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Imagine the following election procedure:

- Paper ballots are marked, in secret and deposited by the voters in sealed ballot boxes. (So far, so good).
- The ballot boxes are then delivered to the offices of a private firm, which is publicly known to be a supporter of and contributor to one of the political parties.
- Upon receipt of the ballot boxes, the doors are locked and no one other than employees of that firm is allowed to inspect and validate the counting.
- The ballots are then destroyed, after which the results are announced.
- The firm's favorite candidate is declared the winner. The final results vary radically from pre-election polls.

And yet this scenario is an exact analogy, in all relevant respects, to the "computer screen" voting system that has been rushed into use, following the fiasco of the 2000 presidential election.

Consider:

- There are, in all, thirteen manufacturers of electronic voting machines, of which two, ES&S and Diebold, are predominant. Both are owned and operated by individuals with right-wing political views, who are heavy contributors to the Republican Party.
- ES&S and Diebold machines use "proprietary" source codes (i.e., not available for public inspection and analysis), and leave no "paper record" of their tallies.
- "Exit polling," a reliable validation method which has proven to be much more accurate than pre-election polling, was "withdrawn" soon after the polls closed in the November 2002 election. Voter News Service (VNS), a consortium owned by the major cable and broadcast TV networks, reported that the system "collapsed," due to "technical problems."
- In a comparison of the polling and results of nineteen 2002 election races (by www.scoop.co.nz), fourteen showed a post poll swing to the Republicans (many far outside the margin of error), two showed a swing to the Democrats (all within the margin of error), and three were "close to correct." If the pre-election poll predictions had been correct, the Democrats would now control the Senate.
- "The state where the biggest upset occurred, Georgia, is also the state that ran its elections with the most electronic voting machines." (The "swing" to the Republican was from 9-12 points). ([Scoop](http://www.scoop.co.nz)). }

Finally, and most significantly: Does all this suggest that "the fix was in"? *Perhaps*. Is there any way of knowing this? *Absolutely not*: The exit polls were cancelled, there is no independent record (e.g., on paper) of the ballots, and the machines and their software are not available for inspection.