

Voting machines are not as good as paper ballots because they will not provide physical evidence that can be examined if the outcome of a vote is called into question. The issue is public confidence in election results. That confidence is vital to our electoral system, not worth compromising in the name of speed, convenience or cost reduction.

Paper ballots, marked by hand, provide a direct, tactile experience that simply feels more engaging and involving than any mechanical method can provide. They make the act of voting more human. The fewer things that come between human beings and their vote, the better.

Similarly, involvement by people at the polls is a good thing, not something to be handed off to machines. Checking IDs, handing over ballots, explaining the rules and scrutinizing ballots in the event of recounts should all be done by human beings. There is nothing more fundamentally important to democracy than voting and we should not try to do it on the cheap.

Machine voting will inevitably lead to arguments in favour of voting from home, with claims of increased accessibility, tallying speed and convenience that could increase voter participation. However, disadvantages of suspected tampering and hacker interference are greater than any advantages because they strike at the credibility of results.

Casting a vote should not be as easy as buying a lottery ticket. It is an important civic responsibility that should require some effort. We can wait a little while, to get the counts. There is no need for instant gratification. The wait can help underscore the seriousness of the decisions being made.

A trip to the polling station, seeing your neighbours there and making your mark is a unique experience that should be kept as direct as humanly, not mechanically, possible. Let's keep that experience special, not make it as ordinary as online shopping.