Preserving the Integrity of Elections Data

Background

Integrity and validity of the voter rolls is central to the conduct of fair elections. This was most recently brought to the forefront with the questions surrounding the 2020 elections cycles. Many jurisdictions faced audits and concerns were raised about the accuracy of voter records. As a result, both Federal and State grants were made available to assist Election officials with modernizing and securing voter information kept by both the State and the individual jurisdictions.

Election security and integrity precedes the 2020 elections. In fact, in 2002 federal legislation HR 3295 was signed into law. This federal legislation called Help America Vote Act or HAVA allocated approximately $3.86 billion dollars in federal funding to help states meet specific mandates imposed by HAVA. This was to alleviate concerns from the 2000 federal election about votes being counted and eligible voters being turned away from polls because of inaccuracies in voter registration documents (www.sos.texas.gov).

HAVA funds came to fruition again in 2019 when the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2020 was signed into law. This act added $425 million in new HAVA funds with the sole purpose to be used to improve the elections by enhancing technology and security (www.sos.texas.gov).

Solutions to these are needed now more than ever. This white paper provides information on using automation to digitize, automate and protect voter information and provide greater confidence in the validity of the voter rolls in the face of post-election audits.

The Solution

Discussions with many Elections Administrators in Texas revealed the need to "digitize" the information that they kept in paper files, as well as the ability to "automate" the syncing of their information with voter information maintained by the Secretary of State. They also needed the ability to accurately automate the deletion of records that had met retention schedules as well as to accurately automate the redaction of sensitive information in documents that might be requested and shared.

After analyzing their needs, our company evaluated our product suite and realized that we could provide a user-friendly end to end solution to meet the needs of Elections officials. Our basic product suite incorporated our document management imaging and automation systems, including using our Optical Character Recognition (OCR). That became the means to sync elections office data with the Secretary of State data thereby eliminated duplicate data entries. Our delivery included an application to keep a secure backup of that information in case of cyber-attacks and breaches. A redaction application was also applied to automate the purging of records that have met retention schedules, which saved on storage costs. These solutions all met the criteria that the HAVA funds intended, which included its purpose of improving technology to enhance security, efficiency, and organization of Elections processes.

The Product Suite

Regardless of what stage of modernization an office is in, our company has a solution for everyone to achieve a fully digitized, automated, and data loss protection vision. All the below modules are "turn-key" and can be implemented within forty-five days or less. That can include some custom configurations and projects. All our solutions are developed based on customer feedback and ease of use to make work life easier.

We often bundle our solutions, but can provide them individually, on-going or as needed if budgets determine the investment in technologies. This flexibility does set us apart from many competitors who often force a full-suite purchase. Clients often end up purchasing features and services that are rarely used, all ending up costing much more. We make sure that our customers get exactly what they need within budget and on-time.

VistaSG	PRODUCT					
FUNCTIONALITY	Document management software	Sweep Module	TEAMS Integration	Backup Protection	Redaction	Retention
Automate Input		✓				
Maintain Voter Record	✓					
Scan Document	✓					
Search and Retrieve Documents	✓					
OCR Document Images	✓					
Full Text Search	✓					
Email Images	✓					
Export Images for Audit	✓					
Automated Secure Backup				✓		
Automated Data Sync			✓			
Manual Redaction					✓	
Unattended Redaction (ai based)					✓	
Delete Approved Records						✓
Reports	✓					

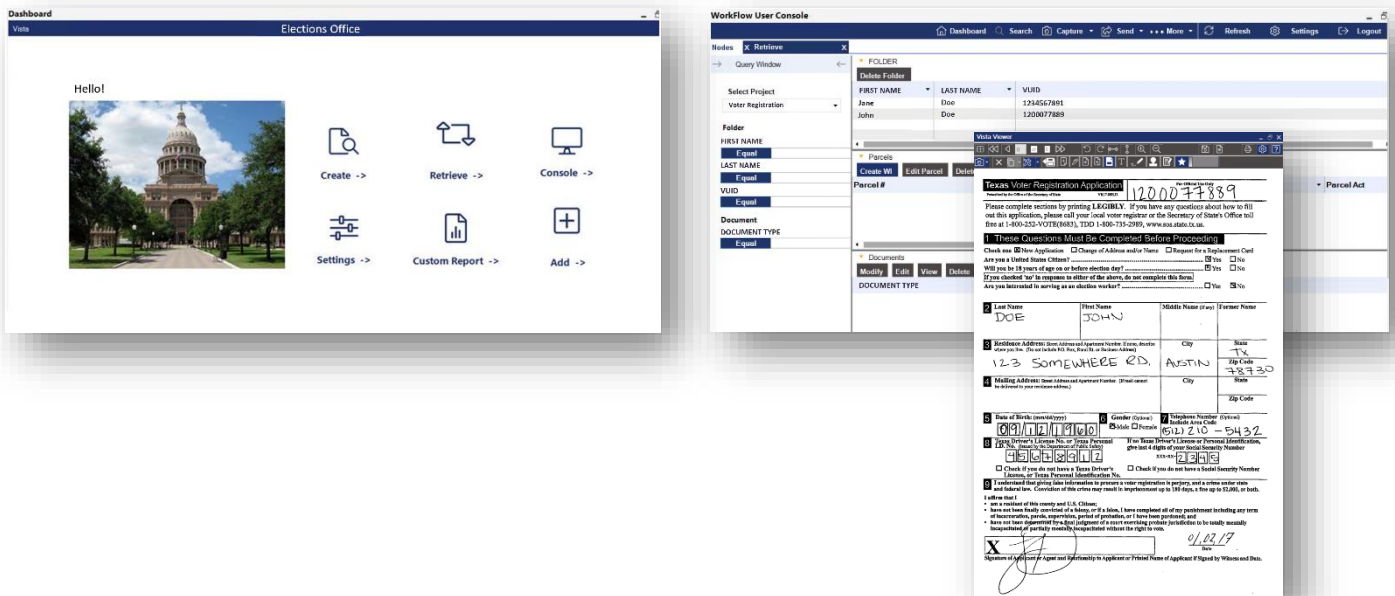**San Patricio County Texas customer experience**

As the first Elections Administrator appointed to San Patricio County almost 17 years ago, Pamela Hill's vision was to go completely digital and ensure everything could be recovered if something went wrong. Pam and her team (Laura, Sarah, and Becky) used to face the same challenges many offices face before making the switch, such as paper piling up, boxes everywhere, and running out of space to store things.

Today Pam's vision is a reality with the help of our product suite. She and her team love that they can get us to customize and easily self-configure our solutions the way they want to; unlike other document management software providers they've used in the past. Sarah shared with us that our product suite is very "user friendly", and that one of the biggest benefits is the customer support. Pam stated that "the support we get from VistaSG has far exceeded our expectations."

They began their search for a new system when the state started digitizing Voter Registrations and decided to make the switch to our product four years ago from this Valentine's Day. (It's truly a love story!) While Pam,

Laura, Sarah, and Becky each take on specific day-to-day roles to manage their voter files, they enjoy all having access to everything in one place so anyone can look up what they need in order to save time.

During elections when their office is especially under a lot of stress, they are also able to save time by looking up a voter in our document management software with a quick search rather than having to manually find physical files. To other offices not sure about making the switch, Pam emphasized, "to not be afraid to go digital because of the backup you have on the system, you are able to recover it!"

Return On Investment (ROI)

Return On Investment (ROI) has become of more considerable interest when we advise or consult our customers and prospects. We have discovered that most of our customers see on average $6,000 thousand dollars' worth of savings by the second year, translating to over 20% return from their investment for their office.

Money and time spent filing and retrieving your documents is significantly reduced by switching to *dms*³. This is our most popular and client selected document management imaging & automation platform solution (with OCR inherent). In addition to its proven efficiencies, all the physical costs that are eliminated include:

- File cabinets and printers

- Property costs occupied by file cabinets

- Offsite storage fees

- Shipping documents to offsite facilities

- Printing supply costs (e.g., ink, toner, etc.)

- Paper expenses (one ream usually costs $3.30)

Beyond the immediate savings and ROI from implementing our software suite for Elections Officials, it also protects against unforeseen risks that could be devastating to your office and harm more than just your bottom line. Natural disasters, ransomware, and theft are all real risks that we are exposed to daily. There is

no amount of money that can replace the time, data, and history that your documents represent. Having documents digital ensures that data can be easily secured and replaced. If these scenarios ever present themselves, your ROI will be something that you cannot put a price on.

Your Return on Investment (ROI)

$6,000 Savings — 2 EMPLOYEE OFFICE

20% ROI

5 EMPLOYEE OFFICE — $15,000 Savings

43% ROI

COST OF PAPER

[Hours Spent (Retrieving/Filing Documents) **X** no. of employees] **X** average hourly salary **X** working days in a month **X** 12 months

COST OF DMS

[0.5 **X** no. of DMS users **X** no. of docs retrieved per day **/** 60 Minutes] **X** average hourly salary **X** working days in a month **X** 12 months

ELIMINATE PHYSICAL COSTS SUCH AS:

PAPER EXPENSES ($3.30 FOR ONE REAM)   PROPERTY COSTS FOR EXTRA STORAGE   PRINTING SUPPLY COSTS   FILE CABINETS & PRINTERS   SHIPPING DOCUMENTS OFF-SITE   OFF-SITE STORAGE COSTS

VSG Contact info

VistaSG is ready to help others make the switch to **Digitize**, **Automate**, and **Protect**! If you are interested in learning more about our easy-to-use *dms3* software, visit our website at www.vistasg.com. You can also email bstorrar@vistasg.com, or give us a call at 512-986-7650 and ask to schedule a demo with one of our amazing team members.

"Let us make your work life easier, more secure… affordably!"

Other References:

Help America Vote Act (HAVA), Texas Secretary of State, www.sos.texas.gov/elections/hava/hava_act.shtml.

Ruiz, Karla. "Calculating the ROI of Document Management Systems." *PaperSave*, 4 Sept. 2018, www.papersave.com/blog/calculating-roi-document-management-systems/.