

Dear Mr. Arntz,

I am a resident of San Francisco (70 Manor Dr., 94127) and was very excited to hear about your announcement last Friday of your intent to establish a task force focused on the openness and transparency of voting systems used in San Francisco County.

I have an extensive background in Open Source software. I was a founder of the Apache web server project in 1995, founded in an office at 3rd and Bryant streets at a company called Organic, and later bootstrapped into an independent 501c3 nonprofit called the Apache Software Foundation in 1998. I served as its volunteer president for the first three years of its existence, and a board member afterwards. I am currently on the board of directors of the Mozilla Foundation, the 501c3 organization that publishes the Firefox web browser that provides an open, secure, privacy-protecting, and high quality alternative to Microsoft Internet Explorer. Concurrent to both efforts, my day job starting in 1999 and continuing to this day is as founder and CTO of CollabNet, founded again in San Francisco, a company focused on building new open source communities both public (such as openoffice.org and java.net) and private (within companies, to enhance efficiency), currently employing 200 people worldwide. I have seen first-hand how the open source model can not just result in more secure systems, it can create significant economic opportunity.

I also join the ranks of those who stood in horror in 2000, 2004, and even last year, as electronic voting machines with no paper trail and no means of auditability produced questionable results in many States of our Union. I have always had a fair degree of comfort with the paper-ballot-scan systems used in my precinct, but I believe that San Francisco really has the potential to do even better. It can become a model for changing the relationship between precincts and voting system vendors, towards one of greater accountability and openness. I believe that the efforts of the Open Voting Consortium will be very valuable in this process - Alan has kept me informed of his progress and I wish them well.

I unfortunately can not be present at tomorrow's board of supervisors' meeting, as I am presenting on Open Source software at a conference in Germany this week, and then again next week at a conference in India. But I would be eager to assist your efforts in the future. Feel free to contact me at this address (brian@behlendorf.com) or at 415-412-4610 at any time.

Thank you and good luck,

Brian