Electoral Cycles vs. ICT Life Cycles

How Sustainable Can ICT in Elections Be?
Comparing the Cycles

Electoral Cycle
- Duration ~ 2 - 5 years
- Repeat everything (including ICT supported activities)

ICT Life Cycle
- Duration ~ 3 – 5 years
- Replace/upgrade/write off everything
Example 1: Windows operating system.

- 1985: Windows 1.0
- 1987: Windows 2.0
- 1990: Windows 3.0
- 1993: Windows NT 3.1
- 1996: Windows NT 4.0
- 2002: Windows XP
- 2006: Windows Vista
- 2009: Windows 7
Example 2: Data Transfer

1990
- floppy disks
- Dial-up

1994
- CD-R

1998
- Broadband internet
- Satellite internet

2002
- Satellite internet

2004
- USB flash

2008
- mobile broadband
Example 3: Mobile Computing & Photography over 5 electoral cycles
Standards to the rescue?

Example 4: Biometrics/fingerprinting

- **ANSI/NBS-ICST1-1986**
  minimum amount of memory for the exchange and storage

- **ANSI/NIST-CSL1-1993**
  focused on formats for the exchange of fingerprint images

- **ANSI/NIST-ITL1a-1997**
  addendum for facial image data

- **ANSI/NIST-ITL1-2000**
  additional image details

- **ANSI/NIST-ITL1-2007**
  new data formats (XML), image quality, image capturing best practices
### Combining the Cycles

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What to do?

- Ignore?
- Look for synergies?
- Build national ICT infrastructure where election applications are only one component?
- Avoid buying the latest and greatest (and most expensive)?
What to do?

- Build regular technology review and planning for replacement into the electoral cycle

- Be critical about efficiency increases claimed only for the long term
Thank You!