



Democracy in Danger: How Hackers and Activists Exposed Fatal Flaws in the Election System

Jake Braun

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Two things have become unambiguous about Russia's role in the 2016 US presidential election: it carried out a significant attack against the United States; and not enough is being done to prevent a repeat performance. Jake Braun explores that problem in *Democracy in Danger*, a chilling warning about how easily this could happen again.

While much has been written about the role of Russian propaganda, *Democracy in Danger* focuses instead on Russia's hacking of voting systems across the United States, erasing voters from voter registration databases and hacking the websites of several secretaries of state. Written as a first-person narrative but packed with information, the book uses Braun's background and expertise to stress the importance of securing our voting systems.

Braun includes plenty of stories from his time as National Deputy Field Director on the 2008 Barack Obama campaign to illustrate how ill-prepared some states are for benign challenges like longer-than-expected voting lines, and how that same lack of preparedness is a red flag when dealing with hacking.

Braun's career transitioned from campaign work to cybersecurity. In the wake of 2016, he co-founded the Voting Village at the hacking conference DEF CON, where white hat hackers testing states' voting systems were able to hack in with relative ease. Braun describes the urgency of creating that event and how it worked, but also how difficult it has been to get the National Association of Secretaries of State to act on these critical vulnerabilities.

Democracy in Danger is a harrowing account of just how unprepared states were, and remain, to stop election-crippling Russian hacks. It explains the problem in thorough and clear detail, with a call to action to protect the fundamentals of American democracy. This is a good and important work.

JEFF FLEISCHER (September / October 2019)

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