

Secretary of State Debra Bowen

Election Night Data-Feed Guide

Version 7.1
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Document History

Version	Date	Author	Description
1.00	12/20/2007	SOS ITD	Initial Release
1.10	04/08/2008	SOS ITD	Update for 2008 Statewide Direct Primary Election
1.11	07/27/2008	SOS ITD	Update for 2008 General Election
2.00	03/16/2009	SOS ITD	Update for 2009 Statewide Special Election
2.01	04/10/2009	SOS ITD	Added the 'update' report type.
3.00	03/23/2010	SOSITD	Update for 2010 Statewide Direct Primary, revised record layout for report date in V Message file and XML 530 file.
4.00	09/13/2010	SOSITD	Update for 2010 General Election, revised record layout for candidate name in C Message file and XML 510 file.
5.00	03/16/2012	SOS ITD	Update for 2012 Presidential Primary election. Added Section 1.2 Data File Changes.
6.00	09/10/2012	SOS ITD	Update for 2012 General Election
7.00	04/09/2014	SOS ITD	Updated for 2014 Primary Election. Split the document into separate files. Added support for EML v7.0-cs1
7.1	09/30/2014	SOS ITD	Update for 2014 General Election.

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1. Introduction

- Each election night, the Secretary of State's office provides live election results in data files to media clients who have signed up with the Secretary of State's office. The data files are provided for media clients to use and process by an external system. This Election Night Data-Feed Guide is intended to give the media client a perspective of the file formats offered and to provide detailed information for both file formats.

For additional information and sample files, go to www.sos.ca.gov/media/

1.1. File formats

Each election cycle, the Secretary of State's office releases files in several formats. Our current file sets are:

- ASCII data format – a domain specific pipe delimited format.
- XML Version 5.0 format – an XML format, designed to use much of the EML 5.0 standard format.
- XML Version 7.0-cs01 format – an XML format, designed to be compliant with the EML 7.0-cs01 committee specification.

1.2. File Retrieval

Media clients have access to the data-feed files via two mechanisms.

The first mechanism is an FTP server. This is a password protected server that data-feed clients may access via an ftp client to download the files. Media clients will receive hostname, username and password information after signing up with the Secretary of State's office.

The second mechanism is a web server provisioned for media clients. This access method is simpler and usually easier to integrate into external processes. Media clients will receive unique URL information for retrieving election night data files after signing up with the Secretary of State's office.

2. General Information

2.1. Contact Information

Please direct all technical questions and comments to the Secretary of State Information Technology Division Help Desk at (916) 653-8905.

2.2. Pre-Election Night Data Files

The pre-election night data files are files that media clients may use to build an external system.

In the ASCII file format, each set of the pre-election night data files contains the five files listed below:

- Candidate Information (C message file)
- Precinct Numbers by County (P message file)
- Contest Codes and Descriptions (R message file)
- County Codes and County Names (S message file)
- Voting Results and County Reporting Status (V message file). This file will show zero votes cast for all candidates.

In the XML File format, each set of the pre-election night data files contains the following files:

- An EML 510 file for all results. This can be a very large file.
- An EML 510 file for each statewide race.
- An EML 530 file for County Reporting Status data.

2.3. Election Night Data Files

The election night data files are created approximately every five minutes after the polls close at 8:00 p.m. Pacific Time on Election Day. There may be longer periods of time during which some counties show no updates because each of the 58 county elections offices processes ballots differently. County elections officials are required to send initial results to the Secretary of State's office no more than two hours after they begin tallying the votes (no later than 10:00 p.m.). Data files will be generated until all counties have reported final numbers for election night.

2.3.1. ASCII Files

The election night data file for ASCII feeds is the V message file. This file contains both the V message records and the A message records which are the Voting Results and County Reporting Status respectively.

For complete details and a technical description of the V message file, please see the ASCII File Format document at www.sos.ca.gov/media.

2.3.2. XML Files

In order to comply with the latest EML standard, the Secretary of State will offer the XML files in two different versions; EML version 5.0 and EML version 7.0-cs01. EML version 5.0 is the same version as in past election cycles.

For the election night data feed, the Secretary of State has adopted EML version 7.0-cs01 as the standard. Support for the EML version 5.0 will end after the November 2014 General Election.

Both EML versions containing the election night data are composed of several file types. The 510 file type includes a file with *every* statewide contest and individual files for *each* statewide contest. Additionally, the 530 file type has one file that contains the County Reporting Status data.

For complete details and a technical description of the EML version 5.0 files, see the XML File Format – EML 5.0 document at www.sos.ca.gov/media/.

For complete details and a technical description of the EML version 7.0-cs01 files, see the XML File Format – EML 7.0-cs01 document at www.sos.ca.gov/media.

3. Testing

The Secretary of State's office is committed to integrated system testing and performs several iterations of testing in the weeks leading up to the election for both internal and data-feed media clients. The system tests simulate election night by generating test data. The Secretary of State's office encourages counties and data-feed media clients to participate in the system tests.

For a specific schedule of testing opportunities, see the Testing Schedule document at www.sos.ca.gov/media.