Statistician calls for audit to address election hacking fears

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Philip Stark and Ron Rivest favor a risk-limiting election audit. Credit: Cyrus Farivar

With the Electoral College set on Dec. 19 to cement the results of Donald Trump's presidential win, UC Berkeley statistician Philip Stark is calling for an audit to double-check that hackers did not manipulate the results.

In an op-ed in USA Today, Stark and MIT cryptographer Ron Rivest, both advisors on the U.S. Election Assistance Commission, argue that

there are good reasons to conduct a ["risk-limiting" audit](#) of the [presidential election](#).

Among them is the conclusion of the Department of Homeland Security and the National Security Agency that Russian hackers attacked the Democratic National Committee and U.S. voter registration databases.

For example, they say, the [election results](#) could have been tipped by manipulating the vote count in a small number of jurisdictions in battleground states, such as areas with limited resources to defend against cyberattacks.

Republican Sen. Lindsey Graham of South Carolina has called on Congress to investigate Russian cyberattacks on the election. Meanwhile, a Washington Post–ABC News poll found that 18 percent of voters believe Trump was not the legitimate winner of the election. Hillary Clinton's lead in the popular vote has grown to 1.7 million.

A [Change.org petition](#) calling for [election officials](#) to double-check the results via a risk-limiting audit is circulating online. More than 100,000 people have signed it so far.

Provided by University of California - Berkeley

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