

Feds: No evidence hackers disrupted North Carolina voting

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A federal investigation didn't turn up any evidence that cyber attacks were responsible for computer errors that disrupted voting in a North Carolina county in 2016, according to a report issued Monday.

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security's report said it didn't identify any malware or [remote access](#) to the Durham County Board of Elections systems that it analyzed.

After [voter](#) check-in software failed, [federal authorities](#) conducted a forensic analysis of the county's electronic poll books to see if Russian military hackers who targeted the software provider may have tampered with registration information to disrupt voting.

Laptops used in some Durham County precincts on Election Day in November 2016 showed inaccurate data to poll workers, such as erroneously identifying voters as having already voted and identifying registered voters as being unregistered. The VR Systems electronic poll books malfunctions forced officials in the heavily Democratic county to switch to paper registration records and extend voting hours.

State election officials seized 21 laptops that had been used to check in Durham County voters and asked [federal officials](#) to do a forensic exam of the computer equipment.

Federal investigators "did not conclusively identify any threat actor activity," but they did identify aspects of county cyber security that

could be improved, according to the report.

The analysis of Durham County laptops was the first known federal investigation of equipment that malfunctioned during the 2016 election, when Russian hackers infiltrated several states.

VR Systems had been targeted by a Russian spear-phishing campaign, but Chief Operating Officer Ben Martin has maintained the company was not hacked as a result. Martin has said he believes a report on Russian interference in the 2016 [election](#) from special counsel Robert Mueller was referring to his Tallahassee, Florida, company—the name was redacted—in describing how Russian spies installed malware on the network of a company that "developed software used by numerous U.S. counties to manage voter rolls."

Martin has disputed that finding, saying a cybersecurity company's audit found no sign of a breach.

However, North Carolina's concerns were renewed by the Mueller report's mention of the electronic poll book company.

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