

# The Problems with Poor Ballot Design

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## Scientific American:

Tensions are mounting as we hurtle towards Election Day this Tuesday, yet with all the focus on who's voting and where, most of us have put little thought into another essential part of the election process: the voting ballot itself. There are significant issues with the mechanics of voting, including the design of ballots and instructions for using them. Philip Kortum is a psychology professor at Rice University who studies how people interact with voting systems in real-world settings. He and Michael Byrne, also at Rice, recently co-authored a paper in *Current Directions in Psychological Science* that delves into the many issues that can arise during the voting process when poorly designed ballot systems trick people into voting incorrectly—or not at all. Here he answers some questions from contributor Catherine Caruso about what can go wrong. An edited transcript of the interview follows.

Read the whole story: [Scientific American](#)