



## Video the Vote

*By Andy Sternberg*

A new, non-partisan coalition will use the Internet and citizen journalism techniques to monitor this year's midterm elections. Fearing a repeat of the problems that plagued many voters in the 2000 and 2004, Video the Vote mobilized a team of volunteers to monitor polling stations.

Video the Vote was launched rapidly, as hundreds of volunteers signed up in the weeks leading up to the election at [Videothevote.org](http://Videothevote.org). In the days before November 7, organizers held formal training sessions and interstate telephone and video conference calls.

"Caring for democracy is something that's very broad – but recognizing how these things are a threat to democracy is a more challenging thing to convey because you have to talk about evidence," said Frances Anderson, an organizer with the California Election Protection Network.

Video the Vote volunteers with digital video cameras were on call to document any incidents spotted by volunteer poll monitors. Any incidents of malfunctioning equipment, voter intimidation, or excessively long lines would be recorded and picked up by a runner to bring to Video the Vote headquarters and upload to the video-sharing Web site YouTube.

Volunteers of all ages came to an independent clothing store in Echo Park the Saturday before the election and were told what to look out for. "Intimidation, by anyone, or an intimidating atmosphere for voters in the polling place," is one thing to take note of, according to Anderson.

But the main objective of Video the Vote is to have documentation ready for broadcast before the polls even close.

"The effort is really to pressure candidates to not prematurely concede or declare victory because to decide an election before all the votes are counted is an insult to democracy," said Anderson. "The message that democracy is worth the wait has to be put out there... we don't need it all to be decided within the prime time window."

<i>Watch the videos at <http://videothevote.org></i>