COMPARING SINGLE WINNER ELECTORAL SYSTEMS
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	Plurality	Traditional Runoff	IRV	Condorcet	Approval	Borda
Majority vote wins	no	YES	YES	YES	usually	no
Result determined in one election	YES	no	YES	YES	YES	YES
Ties are unlikely or easily adjudicated	YES	YES	YES	no	YES	YES
Encourages "honest" voting; discourages stragetic voting.	no	no	YES	depends	YES	no
Encourages cooperation and more postive campaigns.	no	no	YES	depends	YES	YES
Requires enthusiastic support to win	YES	YES	YES	no	YES	usually
Requires broad support to win	usually	usually	YES	YES	YES	YES
Good at electing compromise candidate.	no	no	no	YES	YES	usually
System is easily explained	YES	YES	somewhat	somewhat	YES	YES
Easy for voters to vote	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Used in real public elections?	YES	YES	YES	no	no	no
Every ranking counts equally	no	no	no	YES	YES	no
Eliminates spoiler effect	no	YES	YES	YES	YES	partially

Plurality is a very bad system. It is the easiest system to administer, but that is about all that can be said for it. It doesn't even require a majority vote to win, which is ridiculous. It strongly discourages alternative parties, so if one is a strong believer in the two party system, one might want to be in favor of plurality voting.

Traditional Runoff (i.e. where the runoff is 1-9 months later) at least ensures a majority winner. However, if the runoff is held as a special election, it is common to have a a 50% dropoff in the vote, so only those people determine the ultimate winner. Alternately, it may be consolidated with the next major election date, in which case it isn't rare for 8 months to pass between the first round and second round of the election. Finally, they are quite expensive to administer, costing jurisdictions a lot of money.

IRV is probably overall the best single-winner system, based on the criteria above. It is a little harder to explain than other systems, but not too hard. It is a good default choice for single-winner elections. In IRV, a compromise candidate that does not have a strong base of enthusiastic support will not get elected. However, that candidate's voters will have a lot to say about who wins, because the winner of the election will probably be based on to whom that candidate's #2 votes transfer.

Condorcet is a favorite of many mathmaticians. It is a very strong system **if** a tiebreaking procedure is used that discourages bullet voting. (Unfortunately ties would probably be common in this system, and good Condorcet tiebreaking procedures are very complex.) Condorcet tends to elect compromise candidates, so it might be well utilized for a "healer" type executive position. Let's say that a group has had a lot of internal fighting. Electing the President of this group via Condorcet might be good choice in this situation. Condorcet would be a perfectly reasonable choice for electing a mayor of a city, too.

Approval and Borda voting appear to be good choices for fairly homogenous organizational elections. E.g., the IEEE and the American Mathematical Association use Approval Voting, and to all accounts, it has worked well for them. In emotional public elections, however, these systems would probably devolve to plurality, as candidates would ask their voters to bullet vote, since voting for anyone else other than ones' favorite candidate might very well cause that favored candidate to lose.