

Report the vote #10 Polls and polling

Thanks for being here, I'm Lisa Loving and this is Report the Vote, workshop #9 Personal Safety. Brought to you by the Pacifica Affiliate Network and WNUC LPFM in Detroit – and Pacifica.

In this workshop we cover crucial reporting skills, but this is just one episode of a series. Look for the others online, we're creating them one at a time and posting them at <https://pacificanetwork.org/report-the-vote-news-training/>.

SPECIAL NOTE #1: If you are working on elections coverage, I am heading up a new twice-monthly national radio show designed to carry your reporting. Would you like your work to reach a national audience? Email me! I am at lisaloving33@gmail.com. We're starting at the end of this month and running this show through the first week of January! Please and please again, I need your submissions to make this real. How can I work with you?

SPECIAL NOTE #2 I have a case of my journalism books and if you send me an email I'll mail one to you for free. Because you guys are defending democracy! Two folks have requested a copy but I wanted to get more people on board before I head to the Post Office. Email me your snail mail at lisaloving33@gmail.com.

Polls: can't live with em, can't live without em.

TOUR OF MY CRYSTAL BALL

- It's pretty and it was not cheap – even tho it's essentially just a rock
- Quartz is found in proximity to gold; gold miners look for quartz deposits among other things.
- This one is special because it has a rainbow inside it
- Its made out of smoky quartz which helps counter fear, overcome depression and bring about emotional stability while facilitating positive, practical thinking with clear insights
- I also have a rose quartz one which is about personal relationships and happiness, and a citrine one which is the "success stone," "merchant's stone" or "money stone."
- I bring these out when I am struggling in life because they help me focus my thoughts on what I want to achieve. They help me focus my thoughts on what I want. I look at the stone and think about a question or decision I have to make. I might even pull tarot cards and think about the message of the card and the stone and what I should do next in my life.
- They don't predict the future at all, but they're pretty and feel good in my hands.

Polls basically answer the question: What do people think? And what are they gonna do next? Look at the difference between a poll and a survey here.

<https://www.eballot.com/blog/voting-surveys-polls-what-are-the-differences>

But also polls raise an unanswered question about what is done with the polling info: Is it used to justify a policy or action that was already planned. (look for polling info that is then followed by an “explainer” ie: yes the people are right but this is what makes it hard and that’s why we don’t do what the people clearly want. Cannabis policy is a good example but also abortion access.

The world of polling has changed since 2016

<https://www.pewresearch.org/methods/2023/04/19/how-public-polling-has-changed-in-the-21st-century/>

The study also finds the use of multiple methods increasing. Last year 17% of national pollsters used at least three different methods to sample or interview people (sometimes in the same survey), up from 2% in 2016.

<https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2022/09/21/does-public-opinion-polling-ab-out-issues-still-work/>

[edu/unity/2021/01/11/polling-problems-and-why-we-should-still-trust-some-polls/](https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2021/01/11/polling-problems-and-why-we-should-still-trust-some-polls/)

The question now has become: How much information is actually gathered? I.e. how many different instruments are used to gather info?

Doesn’t answer the question about how the data is or was actually used. It’s a basic critique of that.

● **Why? 2020 presidential polls suffered worst performance in decades, report says**

https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2020-poll-errors/2021/07/18/8d6a9838-e7df-11eb-ba5d-55d3b5ffcaf1_story.html

Different polling organizations conduct their surveys in quite different ways. Survey methodology is undergoing a period of creative ferment. Currently, CNN

and Fox News conduct polls by telephone using live interviewers, CBS News and Politico field their polls online using opt-in panels, and The Associated Press and Pew Research Center conduct polls online using a panel of respondents recruited offline. There is even a fourth group of pollsters that combine methods like robocalls and online surveying with opt-in samples. These different approaches have consequences for [data quality](#), as well as [accuracy in elections](#).

<https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2020/08/05/key-things-to-know-about-election-polling-in-the-united-states/> **The real margin of error is often about double the one reported. There is evidence that when the public is told that a candidate is extremely likely to win, some people may be less likely to vote.**

polls are snapshots of citizens' voting preferences, accompanied by inherent statistical uncertainty <https://theloop.ecpr.eu/how-powerful-are-polls-in-influencing-election-outcomes/>

Even when people have strong views, a single polling question rarely captures those views well.

<https://www.brookings.edu/articles/polling-public-opinion-the-good-the-bad-and-the-ugly/>

And they urge us to remember the great difference between the idea that the people should rule and the use of polls to determine public policy or manipulate the people's will. We're sure the people agree with us. If you doubt that, just take a poll.

<https://brookings.edu/articles/polling-public-opinion-the-good-the-bad-and-the-ugly/>

- Many many elections inclusion rules revolve around polling especially: who is allowed to participate in broadcast debates and who is locked out. That's what can make them a crucial factor in DEI or DEI failure or classic third party sabotage.
- <https://www.vanderbilt.edu> Elections indicate who wins, but not why. Public opinion polling, done right, remains the best way of obtaining citizens' opinions. While some suggest two consecutive polling "fails" in presidential

elections destroy trust in the process, policy makers in a representative democracy should pause before branding all polling data with the same mark.

- **But they are also a tool of social control. There are what are called push-polls, which access people on their phone and ask them leading questions designed to shape how that person views a candidate issue or product.**

Conservative outlet that covers polls

<https://www.realclearpolling.com/latest-polls/president>

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/RealClearPolitics#:~:text=The%20site%20has%20shown%20a,criticism%20of%20mainstream%20media%20biases.>

<https://oertx.highered.texas.gov/courseware/lesson/1192/overview>

Wondering how your favorite candidate is doing in the polls? The site [RealClearPolitics](#) tracks a number of major polling sources on the major elections, including the presidential and Senate elections

Gift link

https://www.nytimes.com/2024/07/23/opinion/kamala-harris-polls-democrats.html?unlocked_article_code=1.9U0.GOBa.T1DJu5vCo5p9&smid=url-share

<https://news.gallup.com/opinion/polling-matters/474695/six-reasons-polling-valuable-representative-democracy.aspx>

<https://www.nytimes.com/2024/07/21/us/politics/kamala-harris-trump-polls.html?searchResultPosition=1>

<https://www.reuters.com/world/us/harris-leads-trump-44-42-us-presidential-race-reutersipsos-poll-finds-2024-07-23/>

<https://projects.fivethirtyeight.com/polls/>

<https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/2024-election/steve-kornacki-harris-trump-undecided-voters-polls-rcna163306>

<https://www.npr.org/2024/07/23/nx-s1-5048890/elections-poll-biden-harris-trump>

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2024-07-23/kamala-harris-poised-to-cut-trump-s-lead-in-2024-election>

https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=4522042

This article examines the influence of polls on voting in four elections held in Quebec, Canada, from 2007 to 2012. It concludes that a) polls are consulted mostly by sophisticated voters; b) people who read polls tend to be more likely to vote and less likely to change their mind in the voting booth; c) younger and less educated voters, as well as people who decide not to vote or who change allegiance, are more likely to state that polls played a role in their decision. Polls either mobilize voters or discourage them to show up. However, their influence is far from being substantial. With respect to decision-making, a preference for the winner seems to have a mobilizing effect in and of itself. These results highlight how important it is that the information conveyed by polls be reliable since this information is taken into account when voters make their decisions.

<https://theloop.ecpr.eu/how-powerful-are-polls-in-influencing-election-outcomes/>

An alternative solution involves a responsible and transparent presentation of polls by polling institutes and the media. Simply mentioning margins of error is insufficient; instead, we should consider graphical representations of margins of error and provide additional crucial information, such as the number of undecided voters. **Reports** that delve into and illustrate the uncertainties associated with polls can also contribute positively to public understanding.

<https://www.press.umich.edu/pdf/0472099213-ch11.pdf>

<https://www.gsb.stanford.edu/insights/how-polls-influence-behavior>

That's it for our workshop. Get the links and one-papers from this workshop online at <https://pacificanetwork.org/report-the-vote-news-training/>. Whenever you listen to or view this workshop, remember that I love helping independent journalists and that's what you are! Look me up on social media or email me at lisaloving33@gmail.com with questions or comments. If you're a community media reporter, I'd love to brainstorm an idea with you.

Friends: Whatever we have 5 years from now is gonna be something you made. So thanks for being with us and hope to see you next time. I'm Lisa Loving and this is Report the Vote.

Brought to you by the Association of Affiliates and WNUC LP FM in Detroit and Pacifica..

(How Does the Electoral College Work?

<https://www.usa.gov/electoral-college#:~:text=A%20candidate%20needs%20the%20vote,electors%20meet%20in%20their%20states.>)

How does the Electoral College process work?

After you cast your ballot for president, your vote goes to a statewide tally. In 48 states and Washington, D.C., the winner gets all the electoral votes for that state. Maine and Nebraska assign their electors using a proportional system. A candidate needs the vote of at least 270 electors—more than half of all electors—to win the presidential election.

In most cases, a projected winner is announced on election night in November after you vote. But the actual Electoral College vote takes place in mid-December when the electors meet in their states. See the [Electoral College timeline of events](#) for the 2020 election.