



AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR
PUBLIC OPINION RESEARCH

Challenges for Election Polling in 2012

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2012 AAPOR Conference

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AAPOR 2012 Election Rapid Response Team

- Lavrakas and Keeter established this RRT in January anticipating the need to vet election polling problems quickly with nonpartisan AAPOR election polling experts
- Members were AAPOR Past-Presidents Diane Colasanto, Rob Daves, Mike Traugott, Cliff Zukin, in addition to election polling scholar and BYU Political Science professor (and PAPOR member) Quin Monson
- No crises ultimately arose, but the RRT met proactively several times throughout the 2012 campaign, including the week before the election to establish a process for having AAPOR ready to issue a press release immediately after the November election
 - The RRT met the morning after the election to finalize this statement

Election Polling Challenges

- AAPOR Press Release, November 7, 2012
 - “During the past two months, journalists, partisans on many sides, and the public at large have focused a great deal of attention on the accuracy of the presidential pre-election polls. At times considerable criticism was directed toward pollsters and their polling methods.”
 - “However, as was seen on Wednesday morning, the vast majority of the major pollsters were highly accurate in their final estimates for the presidential election, both at the national and state levels. The American Association for Public Opinion Research (AAPOR) would like to take this occasion to compliment pollsters who used established, objective scientific methods to conduct their polls, rather than subjective judgments about the electorate to make their forecasts.”

Election Polling Challenges

- AAPOR Press Release (CONT.)
 - “The final estimates of the 2012 election outcomes demonstrated that when pollsters remain committed to objective scientific methods, their pre-election polls are very likely to be an accurate forecast of the voting public’s behavior.”
 - “As importantly, to the extent that polls also are accurate in characterizing the attitudes, beliefs, and motivations of the electorate, we believe that pollsters, and the news media that use their poll findings, provide a great service to democracy by placing the opinions and preferences of the public in the forefront of the electoral process.”

2012 Election Polling Challenges

- In a very close election there were many challenges for pollsters to try to “solve”
- Inclusion of Cell Phone Respondents
 - What proportion of Dual RDD Frame final samples should come from cell phone respondents
 - To Screen or Not to Screen
 - How to combined Landline RDD and Cell Phone RDD
- Very Low Response Rates (< 10%)
- Impact of Differential Nonresponse Due to Hurricane Sandy
- Calculating a DEFF and Applying it Correctly
- Levels of Early Voting
- Determining Likely Voters

Thank You!



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