Survey Monkey Poll

The Internet provides an alternative way to reach people and survey their opinions. It is, however, requires a difficult technique if one would like to get an accurate gauge of public opinion.

Online, there is no way to **randomly** reach people. Instead, what we tried to do was get as big a sample size as possible (we got 421), and then winnow the sample to match known demographic measures, such as age, gender and region. Moreover, online polling can also under-sample groups of people who have less access to the Internet or who simply do not want to take surveys online. A significant population either cannot or will not take a survey online. They tend to be older, less educated and more likely to be rurally located than people who do take an online survey or are otherwise simply just not trustful of online surveys. We tried to adjust for that.

However, while demographic data was available and we could adjust for that and it was much harder to find likely proportion of likely responders in Namibia. Therefore, what we have here is responses of people most likely to answer a survey randomly sent to them (that is biased towards people with the strongest opinion on politics), adjusted to known national demographics through [Raking](https://www.quantitativeskills.com/sisa/calculations/rakehlp.htm).

Why still do it (given the biased results)?

In short, this poll is just like every other poll, it is non-probability and uses raking to overcome some of the random sample issues.

Don't online polls have a bad reputation?

A lot of organizations conduct surveys online which they call polls, but which make no effort to provide a representative sample of the population. Those surveys just reflect whoever decides to answer the questions and are not reliable gauges of public opinion.

This poll, by contrast, was carefully developed to provide a sample that reflects the voting public as a whole.

Representativeness of results

The Post has generally avoided citing results from non-probability Internet-based surveys such as SurveyMonkey, as it is impossible to draw a random sample of Internet users, and random selection is a widely accepted standard in drawing representative samples of any population.

As Internet-based surveys have proliferated, research has grown on the ability to make accurate population estimates from these non-probability samples. Several benchmarking studies have found that probability sample surveys produce smaller errors than samples from opt-in, non-probability surveys. But research has also found that some non-probability methods have been more accurate than others. The Post has continuously reviewed this evidence with an aim of developing a standard to determine which non-probability techniques are useful and appropriate.

So, while the Washington Post is right in saying this sample is non-probability, in that we do not know the probability of any voter answering the survey, so is the traditional phone method. We do not know the probability of non-telephone users being excluded from being called, especially with shifting cell-phone and landline coverage. On a personal note, I do not get called by traditional polls because my cell phone area code is at where my parents lived when I got my first cell phone 15 years ago. And, we do not know all of the dimensions which drive the nonresponse of people called (somewhere between 1% and 10% of people answer the phone). In short, both methods are non-probability.

In short, this poll is just like every other poll, it is non-probability and uses raking to overcome some of the random sample issues.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/mp/survey-methodology/?ut_source=content_center&ut_source2=nbc-surveymonkey-poll&ut_source3=inline&ut_ctatext=here>

Methodology

1. Sampling

* Voluntary response sample