

What's the Best Road Out of the Mess We Are In?

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What's the Root Problem?



The Many Versions of the Problem

- **Estimation errors**
- **Cost pressures in the news business**
- **“Herding”**
- **Improper use of polls to determine debate participation**

Survey Research/Polling Requires Scientific Methods



Survey Research/Polling Requires Scientific Methods

Careful testing of theory and models of how the world works

Improved measurement techniques and procedures

Full disclosure of methods

Peer review and evaluation

Replication

Polling Is a Dynamic Enterprise, Not a Static One

Technology Has Helped the Process in Many Ways



Sample Web Site Usability Survey

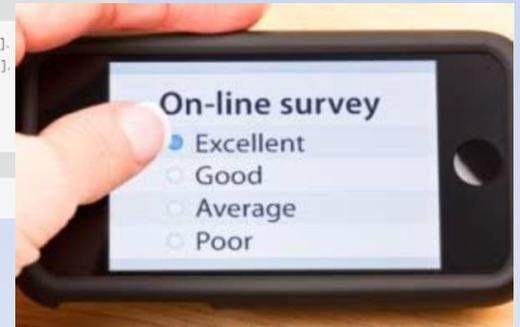
Please take a few minutes to fill out this survey and share your ideas. Your input will help us improve our site and provide the information you want. Thank you.

1: What was your main purpose in visiting this web site?

- I was looking for specific information about [product or service].
- I was looking for general information about [product or service].
- I wanted to download a form(s).
- I was just browsing.
- I wanted to make a purchase of [product or service]

2: Did you accomplish your purpose?

- Yes
- No

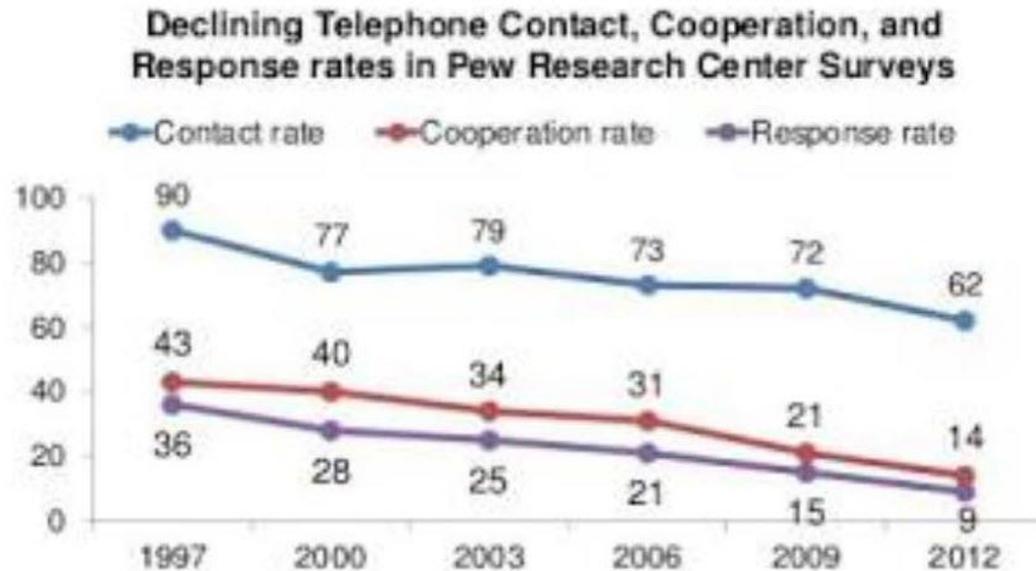


Polling Is a Dynamic Enterprise, Not a Static One But Technology Has Also Hurt the Process in Many Ways



Where Does This Take Us?

Response rates to Pew Research Center telephone surveys have dropped 75% in recent years.



If Coverage and Contact Were the Only Issues, We Could Beat These Problems



But Our Models Are Breaking Down Too



"Black voter turnout in 2012 exceeded the rate of white voter turnout, even in the states with the strictest voter ID laws."

— *Jason Riley on Monday, July 14th, 2014 in comments on Fox News' "The Kelly File"*



Black voter turnout exceeds white voter turnout, even in states with strict ID laws, pundit claims

By Linda Qiu on Thursday, July 17th, 2014 at 12:45 p.m.

Attorney General Eric Holder's recent suggestion of a "racial animus" fueling Obama's critics is no more than political posturing, said *Wall Street Journal* columnist Jason L. Riley.

What Is the Answer?

**More transparency from commercial pollsters about their methods
(peer review)**

**More research involving collaboration between academics and
commercial pollsters**

Methods (Pew and Gallup)

Models of the electoral process

**Research designs to evaluate specific hypotheses about how to
improve estimation (experiments embedded in surveys)**

Regular get togethers to discuss progress and evaluate results