

New York Chapter

AAPOR

American Association for Public Opinion Research

Established 1979

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NYAAPOR Fall/Winter 2005 Newsletter

Programs

By Emily Cruvant

“Blogging and Polling”

September 21, 2005

NYAAPOR’s Fall 2005 season kicked off with a discussion on the growth of weblogs and how the advent of blogging has increased the amount of information about polling available to the interested public. Michael Cornfield, Senior Research Consultant to the Pew Internet & American Life Project, and Mark Blumenthal (also known as the Mystery Pollster), Partner of Bennett, Petts & Blumenthal, presented.

Michael Cornfield began the discussion with an overview of blogs and notable blog moments including Josh Marshall’s Talking Points Memo and the Dean for America weblog. Blogs fuse the mass scale of websites with the conversational quality of email. Three librarians at the University of Indiana conducted a typology study of blogs in 2002 and disclosed the majority (70%) of blogs are personal diaries, while 3% are known as “K” blogs, or knowledge blogs. About 12% are filters that bring other information to the attention of the blog’s readers, often journalists and pollsters. The Pew Internet & American Life Project aims to complement the University of Indiana typology with a social typology of bloggers investigating the reasons why bloggers blog. While many bloggers report blogging is a form of “self-therapy,” others create “memes,” or online content that attract buzz. Recent research on blogs reveals more than one-fourth of Internet users have ever read a blog and twice as many journalists have read blogs. Blogs may have reached more Internet users than reported, as only 38% of Internet users say they know what a blog is.

Mark Blumenthal, AKA the Mystery Pollster, noted that search engines such as Google compound confusion over blogs. Google ranks webpages based on how often they are linked to – a benefit to blogs. Internet users who “Google” may not realize they are on a blog and not a website. Blog visitors tend to be male and well educated, and visitors of the Mystery Pollster are very politically active. On Election Day 2004, heavy traffic crashed many blogs and overwhelmed sitemeters, which measure the number of site hits and page views per day. Blogs, such as Mystery Pollster, have become a forum for commentary on survey research and polling. Often those who are the biggest critics of polling are those most obsessed with it and are frequent visitors to polling blogs. A major benefit of blogs is the ability to get research out of journals and where people can more easily find the information.

“The State of the Market Research Industry”

October 19, 2005

Ed Keller, president of the Market Research Council, and Diane Bowers, president of CASRO, presented their views on the current problems and prospects facing the market research industry, including the drift toward consolidation.

Worldwide spending in market research has increased nearly 8% from last year – the highest growth rate in 5 years. Ed Keller remarked that much of this business has moved toward international research, with many large clients requiring a global footprint and service in local markets. Consolidation in the field has allowed research companies to develop international presence quickly. It appears that consolidation is going in the direction of European companies purchasing US research firms. Six of the 10 biggest research firms in the US are foreign-owned. Small boutiques are winning major accounts, perhaps due to more creativity that may dwindle as big companies consolidate. The result is middle-size firms falling out of the market.

Clients are looking for integrated insights and consultative information over project and data delivery. This requires market researchers to understand the business approach and speak the language of senior management. Key account management is one approach research firms use to become more deeply embedded with clients and understand their industry. However, the problem remains that many business people feel research is too slow. Researchers face the constant dilemma to uphold standards and work within the client’s timeframe.

Diane Bowers presented the current approach to address market research quality standards and the advent of online research standards. CASRO’s standards for online research are to address the distinction between online research and direct marketing. As public trust in telephone research has been damaged by telemarketing, response rates decline, and more clients are moving to online research as a faster method. However, the value in telephone research needs to be emphasized to win back public trust. Researchers should be respectful of respondents by protecting personal information and creating internal Do Not Call lists, though research firms are not subject to the National Do Not Call Registry. Other issues facing the market research industry include company accreditation and proof of compliance with research standards, time and speed issues, and off-shoring.

“2005 Election Review”

Sponsored by: Edison Media Research and Mitofsky International

November 16, 2005

Lee Miringoff, Director of the Marist Institute for Public Opinion, Patrick Murray, Director of the Monmouth University Polling Institute, and Doug Schwartz, Director of the Quinnipiac University Poll discussed the outcomes and key factors in the races for New Jersey Governor and New York City Mayor.

Lee Miringoff started the discussion with a review of the New York City Mayor’s race. The majority of New Yorkers felt things in general were moving in the right direction – a benefit to the incumbent, Michael Bloomberg. One of the key issues in this race was the vast amount of money spent on campaign ads. While Bloomberg flooded the television with messages, the Fernando Ferrer campaign failed to have as much presence on television. Voters did not seem to care that candidates were spending their own money and Bloomberg was able to get in front of the issues with his ad campaign. Bloomberg’s campaign also closed the

gap between approval of the job Bloomberg was doing in office and intent to vote for Bloomberg. In the end, Ferrer was not dynamic enough to beat out the incumbent.

Patrick Murray and Doug Schwartz followed, discussing the New Jersey gubernatorial race. In this highly negative and scandalous race, voters became disgruntled and lost interest in the race. In an open-ended question asking voters' key issues, property taxes and corruption topped all others, but the candidates chose to focus on character debates. Doug Forrester attempted to capitalize on statements by John Corzine's ex-wife, saying Corzine had let his family down and would likely let New Jersey down, with a negative campaign ad featuring his own wife. This did little to raise Forrester in the polls. Corzine spent more money getting urban voters to the polls, which ultimately solidified his victory over Forrester, whose weaker supporters stayed home on Election Day.

Sponsorship

Your NYAAPOR Chapter Needs You!!!

The NY chapter of AAPOR needs your help. We are looking for organizations to sponsor the wonderful programs we will be putting on this year. There are different levels of sponsorship detailed below. Won't you please consider asking your organization to sponsor a program?

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Sincerely,

Joyce Rachelson, Membership Chair

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2005 – 2006 NYAAPOR SPONSORSHIP RATE CARD
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Blue.....\$350 - Includes above plus mention at meetings

Bronze.....\$500 - Includes above plus hotlink to your web site from NYAAPOR's and brochures for your company at meetings

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Gold.....\$1,000 - Includes above plus free attendance for up to 2 people at 2 meetings of your choice

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Additional sponsorship opportunities include:

Newsletter sponsorship - \$500 per issue
Roster sponsorship - \$1,000
Web Site sponsorship - \$1,500

The benefits of a Bronze level will be given to Newsletter sponsorship, Gold to Roster sponsorship and Platinum to Web Site sponsor.

Upcoming Events 2006

“Building A Career in Opinion & Market Research”

Thursday, February 23, 2006
Afternoon Workshop

“Polling on Terrorism and Homeland Security in a post-9/11 World”

Tuesday, February 28, 2006
Evening Session

“Telephone Survey Methods – Where do we go from here?”

Wednesday, March 22, 2006
Evening Session

Holiday Party

NYAAPOR members ended the year with a holiday cocktail reception on December 5 at the Park Avenue Country Club. Dotty Lynch, Senior Political Editor of CBS News, was the guest speaker.

Website

Thanks to the generous sponsorship of the ABC News Polling Unit, the NYAAPOR website has been revamped! You can pay your membership dues online, find out about NYAAPOR’s upcoming events, read the latest newsletter, and more.

You can visit us at www.nyaapor.org

Welcome NYAAPOR New Members!

Drew Allen	Columbia University
Mary Bresette	Pfizer Inc.
Jessica Broome	
Jonathan Cohen	ABC News
Andrew Compagno	Hunter College, GSR Program
Denise D'Andrea	CfMC Research Software
Matthew Derek	Innovative Concepts
Donna Eisenhower, Ph.D.	NYC Dept. of Health
Ashley Hendrickson	University of Connecticut
Chris Job	CfMC Research Software
David Lambert	TNS Global
Andrew J. Magda	University of Connecticut
David Mendelsohn	Harris Interactive
Thomas Miller	Ipsos
Polly Painter	The Roper Center at UConn
Barbara Rice	New York Times Digital
Lisa P. Reid	
Fan Shi	Parsons School of Design
Stacey Siporin	Blum & Weprin Associates
Emily Sprague	University of Connecticut

Harry O'Neill's Retirement

Harry, Warts and All!

By Warren Mitofsky

So Harry O'Neill is retiring?

I thought a lot about what I could say about my friend and colleague, Harry. What can I say about Harry? I did not want to rehash his bio. If you want to see it, it is on the NY AAPOR web site. I don't think it captures Harry. It's in black and white and Harry is in living color.

You never have to wonder when Harry enters a room. You can usually hear him before you see him. I can hear him even if I don't have my hearing aids turned on. Harry's voice booms. Sometimes he is just being social, like when we are at the meetings of the Market Research Council. We gather at the Yale club once a month. For the first half-hour we socialize. It is no trouble finding Harry in the crowd. His voice is like a lighthouse beacon on the coast of Maine. I have no trouble finding him.

Other times when I hear him he is advancing an idea he has. If you listen past the roar it's usually a pretty good idea. I like his ideas He doesn't part with them prematurely. It's clear that he has been thinking about what he is going to say for some time. His ideas are usually well thought out -- carefully reasoned -- and to the point. I think he gave one of the most reasoned evaluations of the public opinion research work many of us do when he accepted the NY AAPOR Lifetime Achievement Award. It should be compulsory reading once a year for all of us. It was called, "An Honorable Profession, Warts and All."

He is not always reasoned. If you goad Harry about being the only Republican in the room you do it at your peril. Then he fires back like buckshot spraying everything around him.

Harry was quite a prominent presidential pollster. But Harry was the last of the unheralded presidential pollsters. Had he been involved in presidential politics a few years later his name would regularly have been in media stories about a presidential campaign. Since 1972 presidential campaign pollsters have become well known. They owe that to the self-promotion of Pat Caddell for his work on George McGovern's campaign. Harry, unfortunately, polled for Richard Nixon four years too soon. The Democrat's pollster that year was Jerry Hursh. Even fewer people have heard of Jerry. I knew him because Jerry and I were graduate students together at Minnesota in the early '60s.

Harry's 15 minutes of fame from his presidential polling -- the one that got news headlines -- came during the Watergate Senate hearings. Nixon's chief of staff, H.R. Haldeman, cited the Opinion Research Corporation, where Harry worked, as the recipient of all that cash that was kept in the safe of the Committee to Re-Elect the President. The money in CREEP's safe was for polls, Haldeman said. Needless to say, Harry ducked the paparazzi camping out around his ORC office.

While I usually disagree with Harry about politics I find myself in agreement with him about public opinion research. I feel fortunate to have worked with Harry on some things important to our craft.

Along with Humphrey Taylor, Harry and I served on the Polling Review Board for the National Council on Public Polls. Have you ever tried to critique the work of your fellow pollsters CONSTRUCTIVELY? I doubt that it can be done. The way it worked was that the three of us drafted a statement aimed at correcting some public misstep in a public poll. Once we were in agreement the Trustees of NCPP got to pass judgment on what we had written. That's when the urge for enlightening the public and the press get overtaken by the enlightened self-interest of some of the trustees. Believe it or not, Harry was the voice of reason in the group. Unfortunately, he retired from the Polling Review Board, too.

For ten years Harry led the Board of Directors of the Roper Center at the University of Connecticut. He followed in the footsteps of Bud Roper. The Roper Center is the place where most of the public polls archive the data from their surveys. It not only has studies from the United States, it has an international collection of public opinion data. It is a wonderful resource for scholars and pollsters. It enables them to review research that has been done over the years. Harry guided the board through problems with wayward directors, University budget cuts, outdated archiving. He stepped down recently in anticipation of his retirement. I harbor the suspicion that he knew we were coming on tougher financial times.

Incidentally, if any of the polling organizations represented here today want to make a contribution in Harry's name to help preserve the Roper Center archive and keep it functioning please let me know.

I usually drive from New York to Storrs for Roper Center meetings and Harry comes with me. He says I make better time than the train. We do, however, get to talk on these trips. One time I heard the story about how Harry met Carmel and how they came to be married. They were both youngsters in the Air Force in Fort Walton, Florida. It was during the Korean war. Harry was a psychologist fresh out of school and Carmel was a nurse. She outranked him. Don't you love the image of Harry saluting and saying "Yes, Ma'am." It was good training for him. He is still doing it 53 years later.

Harry has not changed all that much in the years I know him. He still has the same brush cut I bet they gave him in the Air Force. He has worn the same black rimmed glasses since I have known him. But something is going to change. I will not see Harry in all the familiar places, just some of them. I hope he continues to stay active in our industry. We need his counsel and his judgment about our work.

Postings

Office space available for sub-lease in Soho. If interested, please contact Pearl Beck at pearlbeck@att.net