

PRESS RELEASE

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UNDERSTANDING AND INTERPRETING OPINION POLLS

NEW INTERNATIONAL ONLINE COURSE FOR JOURNALISTS

AAPOR, ESOMAR and WAPOR have collaborated to launch the first-ever international online training tool for journalists to help improve media reporting about polls and survey results around the world.

Aimed at journalists, media students, bloggers, voters and anyone who wants to know why polls work and how they are conducted, the course is hosted by Poynter, which provides online training for journalists. Thanks to AAPOR, ESOMAR and WAPOR funding, the course is available free of charge.

This course will help journalists understand and interpret opinion polls to ensure their reports are as objective as possible and identify what they need to know about a study so they can more critically assess poll quality.

The study of people's attitudes and beliefs about political and social issues often deals with highly contentious subjects such as immigration and voting intentions that arouse huge public interest.

Properly conducted opinion polls use statistical methods to provide the public, politicians and the media with objective measures of people's attitudes and intentions, allowing the voice of the general public to be heard. They also help guide policy by giving decision-makers impartial and unbiased information about what the public wants.

Mollyann Brodie, President of AAPOR, said "This international course will help journalists understand why the questions asked, the type of people who were included in the survey and the timing of the poll can all impact the poll results. This will improve their ability to interpret the results and ensure professional and unbiased reporting."

Finn Raben, Director General of ESOMAR, speaking on behalf of the ESOMAR Council, added "The course will also help journalists explain why polls covering the same election can produce different results or why the outcome of an election might deviate from the result 'predicted' by the polls. We also believe that it is important that journalists check which polls they should be more cautious about reporting."

Patricia Moy, President of WAPOR, said "Polls can also signal to journalists emerging political concerns. This is incredibly important during an election campaign when candidates are running neck-to-neck. We hope journalists all over the world will sign up and learn more about how to report on opinion polls."

The content is based on a course originally developed for the US by AAPOR. It has been updated to cover the latest methodologies including online polls, and expanded with examples from all over the world for international coverage.

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The course was developed by an international expert team, including:

- Kathy Frankovic, Polling consultant and former Director of Surveys at CBS News, ESOMAR Professional Standards Committee member
- Scott Clement, Polling Manager, The Washington Post, AAPOR Education Committee member
- Alejandro Moreno, Professor of Political Science, Instituto Tecnológico Autónomo de México (ITAM), Director of public opinion polling at Reforma newspaper, WAPOR Past President
- Adam Phillips, consultant to ESOMAR Professional Standards and chair, ESOMAR Legal Committees
- Michael Traugott, Research Professor Emeritus, Center for Political Studies, Professor Emeritus, Department of Communication Studies, University of Michigan, AAPOR and WAPOR Past President
- Kathy Joe, Director, International Standards & Public Affairs, ESOMAR

Sign up for this free course at Poynter:

<http://www.newsu.org/courses/understanding-and-interpreting-polls-international>

For more information contact:

Professional.standards@esomar.org or info@newsu.org

Training Partners:



The [American Association for Public Opinion Research \(AAPOR\)](#) is the leading professional organization of public opinion and survey research professionals in the U.S., with members from academia, media, government, the non-profit sector and private industry.



The [World Association for Social, Opinion and Market Research \(ESOMAR\)](#) is the essential organization for encouraging, advancing and elevating market research with over 4900 individual and 300 corporate members in 130 countries.



The [World Association for Public Opinion Research \(WAPOR\)](#) is the leading international professional association for promoting the development and publication of public opinion research. Its 500 members hail from academic and business professions in more than 50 countries.