

Psychology 207: Survey and Questionnaire Research Methods
Assignment #2

Due: Wednesday, April 6

Purpose: To learn how to find the results of public opinion surveys relevant to your questionnaire using a database compiled by the Roper Center for Public Opinion Research.

Instructions:

1. Using the instructions provided on the Links page of the course web site, access the Roper Center iPOLL database.
2. Search the database to find at least three questions that are somehow relevant to your SAQ topic and that have been administered in national or regional surveys. They may be questions that you'll consider using or adapting in your own questionnaire, or they may be questions that simply provide you with background information relevant to your topic. You can either find three completely different items, or include one or two items that were administered in multiple surveys with different samples.
3. For each survey item, click on the magnifying glass icon ["view question details"] to read the full database entry. Obtain the following information for each question:
 - The exact wording of the survey question
 - The year and month in which the survey was conducted
 - The percentage in each response category (e.g., "agree," "disagree"), including "no opinion," "no response," and "don't know/refused" (if these data are reported)
 - The survey sponsor (usually identified with the phrase "survey by X")
 - The organization that conducted the survey
 - The total number of survey participants
 - The beginning and ending dates of the survey (i.e., when the data were collected)
 - The population from which the sample was drawn (e.g., US adults)
 - The interview method (e.g., telephone interview, in-person interview)
 - The database ID number for the survey question (this appears in brackets at the end of each entry, e.g., USYANKCS.091092.R41)
4. Enter this information into the template provided on the course website's Assignments section (in MS Word format).
5. Submit a printed version of your table to receive credit for this exercise. Be sure to include your name and e-mail address on your assignment.
6. All course assignments must be typed or laser-printed. Handwritten assignments *won't* be accepted.

Hint

When searching the Roper iPOLL database, you can use Boolean operators (*and, or, not*) to make your search more precise. You can also use the percent symbol (%) as a “wildcard” character. If you include it, the search engine will find variations that use the word stem you specify. Thus, *superma%* will search for *supermarket* and *superman*. For more help with searching, consult the “Basic Search” section of IPOLL’s *User Guide* page.

ACCESSING THE ROPER CENTER iPOLL DATABASE

Note: These instructions (with URLs) are posted on the “Links” page of the course website. You can also find the database by searching for “Roper” on the UCD Library website in “Electronic Databases A-Z.”

From campus:

1. From campus computers, you can link directly to <http://www.ropercenter.uconn.edu/>
2. When you reach the Roper Center site, click on the iPOLL link. The next screen should be a search form. If you're prompted to enter your UCD e-mail address, do so. (This is to ensure that database users are from campuses that subscribe to the Roper Center.)
3. Now you'll be able to use the database.

From off-campus (using VPN):

1. Log in from the library VPN login page [https://vpn.lib.ucdavis.edu/dana-na/auth/url_default/welcome.cgi] Use your Kerberos (campus) user ID and password.
2. After logging in, select *Electronic Databases A-Z* from the list of Web Bookmarks.
3. Search for "Roper" to locate the *Roper Center for Public Opinion Research* link. Click on that link.
4. You'll be taken to the Roper Center's site. Click on the iPOLL link.
5. The next screen should be a search form. If you're prompted to enter your UCD e-mail address, do so. (This is to ensure that database users are from campuses that subscribe to the Roper Center.)
6. Now you'll be able to use the database.

USING THE ROPER CENTER iPOLL DATABASE

1. On the search page, enter one or more terms or phrases in the “Search for” box. For example: *(democrat% OR republican%) AND (candidate)*
[Note the use of parentheses, the % as a wildcard character, and the terms OR and AND.]
2. Ignore the “Topic” menu.
3. To narrow your search, you can select a specific polling organization from the “Organization” pull-down menu, e.g., Time Magazine or Princeton Survey Research Associates.
4. Enter a date range, if desired.
5. After you’ve double-checked that you’ve correctly completed the form, click Search.
6. The database will display a list of questions that conform to your specifications. (It may span multiple pages.) To view the details for a specific item, click on the magnifying glass icon [“view question details”]. This will reveal the information you’ll need for your homework assignment. You can also check the boxes next to multiple items on the page and then click the *VIEW* icon at the top of the list to view the details for all of them simultaneously. (Warning: If you advance to a new page of search results, the database *won’t* remember your previous checkmarks.)