

ELECTION POLLING: WHOM CAN WE ACTUALLY TRUST?

By Kayla Winters

IBD/TIPP

- TIPP is a national tracking poll for Investors' Business Daily
- Named America's most accurate pollster two elections in a row
- Traditional telephone methodology using Random Digit Dial (RDD) landline and cell phone samples

How The Pollsters Fared					
	Obama/Biden	McCain/Palin	Margin	'08 Rank	'04 Rank
Final popular vote tally	52.9%	45.7%	7.2%	-	-
Daily-tracking polls					
IBD/TIPP Poll	51.5%	44.3%	7.2%	1	1
Bassmussen	52.0%	46.0%	6.0%	4	3
ABC News/Washington Post	53.0%	44.0%	9.0%	5	5
Battleground (Celinda Lake)	51.5%	46.5%	5.0%	6	11
Diageo/Hotline	50.0%	45.0%	5.0%	6	-
Daily Kos/Research 2000	51.0%	46.0%	5.0%	6	-
Gallup (CNN/USAT/Gallup in '04)	55.0%	44.0%	11.0%	7	7
Reuters/Zogby	54.1%	42.7%	11.4%	8	6
Battleground (Torrance/Goeas)	50.2%	48.3%	1.9%	9	4
Non-tracking polls					
Fox News/Opinion Dynamics	50.0%	43.0%	7.0%	2	10
Democracy Corps	51.0%	44.0%	7.0%	2	8
CNN/Opinion Research Corp.	53.0%	46.0%	7.0%	2	-
Ipsos/McClatchy Poll	53.0%	46.0%	7.0%	2	-
NBC/Wall Street Journal	51.0%	43.0%	8.0%	3	5
American Research Group	53.0%	45.0%	8.0%	3	-
Harris Interactive (Online)	52.0%	44.0%	8.0%	3	-
Pew Research Center	52.0%	46.0%	6.0%	4	2
CBS News	51.0%	42.0%	9.0%	5	2
Marist Poll	52.0%	43.0%	9.0%	5	9

Sources: RealClearPolitics.com, PellingReport.com, individual polling organizations

ABOUT THE DATA

- Polling labeled Day 1– October 9th
- Twenty consecutive days of polling
 - October 28th – Day 20
- Effects of Sandy
- Data gives information of likely voters:
 - Males, Females, Race, Ethnicity, Education, Household description, Income, Religion, and the overall percentage of voters who favor Obama or Romney



CALCULATIONS

- Focus on women in favor of Obama

Descriptives			Statistic	Std. Error
Female	Mean		.4990	.00240
	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Lower Bound	.4940	
		Upper Bound	.5040	
	5% Trimmed Mean		.4989	
	Median		.5000	
	Variance		.000	
	Std. Deviation		.01071	
	Minimum		.48	
	Maximum		.52	
	Range		.04	
	Interquartile Range		.02	
	Skewness		-.354	.512
	Kurtosis		.067	.992

$$\Theta = \sqrt{(p(1-p))/n}$$

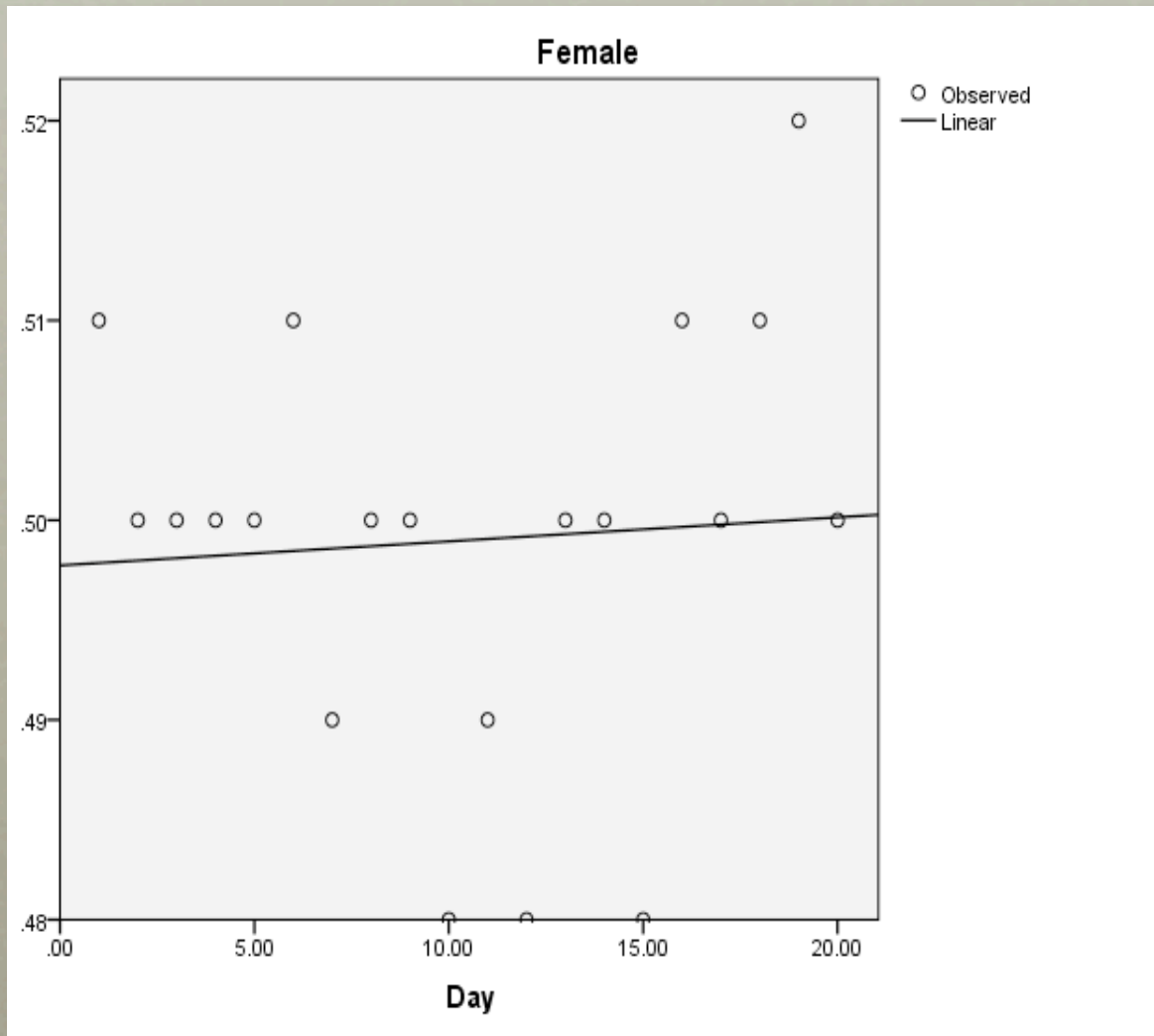
$p = .499$ (average of percentages of females in favor of Obama)

$$1-p = .501$$

$n = 445.378$ (average of total registered voters)

$$\theta \approx .0237$$

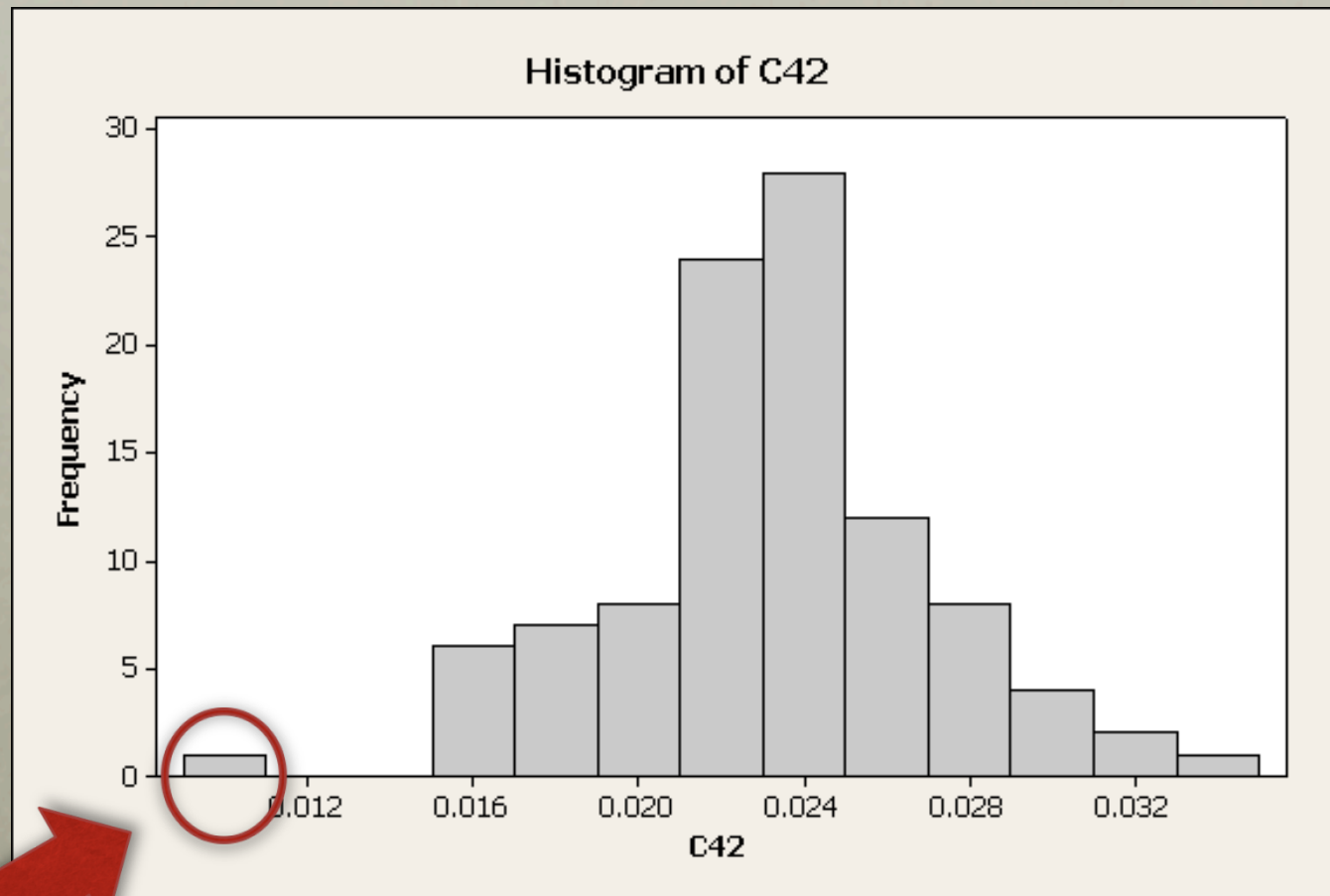
LINEAR REGRESSION



NEXT STEPS

- Problems: Rounding
- One way around this: Simulation
 - 1) Day 1- Day 20 use a binomial distribution to simulate 100 data entries with 450 trials and a probability equal to 0.50
 - 2) Change 100 simulations into percentages
 - 3) Calculate the average standard deviation for all 20 days
- Row 101: The actual data

RESULTS



Actual
Data

CONCLUSIONS

- Looking at the results it seems as though the data was smoothed out
- Data with less variance makes their polling look more accurate
- Other categories such as Education Level has similar results
- Is this why they are named number one polling place?

A CLOSER LOOK

- Misleading descriptions of the data
- Started polling before “Day 1”
 - Each poll was an average of the 5 previous days
- Difference in the final poll

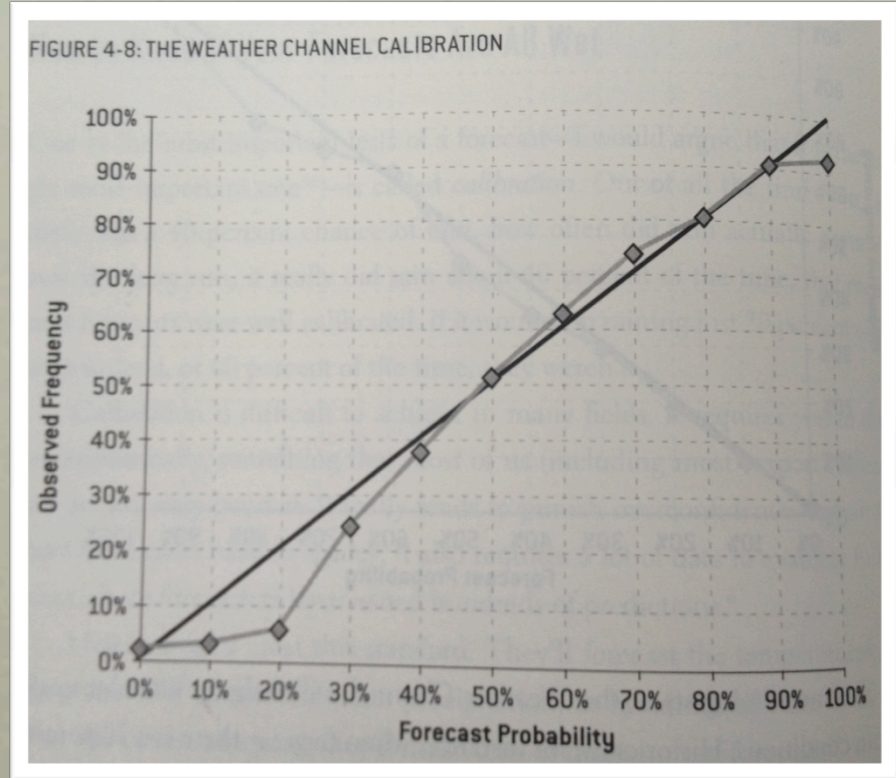
IBD/TIPP Tracking Poll: Day 1

Romney holds a 2-point lead over Obama among likely voters in the first day of our presidential tracking poll. Independents favor Romney over Obama 52%-34%, while men give him a 54% to 38% edge. Romney voters' intensity is up: 70% of his voters now support him strongly, vs. 46% in August.

Source: IBD/TIPP Poll of 824 registered voters (Oct. 2-7) *small sample size, interpret with caution

“JUST WHERE IS THE DIVIDING LINE BETWEEN *PARTLY CLOUDY* AND *MOSTLY CLOUDY*?”

- Weather forecasters:
 - Accuracy
 - Honesty
 - Economic value
- Difference in weather predictions vs. political predictions
- “Wet Bias”
- You pay, we please



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