



**Getting Concrete about the Abstract:
Tips for Writing Successful AAPOR Abstracts**

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OUTLINE for Today's Webinar

- An overview of AAPOR 2018
 - AAPOR Abstract Submission Categories for 2018
 - Abstract Submission Process
 - Important Dates to Remember
- An overview of the AAPOR Abstract Review Process
 - Acceptance rates, review process, abstract scoring
- Thinking about AAPOR Abstracts for those New to AAPOR
- Some Do's and Don'ts for Writing Winning Abstracts
- Why Abstracts get Rejected and What to Do About it!
 - Walking through how you can avoid these common mistakes using a real-life example.

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An Overview of AAPOR 2018

AAPOR 2018:

Taking Survey and Public Opinion Research to New Heights!

- Any topic across public opinion, survey and social science research will be considered;
- This year we specifically seek to showcase how surveys are being reinvented, redefined or reimagined in light of new technologies, big data, increased costs and declining response rates.



An Overview of AAPOR 2018!

- In particular, we also seek to learn from studies:
 - exploring new ways to process survey data (e.g. natural language processing)
 - Collecting new types of data using survey data collection methods;
 - demonstrating how public opinion is being quantified in new ways;
 - using new methods for collecting or gathering public opinion data such as systematic web scraping or passive collection of twitter data;
 - quantifying public opinion about topics that are of great interest and importance to humankind.

An overview of AAPOR 2018!

- Several Categories of Submissions including:
 - Full Panels
 - Papers
 - Methodological Briefs
 - Posters

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 - PORTAL track presentations 
 - PORTAL track Panel 

An overview of AAPOR 2018!

- The PORTAL TRACK:
 - For AAPOR 2018 we will have a mini-conference that will be spliced into the regular AAPOR conference via the PORTAL: Public Opinion Research Training and Learning track.
 - Each Portal track session will be 90 minutes and will feature two 45 minute talks (40 minute + 5 min for Q and A).
 - The sessions are intended to be a tangible way to help AAPOR attendees retool in new and emerging areas of our field at a critical time of transition and to help researchers, students and practitioners alike take their own survey and public opinion research in new directions and to new heights.

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An Overview of AAPOR 2018!

- **Full Panels** are organized sessions that focus on a common theme and include five participants in addition to the panel organizer. **The organizer of the panel should enter up to a 300-word abstract into the system discussing the issues to be addressed and their importance. In addition, the panel organizer must enter an abstract (up to 300-words) FOR EACH proposed panelist.**
- **Papers** involve original research featuring an oral address of 10-14 minutes to an audience. A 300-word abstract is required at submission.
- **Methodological Briefs** are intentionally short (5-7 minutes) oral presentations of original methodological research that highlight significant empirical results with less theoretical elaboration than a full paper. A 300-word abstract is required at submission.




An Overview of AAPOR 2018!

- **Posters** are presentations of original research that rely on visual display (i.e., posters) combined with interactive author-audience discussion. A 300-word abstract is required at submission.
 - **New this year!** Posters will be grouped by tracks and will be housed in separate conference rooms!!

An Overview of AAPOR 2018!

- **PORTAL track presentations** A 300-word abstract should include:
 - an overview of the topic to be covered;
 - highlight examples that will be used to illustrate the method/topic, if appropriate;
 - a very brief list of specific content items that will be covered.
- **PORTAL track Panel** consist of two complementary PORTAL track presentations submitted together. Abstract submissions for a PORTAL track Panel should include a suggested name for the Panel as well as the 300-word abstracts for BOTH of the presentations.

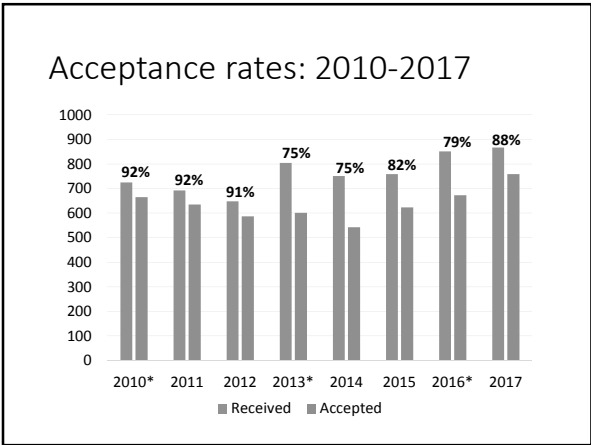
An Overview of AAPOR 2018!

- **New for 2018:** All submitters are asked to identify the single most-relevant/applicable track for their submission.
 - Attitudes & Issues
 - Populations, Polls and Politics
 - Data Quality
 - Data Collection and Survey Participation
 - Innovations & Emerging Methods
 - Multinational, Multigenerational, and Multicultural (3MC)
 - Probability & Nonprobability Samples
 -  Big Data/Data Science and Surveys
 -  Questionnaire Design & Interviewing
 -  Research in Practice

An Overview of AAPOR 2018!

- A few important dates to remember for AAPOR Abstract submissions for the 2018 Conference:
 - Abstracts accepted from **9/11/2017 – 11/9/2017**
 - Abstract review period: 11/9/2017 – 11/23/2017
 - **Acceptance Notification via email: Mid-January, 2018**

An Overview of the AAPOR Abstract Review Process



- ### Overview of the abstract review and selection process
- 1) Abstracts sent to reviewers
 - 2) Reviewers evaluate abstracts
 - 3) Metrics calculated
 - 4) Program Team assesses, sorts, compiles

1) Abstracts sent to reviewers

- Who they are



- What they do
 - Receive 10-20 abstracts
 - Have about 2 weeks to review
 - Assignment based on match between reviewer's areas of expertise and abstract keywords

2) Reviewers evaluate abstracts

- Rate on scale from 0-10

0-2 3-4 5 6-7 8-10
Unacceptable Belowaverage Average Above average Outstanding

- Make overall recommendation
 - *Accept*
 - *Accept if space permits*
 - *Reject*
- Provide comments to the Program Team

3) Metrics calculated

- Each abstract evaluated by 3 reviewers
- Program Team provided with
 - Average score and normalized scores
 - Min and max scores
 - Individual reviewer's ratings, recommendation, and comments
- Comments are incredibly helpful

4) Program Team assess, sorts, compiles



- Average score cut-off for papers, briefs, and posters
- Posters and briefs reviewed separately
- Abstracts for papers grouped by
 - Tracks
 - Research Area
 - Key Words

- Reasons abstracts get rejected
 - Say unwilling to present as poster
 - Can't find 3-4 other papers to build a session around

Thinking about AAPOR Abstracts for Those who are New AAPOR

What to present?

- Present work done at school
 - Thesis
 - Dissertation chapter
 - Class paper
 - An idea you haven't thoroughly explore
- Present work done at work
 - Proactively communicate with your clients and/or colleagues
 - Set expectations and ask for permission
 - Go through internal review

Work with others

- Very few AAPOR presentations have only one author
- Create and maintain a network of researchers
 - Professor, classmates, coworkers, AAPOR attendees, other conference attendees
 - Actively reach out to others
- Run your ideas by someone else
- Proofread

Don't know what's good?

- Look at the past AAPOR abstracts
- <https://www.aapor.org/Conference-Events/Recent-Conferences.aspx>
 - Program and abstracts since 2010
 - Program, abstracts and proceedings since 2011
 - Program, abstracts, proceedings and presentations since 2017
- Look for the trends and see what topics have been presented frequently in recent years
- Look up by key words and search for abstracts that match your research interests
- Look for types of presentations (full paper, brief, post, etc.) and decide which one fits you well
- Look for people that you can potentially collaborate with

Some Do's and Don'ts for Writing Winning AAPOR Abstracts

Do's and Don'ts for Your Abstract

- 30 years of AAPOR conference abstract writing and numerous stints as a reviewer have left me with a few simple (and mostly common-sense) rules about what to DO and DON'T DO
- 300 words is really short, so use your words wisely. Write long and then edit down
- Think about the reviewer who is reading 10-20 of these. This abstract is all they have to go on

Do's

- Articulate how and why your project is interesting. Properly motivate it with respect to the audience.
- Tie it to an existing debate or body of research
- Describe what you did and what you found, even if results are preliminary
- If you haven't done the research yet, make it clear that your approach will yield valuable information, regardless of the results

Do's

- Make sure you cover...
 - The motivation for the research
 - What domain it addresses (e.g., survey methods, public opinion, social media)
 - The methodology employed
 - The findings
 - The implications
- If methodology is new or arcane, spend a little more time explaining. If not, you can shorthand
- Come up with a good title!

Don'ts

- Don't provide a detailed literature review. Just provide enough grounding in existing research to situate your work. A few citations can be good, but don't go overboard
- Don't give methodological detail that's not critical to evaluating the research, especially for studies with standard methods that reviewers will readily understand (e.g., don't explain what an RDD survey is)

How much does a promise of a \$5 Gift Card Buy for a Web Survey of College Students? Probably more than you think. (Cantor, 2017 conference)

One of the most common results in the survey methods literature is that small pre-paid incentives are more effective than promised incentives (e.g., Dillman, et al., 2009). For example, a recent meta-analysis found that a \$2 pre-paid incentive raised the response rate by about as much as a \$30 promised incentive for a telephone interview (Mercer, et al, 2015). However, many surveys are not in a position to provide a pre-paid incentive to everyone in the sample (e.g. web surveys using e-mail addresses). Even RDD telephone surveys are generally unable to do so because of problems with matching addresses to phone numbers. Much of the research on promised incentives are with general population samples using 'traditional' modes of interviewing such as mail, telephone or in-person. There is not as much research on new technologies, such as web surveys, where issues such as dropout rates and item missing data are prominent. This paper presents results of an experiment which tested the use of a promised \$5 gift card on a web survey of college students. Students were told they would receive a \$5 card once they completed the survey. The incentive significantly increased the response rate by 9 percentage points, from 16% to 25%. There was some indication that the incentive had a small, but significant, effect on the types of people who responded to the survey. Perhaps more dramatically, those who were offered the incentive were about 2.5 times more likely to complete the entire survey and were much more likely to complete some of the more sensitive parts of the survey. The results emphasize that 'one size fits all' for incentives is not appropriate. The population and mode of interview should be considered when weighing the costs and benefits of different types of incentives.

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Great title

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Situate research in the literature

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What’s new here?

“Much of the research on promised incentives are with general population samples using ‘traditional’ modes of interviewing such as mail, telephone or in-person. **There is not as much research on new technologies, such as web surveys, where issues such as dropout rates and item missing data are prominent.** This paper presents results of an experiment which tested the use of a promised \$5 gift card on a web survey of college students. Students were told they would receive a \$5 card once they completed the survey.”

What did you find? What’s the implication?

“The incentive significantly increased the response rate by 9 percentage points, from 16% to 25%. There was some indication that the incentive had a small, but significant, effect on the types of people who responded to the survey. **Perhaps more dramatically, those who were offered the incentive were about 2.5 times more likely to complete the entire survey and were much more likely to complete some of the more sensitive parts of the survey.** The results emphasize that ‘one size fits all’ for incentives is not appropriate.”

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Predicting 2016 State Election Results with a National Tracking Poll and MRP (de Jonge and Langer, 2017 conference)

This paper presents state-level estimates of the 2016 presidential election using data from the ABC News/Washington Post tracking poll, which included over 7,000 likely voters interviewed during the 19 days preceding the 2016 election. To do so, the analysis employed multilevel regression with poststratification (MRP) to estimate who was likely to vote and for whom, using basic demographic variables at the individual level (gender, age, education and race) and a few state-level variables (past party vote shares and shares of each state that are black, Hispanic and evangelical white Protestants). For poststratification, the analysis used the most recent 5-year ACS estimates (2010-2014). The paper presents not only the state-level turnout and vote choice estimates from this approach, but also a variety of subgroup-level estimates, and discusses the implications for understanding the contours of the election. Overall, the MRP estimates proved highly accurate in predicting the winner in each state (missing just one) and was more precise in estimating the national popular vote than many published results. We find similar results using ABC or ABC/Post pre-election tracking data from 2004, 2008 and 2012 alike. While far from perfect in estimating the exact popular vote shares and margins in each state, the MRP approach provided a much more accurate representation of the election outcome than prevailing polling averages and forecasts. The paper concludes by discussing how pollsters and others – to the extent they are focused on predicting election outcomes – could make use of MRP as an alternative approach to weighting and likely voter modeling.

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Provide more methodological detail if the study is complex

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Why AAPOR Abstracts get Rejected and What to Do About it!

4 main reasons reviewers reject

1) Impetus for research is unclear

- "This abstract lacks a specific research question."
- "Lacks theoretical grounding."
- "I would like the authors to tell how this relates to the broader field."
- "The research question was not clearly stipulated."

4 main reasons reviewers reject

2) Methodology unclear

- "Lacks specifics on what was done."
- "Not clear from the abstract how the author will be studying this. That is a real weakness."
- "Unclear methodology and quality of study."
- "Very little information is provided about the study itself."
- "Not clear how the authors measure or operationalize concepts such as 'social capital' or 'religiosity'."

4 main reasons reviewers reject

3) Takeaways aren't obvious

- "Not clear statement of problem or approach to solving it. Could be informative but hard to assess."
- "I had to read this abstract several times to figure out the focus of what one could learn from hearing this talk."
- "I wanted to like this because it is a classic, old-school AAPOR study in the political science vein. But this abstract doesn't promise any insights into either political science or polling."

4 main reasons reviewers reject

4) Lack of fit for conference

- “I don’t know that this will have wide appeal among AAPOR conference attendees. I don’t know that this is a fit with AAPOR.”
- “Not sure if appropriate for this conference.”
- “I’m not sure if conference attendees would be interested in this particular kind of survey.”
- “Not incredibly novel nor relevant to survey research.”

Effects of ACASI Voice Choice and Voice Persona on Reports to Questions About Sensitive Behaviors Among Young Adults (DiLoreto, Dykema, Jaques, and Assad, 2015 Conference)

Audio computer-assisted self-interviewing (ACASI) – in which respondents answer pre-recorded questions during an in-person interview – is the preferred method for administering sensitive questions in face-to-face interviews because it often yields higher reports of sensitive behaviors (Tourangeau and Smith 1996; Turner, Ku, et al. 1998). In addition, the inclusion of audio may overcome barriers to reading among respondents’ with low literacy levels. However, research raises doubts about whether respondents actually use the audio and whether the inclusion of audio has any effect on survey responses. In order to increase the likelihood that respondents would refrain from turning the audio off, we implemented an experiment in which respondents were randomly assigned to hear one of three types of prerecorded voices versus being presented with the option of selecting from among the three voices. Voices were selected to represent different personas, including an empathetic-sounding voice, a professional-sounding voice, and a synthetic (text-to-speech) voice. We hypothesized that providing respondents with the choice of voice would mitigate the tedium of listening to the audio and emphasize the importance of the audio component. We examine the effects of voice choice and the type of voice listened to on levels of reporting about sensitive behaviors, item nonresponse, and the proportion of audio listened to. We also examine the effect of literacy on respondents’ propensity to turn the audio off. Data are from the California Youth Transitions to Adulthood Study in which 727 foster care youth (aged 17 in 2013) participated in an in-person interview about their experiences while wards of the state (RR=95.3%). Questions asked about a variety of sensitive topics including delinquency, violence, and sexual behaviors. Our analysis adds to the small body of research on voice effects in surveys using ACASI, with important findings on measuring sensitive behaviors, particularly among young adults.

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Anchor current research into past research:

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Gap in past research current research addresses:

“However, research raises doubts about whether respondents actually use the audio and whether the inclusion of audio has any effect on survey responses. In order to increase the likelihood that respondents would refrain from turning the audio off, we implemented an experiment in which respondents were randomly assigned to hear one of three types of prerecorded voices versus being presented with the option of selecting from among the three voices.”

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More description of experimental design and hypothesis:

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Description of outcomes to be examined:

“We examine the effects of voice choice and the type of voice listened to on levels of reporting about sensitive behaviors, item nonresponse, and the proportion of audio listened to. We also examine the effect of literacy on respondents’ propensity to turn the audio off.”

Full description of the data source:

“We also examine the effect of literacy on respondents’ propensity to turn the audio off. Data are from the California Youth Transitions to Adulthood Study in which 727 foster care youth (aged 17 in 2013) participated in an in-person interview about their experiences while wards of the state (RR=95.3%). “

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audience will find difficult to synthesize voice levels listened to. We also examine respondents’ propensity to turn the audio off. Data are from the California Youth Transitions to Adulthood Study in which 727 foster care youth (aged 17 in 2013) participated in an in-person interview about their experiences while wards of the state (RR=95.3%). Questions asked about a variety of sensitive topics including delinquency, violence, and sexual behaviors. Our analysis adds to the small body of research on voice effects in surveys using ACASI, with important findings on measuring sensitive behaviors, particularly among young adults.

Clear statement of what audience will learn by attending presentation:

“Our analysis adds to the small body of research on voice effects in surveys using ACASI, with important findings on measuring sensitive behaviors, particularly among young adults.”

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Final Do’s and Don’ts

Don’t forget that the AAPOR Abstract Submission Deadline is Nov. 11, 2017.

Do: Submit an Abstract Today!
