

The American Trends Panel Survey Methodology

The American Trends Panel (ATP), created by the Pew Research Center, is a nationally representative panel of randomly selected U.S. adults living in households. Respondents who self-identify as internet users and who provided an email address participate in the panel via monthly self-administered Web surveys, and those who do not use the internet or decline to provide an email address participate via the mail. The panel is being managed by Abt SRBI.

Data in this report are drawn from the early respondents to the January 2016 wave of the panel, which began fieldwork on January 12, 2016. The 3,760 respondents consist of 3,661 Web panelists who had completed the survey by January 27 and 99 mail panelists whose responses had been received by January 22. Panelists who have access to the internet but take surveys by mail were not sampled in this wave (i.e. mail respondents to this wave are all non-Internet users). The margin of sampling error for the full sample of 3,760 respondents is plus or minus 2.3 percentage points.

Members of the American Trends Panel were recruited from two large, national landline and cellphone random digit dial (RDD) surveys conducted in English and Spanish. At the end of each survey, respondents were invited to join the panel. The first group of panelists was recruited from the 2014 Political Polarization and Typology Survey, conducted January 23rd to March 16th, 2014. Of the 10,013 adults interviewed, 9,809 were invited to take part in the panel and a total of 5,338 agreed to participate.¹ The second group of panelists was recruited from the 2015 Survey on Government, conducted August 27th to October 4th, 2015. Of the 6,004 adults interviewed, all were invited to join the panel, and 2,976 agreed to participate.²

Participating panelists provided either a mailing address or an email address to which a welcome packet, a monetary incentive and future survey invitations could be sent. Panelists also receive a small monetary incentive after participating in each wave of the survey.

The ATP data were weighted in a multi-step process that begins with a base weight incorporating the respondents' original survey selection probability and the fact that in 2014 some panelists were subsampled for invitation to the panel. Next, an adjustment was made for the fact that the propensity to join the panel and remain an active panelist varied across different groups in the sample. The final step in the weighting uses an iterative technique that

¹ When data collection for the 2014 Political Polarization and Typology Survey began, non-internet users were subsampled at a rate of 25%, but a decision was made shortly thereafter to invite all non-internet users to join. In total, 83% of non-internet users were invited to join the panel.

² Respondents to the 2014 Political Polarization and Typology Survey who indicated that they are internet users but refused to provide an email address were initially permitted to participate in the American Trends Panel by mail, but were no longer permitted to join the panel after February 6, 2014. Internet users from the 2015 Survey on Government who refused to provide an email address were not permitted to join the panel.

matches gender, age, education, race, Hispanic origin and region to parameters from the U.S. Census Bureau's 2014 American Community Survey. Population density is weighted to match the 2010 U.S. Decennial Census. Telephone service is weighted to estimates of telephone coverage for 2016 that were projected from the January-June 2015 National Health Interview Survey. It also adjusts for party affiliation using an average of the three most recent Pew Research Center general public telephone surveys, and for internet use using as a parameter a measure from the 2015 Survey on Government. Sampling errors and statistical tests of significance take into account the effect of weighting. Interviews are conducted in both English and Spanish, but the Hispanic sample in the American Trends Panel is predominantly native born and English speaking.

The following table shows the unweighted sample sizes and the error attributable to sampling that would be expected at the 95% level of confidence for different groups in the survey:

Group	Unweighted sample size	Plus or minus ...
Total sample	3,760	2.3%
Republican Debate Viewers	702	5.3%
Democratic Debate Viewers	808	4.9%

Sample sizes and sampling errors for other subgroups are available upon request.

In addition to sampling error, one should bear in mind that question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of opinion polls.

The Web component of the January 2016 wave had a response rate of 58.1% (3,661 responses among 6,301 Web-based individuals in the panel); the mail component had a response rate of 20.9% (99 responses among 474 non-Internet users in the panel). Taking account of the combined, weighted response rate for the recruitment surveys (10.0%) and attrition from panel members who were removed at their request or for inactivity, the cumulative response rate for the January 2016 ATP wave is 2.5%³.

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³ Approximately once per year, panelists who have not participated in multiple consecutive waves are removed from the panel. These cases are counted in the denominator of cumulative response rates.

**PEW RESEARCH CENTER
AMERICAN TRENDS PANEL WAVE 14 EARLY RELEASE
TOPLINE
JANUARY 12-27, 2016
N=3,760**

ASK ALL:

PRIMDEB Did you happen to watch any of the presidential debates for the Republican and Democratic presidential nominations?

Jan 12-27
2016

37	Yes, have watched more than one debate
17	Yes, watched one of the debates
45	No, have not watched any of the debates
1	No answer

ASK IF WATCHED ONE DEBATE (PRIMDEB=2) [N=607]:

DEBBOTH1 Did you watch a debate for the Republican or Democratic candidates?

Jan 12-27
2016

55	Debate for the Republican party's candidate
42	Debate for the Democratic party's candidate
3	No answer

ASK IF WATCHED MORE THAN ONE DEBATE (PRIMDEB=1) [N=1,727]:

DEBBOTH2 Did you watch debates for both the Republican and Democratic candidates, or just one of the parties?

Jan 12-27
2016

76	Debates for both party's candidates
21	Debates for the Republican party's candidate
3	Debates for the Democratic party's candidate
*	No answer