



I. Survey Methodology

The Elon University Poll is conducted using a stratified random sample of households with telephones and wireless telephone numbers in the population of interest – in this case, citizens in North Carolina. The sample of telephone numbers for the survey is obtained from Survey Sampling International, LLC.

Selection of Households

To equalize the probability of telephone selection, sample telephone numbers are systematically stratified according to subpopulation strata (e.g., a zip code, a county, a state, etc.), which yields a sample from telephone exchanges in proportion to each exchange's share of telephone households in the population of interest. Estimates of telephone households in the population of interest are generally obtained from several databases. Samples of household telephone numbers are distributed across all eligible blocks of numbers in proportion to the density of listed households assigned in the population of interest according to a specified subpopulation stratum. Upon determining the projected (or preferred) sample size, a sampling interval is calculated by summing the number of listed residential numbers in each eligible block within the population of interest and dividing that sum by the number of sampling points assigned to the population. From a random start between zero and the sampling interval, blocks are systematically selected in proportion to the density of listed household "working blocks." A *block* (also known as a *bank*) is a set of contiguous numbers identified by the first two digits of the last four digits of a telephone number. A working block contains three or more working telephone numbers. Exchanges are assigned to a population on the basis of all eligible blocks in proportion to the density of working telephone households. Once each population's proportion of telephone households is determined, then a sampling interval, based on that proportion, is calculated and specific exchanges and numbers are randomly selected. The methodology for the wireless component of this study starts with the determining which area code-exchange combinations in North Carolina are included in the wireless or shared Telcordia types. Similar to the process for selecting household telephone numbers, wireless numbers involve a multi-step process in which blocks of numbers are determined for each area code-exchange combination in the Telcordia types. From a random start within the first sampling interval, a systematic n th selection of each block of numbers is performed and a two-digit random number between 00 and 99 is appended to each selected n th block stem. The intent is to provide a stratification that will yield a sample that is representative both geographically and by large and small carrier. From these, a random sample is generated. Because exchanges and numbers are randomly selected by the computer, unlisted as well as listed household telephone numbers are included in the sample. Thus, the sample of telephone numbers generated for the population of interest constitutes a random sample of telephone households and wireless numbers of the population.

Procedures Used for Conducting the Poll

The survey was conducted Monday, October 27th, through Thursday, October 30th, of 2008. During this time calls were made from 5:00 pm to 9:00 pm EST. The Elon University Poll uses CATI system software (Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing) in the administration of surveys. For each working telephone number in the sample, several attempts were made to reach each number. Only individuals 18 years or older were interviewed; those reached at business or work numbers were not interviewed. For each number reached, one adult is generally selected based on whether s/he is the oldest or youngest adult. Interviews, which are conducted by live interviewers, are completed with adults from the target population as specified. Interviews for this survey were completed with 797 adults from North Carolina. For a sample size of 797, there is a 95 percent probability that our survey results are within plus or minus 3.5 percentage points (the margin of sampling error) of the actual population distribution for any given question. For sub-samples (a subgroup selected from the overall sample), the margin of error is higher depending on the size of the subsample. When we use a subsample, we identify these results as being from a subsample and provide the total number of respondents and margin of error for that subsample. In reporting our results, we note any use of a subsample where applicable. Because our surveys are based on probability sampling, there are a variety of factors that prevent these results from being perfect, complete depictions of the population; the foremost example is that of margin of sampling error (as noted above). With all probability samples, there are theoretical and practical difficulties estimating population characteristics (or parameters). Thus, while efforts are made to reduce or lessen such threats, sampling error as well as other sources of error – while not all inclusive, examples of other error effects are non-response rates, question order effects, question wording effects, etc. – are present in surveys derived from probability samples.

Questions and Question Order

The Elon University Poll provides the questions as worded and the order in which these questions are administered (to respondents). Conspicuous in reviewing some questions is the “bracketed” information. Information contained within brackets ([]) denotes response options as provided in the question; this bracketed information is rotated per question to ensure that respondents do not receive a set order of response options presented to them, which also maintains question construction integrity by avoiding respondent acquiescence based on question composition. Some questions used a probe maneuver to determine a respondent’s intensity of perspective. Probe techniques used in this questionnaire mainly consist of asking a respondent if their response is more intense than initially provided. For example, upon indicating whether s/he is satisfied or dissatisfied, we asked the respondent “would you say you are very ‘satisfied’/’dissatisfied’?”. This technique is employed in some questions as opposed to specifying the full range of choices in the question. Though specifying the full range of options in questions is a commonly accepted practice in survey research, we sometimes prefer that the respondent determine whether their perspective is stronger or more intense for which the probe technique used. Another method for acquiring information from respondents is to ask an “open-ended” question. The open-ended question is a question for which no response options are provided, i.e., it is entirely up to the respondent to provide the response information.

The Elon University Poll

The Elon University Poll is conducted under the auspices of the Center for Public Opinion Polling (Hunter Bacot, Director & Mileah Kromer, Assistant Director), which is a constituent part of the Institute for Politics

and Public Affairs (George Taylor, Director); both these organizations are housed in the department of political science at Elon University. These academic units are part of Elon College, the College of Arts and Sciences at Elon University, which is under the direction of Dr. Steven House (Dean). The Elon University administration, led by Dr. Leo Lambert, President of the university, fully support the Elon University Poll as part of its service commitment to state, regional, and national constituents. Dr. Hunter Bacot, a professor in the department of political science, directs the Elon University Poll. Elon University students administer the survey as part of the University's commitment to experiential learning where "students learn through doing."

II. Survey Instrument and Percent Distributions by Question

Interviews were completed with 797 adults from households in the North Carolina. For a sample size of 797, there is a 95 percent probability that our survey results are within plus or minus 3.5 percent (the margin of sampling error) of the actual population distribution for any given question. Data are weighted to reflect the adult population in terms of gender.

About the Codes appearing in Questions and Responses	
Response Options not offered	Response options are <u>not</u> offered to the person taking the survey (respondent), but are included in the question and these options are rotated at random (and usually denoted by brackets, []). Response options are generally offered only for demographic questions (background characteristic, e.g., age, education, income, etc.).
(v) = volunteered response	Respondents volunteer response option. As response options are <u>not</u> offered to those taking the survey, some respondents offer or volunteer response options. Though not all volunteered options can be anticipated, the more common options are included and noted.
(p) = probed response	Respondents self-place in this option or category. A probe maneuver is used in questions to allow the respondent to indicate whether her/his response is more intense than initially provided for in the choices appearing in the question. For example, on probe questions the interviewer, upon a respondent indicating that she/he is satisfied (or dissatisfied), is instructed to ask him/her "Would you say you are "very satisfied"?"

Where have you gotten information about this year's elections, or have you not given it much thought? (open ended; multiple responses permitted)

Information Source	Percent
Local Television News	53.1
Local Newspapers	37.6
Internet	37.4
Cable Television News	36.2
National Network Television News	28.7
National Cable Political Shows	21.2
National Newspapers	20.6
Local Radio Stations	15.9
Television Commercials	9.3
Family, Friends, and Neighbors	7.3
Candidate Mailings	4.5
Coworkers	3.7
Community Associations (Cmty. Center, Church, etc.)	2.7
C-SPAN Shows	1.9
Local Government (Library, Board of Elections, etc.)	1.6
Other (e.g., candidates, rallies, debates, candidate's book)	7.3
Have Not Given It Much Thought	2.0
Don't Know	0.9
Total (797, +/- 3.5)	

Note: Respondents were allowed to identify multiple sources of information, so percentages do not total to 100%.

How do you feel about the information you received during this campaign about the Presidential candidates and the issues . . . Do you feel you [did not get enough information to make an informed choice, OR that you got enough information to make an informed choice]?

	Percent
DID NOT GET ENOUGH INFORMATION TO MAKE INFORMED CHOICE	16.4
GOT ENOUGH INFORMATION TO MAKE INFORMED CHOICE	79.2
SUCH INFORMATION IS NOT USEFUL (v)	2.8
DON'T KNOW (v)	1.6
Total (797, +/- 3.5)	100.0

Were campaign commercials [not at all helpful, not too helpful, fairly helpful, or very helpful] for you in deciding which candidate to vote for?

	Percent
NOT AT ALL HELPFUL	42.8
NOT TOO HELPFUL	26.9
FAIRLY HELPFUL	19.2
VERY HELPFUL	8.4
DON'T KNOW (v)	2.4
REFUSED (v)	0.3
Total (797, +/- 3.5)	100.0

Now, changing topics to political advertising . . .

Using [negative, neutral, or positive] as your choices, what is your overall impression of the . . . [insert campaign] (probe)

Campaign	Extremely Negative (p)	Negative	Neutral	Positive	Extremely Positive (p)	Have Not Paid Attention (v)	Don't Know (v)
Obama/Biden Presidential Campaign	12.4	17.5	24.7	26.6	16.7	0.1	2.0
McCain/Palin Presidential Campaign	22.6	27.7	21.8	19.3	6.9	0.3	1.4
Hagan Senate Campaign	15.2	22.6	31.8	17.3	2.4	2.8	7.8
Dole Senate Campaign	18.2	30.1	27.4	14.3	2.8	2.3	4.9
McCrory Campaign for Governor	3.8	17.3	37.9	21.6	6.1	3.3	9.9
Perdue Campaign for Governor	6.4	23.6	35.9	19.2	4.2	2.8	7.9

Total 797, +/- 3.5

Now, thinking about the tone of the campaigns run by the major party candidates this year, which - if any - do you think have been too negative or nasty? (open ended)

	Percent
PRESIDENT -- DEMOCRATS -- OBAMA-BIDEN	8.3
PRESIDENT -- REPUBLICANS -- MCCAIN-PALIN	24.8
US SENATE -- REPUBLICAN -- DOLE	5.0
US SENATE -- DEMOCRAT -- HAGAN	4.0
NC GOVERNOR -- REPUBLICAN -- MCCRORY	0.5
NC GOVERNOR -- DEMOCRAT -- PERDUE	1.6
NAMED ALL DEMOCRATS	6.8
NAMED ALL REPUBLICANS	11.7
NAMED ALL CAMPAIGNS AS NEGATIVE OR NASTY (v)	21.1
NAMED ANOTHER CAMPAIGN	1.2
DON'T KNOW	14.5
REFUSED	0.5
Total (797, +/- 3.5)	100.0

During this campaign, would you say you paid [no attention at all, not much attention, some attention, or a lot of attention] to political or campaign advertisements?

	Percent
NO ATTENTION AT ALL	10.8
NOT MUCH ATTENTION	24.4
SOME ATTENTION	35.7
A LOT OF ATTENTION	28.6
DON'T KNOW (v)	0.5
Total (797, +/- 3.5)	100.0

In general, do you think the overall tone of the television campaign ads in North Carolina have been [positive or negative]? (probe)

	Percent
VERY NEGATIVE (p)	23.8
NEGATIVE	45.1
POSITIVE	13.4
VERY POSITIVE (p)	2.5
NEITHER (v)	9.5
DON'T KNOW (v)	5.6
REFUSED (v)	0.1
Total (797, +/- 3.5)	100.0

During this election campaign have you watched any television campaign ads that you thought were negative?

	Percent
NO	7.8
YES	90.3
DON'T KNOW (v)	1.9
REFUSED (v)	0.1
Total (797, +/- 3.5)	100.0

Respondents answering “yes” and “don’t know” answered next questions; respondents answering “no” or “refused” skip these next two questions.

Were these ads [very effective, somewhat effective, or not at all effective] in influencing your decision on who to support?

	Percent
NOT AT ALL EFFECTIVE	64.0
SOMEWHAT EFFECTIVE	20.6
VERY EFFECTIVE	12.0
NEITHER (v)	1.8
DON'T KNOW (v)	1.7
Total (734, +/- 3.7)	100.0

More specifically, which candidate do you feel has run the most negative advertisements on television? (open ended)

	Percent
OBAMA OR BIDEN -- PRESIDENT -- DEMOCRATS	16.8
MCCAIN OR PALIN -- PRESIDENT -- REPUBLICANS	36.3
DOLE -- US SENATE -- REPUBLICAN	13.2
HAGAN -- US SENATE -- DEMOCRAT	12.0
MCCRORY -- NC GOVERNOR -- REPUBLICAN	1.5
PERDUE -- NC GOVERNOR -- DEMOCRAT	3.9
ALL ADS WERE TOO NEGATIVE	7.1
NAMED ANOTHER CANDIDATE/RACE	1.0
DON'T KNOW	8.2
REFUSED	0.2
Total (734, +/- 3.7)	100.0

Note: Respondents could identify the candidate and/or the party and/or the race.

Compared to past presidential elections, would you say that overall there was [more or less] mud-slinging or negative campaigning in this campaign?

	Percent
LESS MUD-SLINGING OR NEGATIVE CAMPAIGNING	11.8
ABOUT THE SAME (v)	25.2
MORE MUD-SLINGING OR NEGATIVE CAMPAIGNING	59.4
HAVEN T PAID MUCH ATTENTION TO THE ELECTION (v)	0.2
DON'T KNOW (v)	3.3
Total (797, +/- 3.5)	100.0