

Polygraph research

[Sociology](#), [Communication](#)



Christopher Langford Writing II T-Th 930-1045 Writing Assignment 2

Polygraph I began my research thinking I wanted to find out where we were today in our advancement of the lie detector machine and its accuracy.

There was a time it was heard of often and considered quite controversial in its legitimacy. My research took me on a different journey than I had expected. A journey discovering that the Polygraph Machine is not only just as controversial today as ever, but also that there appears to be behind the controversy then simply its technology. The Polygraph Machine was traditionally known for its use in lie detection within law enforcement.

So I began my search in the Criminal Justice data base of our school library. I came across an interesting article, “ The Truth Surrounding Lie Detection Technology”, written by Rebecca Kanable, a freelance writer specializing in law enforcement topics for the periodical Law Enforcement Technology. Her article, although informative of the details in how the polygraph machine works, what it detects physiologically, and why it might be considered inaccurate, revealed to me there may be more behind the controversial system than simply its technology.

She would reference an important sounding entity called the APA (American Polygraph Association), explaining the APA founding, their development, and purpose. After discussing the APA and its extensive research and technology, another official sounding entity was introduced, the NAS (National Academy of Sciences). The NAS reported that contrary to the APA’s pride in their more than 80% accuracy in detecting deception, a majority of the research was unreliable, unscientific, and biased.

The APA responded that the NAS findings were confined to a review of the research on polygraph testing in particular, and how it relates to personnel screening. The APA said the NAS relied on 57 of more than 1000 research studies available. The NAS in turn responded that a century of research in psychology and physiology provided little basis for expecting the polygraph test could have extremely high accuracy because the physiological responses are not uniquely related to deception only. At this point a third entity was introduced, the NACVSA (National Association of Computer Voice Stress Analysis), who also bashed the APA as a flawed method and flawed technology. They would tout how they were supported in agreement by the NITV (National Institute for Truth Verification), yet another official sounding entity. This back and forth seemed a bit odd, as though one or the other had an agenda. That is what redirected my research into whom these entities were, and who was considered more reliable for the truth about lie detection. First stop was the APA web site (APA.org).

I discovered it was a profit driven business selling technology, instruments, research, and advanced training and education programs, as well as advertising their APA magazine. Their primary customers were law enforcement, the legal community, and private sector security screening. It certainly was official, but only in the business sense. Ironically, in my search for the APA web site, it was paired with Antipolygraph.org web site. A location for message board discussions against the polygraph, most of which was specifically directed at the APA. I then moved on to the first entity contradicting the APA in Kanable's article, the NAS.

NASonline.org had nothing to sell, but rather a non profit society established by an act of congress signed by Abraham Lincoln in 1863 and extended by President Woodrow Wilson charged with the mission of providing independent objective advice to the nation on matters related to science and technology. It definitely carried some weight in legitimacy, but to be sure it was not a bias source about this topic, I search its site database for this particular topic, and although it spoke about the technology of the polygraph, it made no specific mention of the APA itself.

I was unable to do the same of the APA site as you had to be a paying member to access their database. I felt the NAS response to the APA research was legitimate coinciding with their purpose. What about the NACVSA? It turns out they are a direct competitor of the APA. Upon arriving at the CVSA1.com web site, it was immediately obvious in their solicitation of CVSA software and training. Also solicited were funding assistance through grants from both Walmart and Target to purchase the technology. They tried to hide behind government looking signs and symbols to appear more “official”.

They covered the bases offering insight of cases solved by their technology, who was using their technology, and the history of their technology. They would repeatedly indicate their direct support from the National Institute for Truth Verification. Of course this institute must be official and have a web site. A Google turned up nothing for the NITV, and any mention of them would link you to the CVSA1.com web site. An attempt at Wikipedia also only had them listed as a vendor and tied to the NACVSA.

Returning to the CVSA1 website for further investigation, I noticed in small print in the corner the following, “ the NITV is the manufacturer and sole source for the Computer Voice Stress Analyzer”. That certainly did explain their avid support of the CVSA technology. One last scroll through all the sites having mention of the NITV, I noticed a Government site with their mention. Eforia. bis. doc. gov. was a public posting of government documents from the department of commerce. It displayed 11 charges against the NITV of illegal exportation as a private business. So much for that.

Realizing I only had information from either the biased private businesses of technology, or the seemingly unbiased sources of government documents and a science society founded by congress, I now wanted to find others with something to say about the polygraph. I went back to the school library database with a refinement for only magazines and newspapers. First was a eye catching title of an article in the Atlantic Monthly by Alan Berlow called “ The Wrong Man”. I gave accounts of cases leading to the conviction and eventual carrying out of death sentences of what would turn out to be discovered as wrongful conviction down the road.

The tie with the polygraph came in that the results of the polygraphs, although not admissible in court, did find in agreement with what resulted in their convictions, even in contradiction of there being no physical evidence. This article revealed why the DA in one of those cases was so adamant in ignoring the lack of evidence for guilt and continuing till a conviction. He had knowledge of, and was influenced by, the non admissible results of the polygraph. The Wall Street Journal offered opposite perspectives on the

polygraph. In 2003, an Article by Sharon Begley called “ Inertia, Hope, Morality, score TKO’s in Bouts with “ Solid Science”.

The dispute with the polygraph was no different then others but with her particular method and terminology of expression. The second Wall Street Journal article, “ For The Polygraph Paradox; Lie Detectors Aren’t Perfect; But convicted Sex Offenders Concede, They May Be Good Enough”, by Laurie P. Cohen. Although alluding to a positive use for the polygraph in spite of its controversy, I doubted the weight of this perspective as the only source of data was that of those who were convicted. It has no opposite data of those who were not convicted.

I didn’t take either article as being to far out of bounds as the Wall Street Journal is widely known as quite reputable, whether you agree with a particular article or not. So I then narrowed my search to the immediate locality, and took an article from the Telegram & Gazette. It was a General interest periodical in 1989 with no specific author. It was merely stating a factual outcome of the Massachusetts Supreme Court having ruled the polygraph test as inadmissible in this state. My research into the polygraph, although somewhat informative about its accuracy, was far more revealing about the source of opinions about the polygraph.

My research resulted in verification of exactly what the assignment intended. The need to investigate and verify the legitimacy of expressed information before accepting it as factual evidence of what you are researching. Annotated Bibliography Kanable, Rebecca. “ The Truth Surrounding Lie Detection Technology. ” Law Enforcement Technology, Aug 2010, Vol. 37 Issue 8 p60-67, An article that reveals the uses and allowances of the <https://assignbuster.com/polygraph-research/>

polygraph in our law enforcement system, legal system, and employment system. Barlow, Alan. “ The Wrong Man” The Atlantic Monthly Nov. 1999 Vol. 84, Issue 5 p66-91 Article telling three separate stories of how the polygraph had an inappropriate influence on the outcome of three murder trials. Begley, Sharon. “ Inertia, Hope, Morality Score TKO’s in Bouts with ‘ Solid Science’.” Wall Street Journal, N. Y. 6 June 2003 B. 1. AN anti polygraph writing reinforcing public opinion about the misuse Of the polygraph and its lack of agreeable legitimacy for use in trial court. Cohen, Laurie P. “ The Polygraph Paradox; Lie Detectors Aren’t Perfect; But, Convicted Sex Offenders Concede, They May Be Good Enough. Wall Street Journal, N. Y. 22 Mar. 2008 A. 1. This article explores a remote possibility of some positive outcome for polygraph use. Unfortunately it an opinion piece and purely based on speculation from a partial perspective. Court Rules Polygraph Test Not Admissible: Telegram & Gazette, [Worcester, MA.] 12 Dec. 1989: C7 Globe Newspaper Company Inc. General Interest Periodicals – U. S. This newspaper clip is a simple statement of a judicial finding. American Polygraph Association [www. polygraph. org](http://www.polygraph.org) Update 2012

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