

Election polling and public opinion

Sociology



One of the keys to using these polls is to assume that the margin of error is far greater than the polls would lead us to believe. Generally, the margin is plus or minus 3 percent. However, the reasons given above would inject more than this amount of error. News outlets are challenged to produce polls almost daily that have a headline-grabbing quality. The consumer needs to be aware that these polls are used to sell news and attract an audience. They are not scientific or for the benefit of the viewer. While it would be a bit overboard to regulate the polling, it is the responsibility of the source to be as accurate as possible. In an election, the candidate that is reported as the frontrunner may have an advantage, as people like to vote with the winner. This is why momentum is regularly brought up as a desirable feature of a campaign.