

CNN's Final Polls Most Accurately Reflect Actual Presidential Vote

CNN Dispatch - November 10, 2008 - The final national and state polls CNN released the week before the presidential election proved to be the most accurate when compared to polls from other independent polling organizations.

CNN and the Opinion Research Corporation estimated on Sunday, Nov. 2, that Sen. Barack Obama led Sen. John McCain nationally 53 percent to 46 percent. Those numbers were right on. According to a tabulation by the Associated Press from Monday, Nov. 10, Obama won the popular vote 53 percent to 46 percent.

Additionally, the network's polls correctly projected the winner in all ten of the states where the network polled the week prior to the election. In eight out of those ten states, CNN predicted the most accurate percentage difference between the candidates compared with other independent polls. Results from the final CNN/ TIME/Opinion Research Corporation polls in Colorado, Georgia and Ohio were perfect, and the ones from Florida, Missouri and Pennsylvania were within one point.

"One of the keys to our polling success was a new and improved voter model," said CNN polling director Keating Holland. "We based our projections on a relatively conservative turnout estimate, which, in turn, helped make our poll results dead-on in most cases."

In addition, Holland also credits the trained Opinion Research Corporation interviewers who rarely accepted "I don't know" as an answer.

"We encourage the interviewers to push hard for an answer, so we do not end up with an unrealistically high number of undecided voters," Holland said.

"CNN not only got it right nationally – but in state after state, our final results proved to be more precise than other polling organizations," said CNN political director Sam Feist. "In a time when Americans are highly skeptical of polls, CNN and ORC demonstrated that when polls are done right, they can be an outstanding indicator of how the American electorate plans to vote."