

Methodology

The American Trends Panel survey methodology

The American Trends Panel (ATP), created by Pew Research Center, is a nationally representative panel of randomly selected U.S. adults. Panelists participate via self-administered web surveys. Panelists who do not have internet access at home are provided with a tablet and wireless internet connection. The panel is being managed by Ipsos.

Data in this report is drawn from the panel wave conducted July 13 to July 19, 2020. A total of 10,211 panelists responded out of 12,981 who were sampled, for a response rate of 79%. There were no panelists who were

removed from the data due to extremely high rates of refusal or straightlining. The cumulative response rate accounting for nonresponse to the recruitment surveys and attrition is 4.3%. The break-off rate among panelists who logged on to the survey and completed at least one item is 1%. The margin of sampling error for the full sample of 10,211 respondents is plus or minus 1.5 percentage points.

American Trends Panel recruitment surveys

Recruitment dates	Mode	Invited	Joined	Active panelists remaining
Jan. 23 to March 16, 2014	Landline/ cell RDD	9,809	5,338	2,304
Aug. 27 to Oct. 4, 2015	Landline/ cell RDD	6,004	2,976	1,335
April 25 to June 4, 2017	Landline/ cell RDD	3,905	1,628	684
Aug. 8 to Oct. 31, 2018	ABS/web	9,396	8,778	6,405
Aug. 19 to Nov. 30, 2019	ABS/web	5,900	4,720	4,682
	Total	35,014	23,440	15,410

Note: Approximately once per year, panelists who have not participated in multiple consecutive waves or who did not complete an annual profiling survey are removed from the panel. Panelists also become inactive if they ask to be removed from the panel.

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This study featured a stratified random sample from the ATP. The sample was allocated according to the following strata, in order: tablet households, Mexican-born Hispanics, U.S.-born Hispanics, other foreign-born Hispanics, Cuban-born Hispanics, non-internet, high school education or less, not registered to vote, nonvolunteers, people ages 18 to 34, non-Hispanic Black adults, and all other categories not already falling into any of the above. The ATP was created in 2014, with the first cohort of panelists invited to join the panel at the end of a large, national, landline and cellphone random-digit-dial survey that was conducted in both English and Spanish. Two additional recruitments were conducted using the same method in 2015 and 2017, respectively. Across these three surveys, a total of 19,718 adults were invited to join the ATP, of which 9,942 agreed to participate.

In August 2018, the ATP switched from telephone to address-based recruitment. Invitations were sent to a random, address-based sample of households selected from the U.S. Postal Service's Delivery Sequence File. In each household, the adult with the next birthday was asked to go online to complete a survey, at the end of which they were invited to join the panel. For a random half-sample of invitations, households without internet access were instructed to return a postcard. These households were contacted by telephone and sent a tablet if they agreed to participate. A total of 9,396 were invited to join the panel, and 8,778 agreed to join the panel and completed an initial profile survey. The same recruitment procedure was carried out on August 19, 2019, from which a total of 5,900 were invited to join the panel and 4,720 agreed to join the panel and completed an initial profile survey. Of the 23,440 individuals who have ever joined the ATP, 15,410 remained active panelists and continued to receive survey invitations at the time this survey was conducted.

The U.S. Postal Service's Delivery Sequence File has been estimated to cover as much as 98% of the population, although some studies suggest that the coverage could be in the low 90% range.¹ The American Trends Panel never uses breakout routers or chains that direct respondents to additional surveys.

¹ AAPOR Task Force on Address-based Sampling. 2016. "[AAPOR Report: Address-based Sampling](#)."

Weighting

The ATP data was weighted in a multistep process that begins by calibrating the entire panel so that it aligns with the population benchmarks identified in the accompanying table to create a full-panel weight. For ATP waves in which only a subsample of panelists are invited to participate, a wave-specific base weight is created by adjusting the full-panel weights for subsampled panelists to account for any differential probabilities of selection for the particular panel wave. For waves in which all active panelists are invited to participate, the wave-specific base weight is identical to the full-panel weight. The next step in the weighting uses an iterative technique that aligns the sample to population benchmarks on the dimensions listed in the accompanying table.

Sampling errors and test of statistical significance take into account the effect of weighting. Interviews are conducted in both English and Spanish.

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.

Weighting dimensions

Variable	Benchmark source
Gender	2018 American Community Survey
Age	
Education	
Race/Hispanic origin	
Born inside vs. outside the U.S. among Asians	
Country of birth among Hispanics	
Years lived in the United States	
Home internet access	
Region x Metropolitan status	2019 CPS March Supplement
Volunteerism	2017 CPS Volunteering & Civic Life Supplement
Voter registration	2018 CPS Voting and Registration Supplement
Party affiliation	Average of the three most recent Pew Research Center telephone surveys.

Note: Estimates from the ACS are based on non-institutionalized adults. Voter registration is calculated using procedures from Hur, Achen (2013) and rescaled to include the total U.S. adult population.

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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	Weighted percentage	Plus or minus ...
Total sample	10,211		1.5 percentage points
Rep/Lean Rep	4,110	45	2.2 percentage points
Dem/Lean Dem	5,761	50	2.0 percentage points

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

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Topline questionnaire

PEW RESEARCH CENTER'S AMERICAN TRENDS PANEL
 W70 JULY 2020
 FINAL TOPLINE
 JULY 13-19, 2020
 N=10,211

THE QUESTIONS PRESENTED BELOW ARE PART OF A LARGER SURVEY CONDUCTED ON THE AMERICAN TRENDS PANEL. OTHER QUESTIONS ON THIS SURVEY HAVE BEEN PREVIOUSLY RELEASED OR HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE.

NOTE: ALL NUMBERS ARE PERCENTAGES UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED. THE PERCENTAGES LESS THAN 0.5% ARE REPLACED BY AN ASTERISK (*). ROWS/COLUMNS MAY NOT TOTAL 100% DUE TO ROUNDING.

	Sample size	Margin of error at 95% confidence level
U.S. adults	10,211	+/- 1.5 percentage points

ASK ALL:
 SNSRATE Overall, what effect would you say social media has on the way things are going in this country today?

July 13-19, 2020

10	Mostly positive effect
64	Mostly negative effect
25	Neither positive nor negative effect
1	No answer

ASK IF SAID MOSTLY POSITIVE (SNSRATE=1) [N=859]:

SNSRATEPOS What is the main reason you think social media has a mostly positive effect on the way things are going in this country today? [OPEN-END RESPONSE, CODED ANSWERS SHOWN BELOW]

July 13-19, 2020

25	Helping people stay informed and aware
12	Communication/connection/community
8	Visibility for marginalized groups
7	Activism and social movements
7	Exposure to different opinions or viewpoints
6	Holding people or institutions accountable
4	Access to news
11	Other
35	Refused

ASK IF SAID MOSTLY NEGATIVE (SNSRATE=2) [N=6,934]:

SNSRATENEG What is the main reason you think social media has a mostly negative effect on the way things are going in this country today? [OPEN-END RESPONSE, CODED ANSWERS SHOWN BELOW]

July 13-19, 2020

28	Misinformation/made up news
16	Hate/harassment/extremism
11	People believing everything/not knowing what to believe
9	Censorship/bias
7	Too much negativity
6	Partisanship/polarization/division
5	Echo chambers/people getting one point of view
4	Anti-Trump or anti-conservative views
4	Sensationalism/exaggeration/clickbait
3	Vanity/drama/impacts on mental health
2	Privacy or data collection concerns/bad actors
9	Other
21	Refused

ASK ALL:

PARTY In politics today, do you consider yourself a...

ASK IF INDEP/SOMETHING ELSE (PARTY=3 or 4 or REFUSED):

PARTYLN As of today do you lean more to...

	<u>Republican</u>	<u>Democrat</u>	<u>Independent</u>	Something <u>else</u>	No <u>answer</u>	Lean <u>Rep</u>	Lean <u>Dem</u>
July 13-19, 2020	28	29	27	15	1	17	21