

UNST 133A
Spring 2005
Dr. Marc R. Feldesman

Assignment #4 (Winter) Assignment #2 (Spring) eVoting Survey

By this time in the year you have all done research on the pros and cons of eVoting (hopefully last term). In class, you decided that eVoting would be defined as: "voting in which voters cast their ballots using a touch screen voting machine (not unlike an ATM), or using a precinct-based computer system to vote via a keyboard and/or mouse". Last term, you worked together as a class and came to a consensus eVoting Survey form that everyone in the class used. Each student was given approximately 50 copies of the survey form and each "interviewed" at least 50 people from a variety of backgrounds and in a number of different contexts to learn their views on eVoting. The survey also collected other data that you believed might be important in influencing how a person feels about eVoting.

So you did that. Now what?

Reconnect with everyone who participated in your fall group. If you've forgotten, send me a note and I'll remind you of your fellow group members. Everything that follows is a GROUP effort. Only **one paper** will be turned in for every group and **one oral report** will be given for each group. (This paper and oral report will NOT BE DUE until week 4 of Spring Term, but the research [#1 - #3] below NEEDS to be done before the end of Winter term. To insure you do it, I want to see a group spreadsheet with your new data and a copy of your questionnaire by the end of Winter term.)

For your research:

1. Re-do your survey from Fall term collecting data from approximately 75 people per group member. These should NOT be the same people you surveyed in the Fall. Moreover, pay far more attention to WHERE you survey, concentrating especially on any voter demographics that were underrepresented in your Fall surveys. The idea is to broaden your horizon. Since the November elections are history, you may want to modify the survey you used in the Fall. This time, you're free to modify it however you want, but don't make it so different that there is no way to compare your Fall term results with those in Winter. If you have any doubts about what you're doing, contact me immediately. None of you made much use of the "other" questions you surveyed in the Fall. Perhaps they'll be more important this term and so you may want to revise or add questions to zero in on those factors that you think might be germane to one's opinion on eVoting.
2. Everyone collect data quickly but thoroughly. Ultimately, when you've got all your data collected, the question you're interested in answering is whether or not the experience of the November elections changed people's views on e-Voting. This means that you'll need to have some numbers to compare and some ways to compare them.

The statistics unit we did at the beginning of the term and the readings from DUMMIES should give you enough tools to be dangerous. Excel, while not optimal for this kind of analysis, will suffice both for graphics and for statistical analysis, both of which are absolutely, positively required this time. You may use R instead, if you can figure it out.

3. Figure out a way to frame the question described above (#2), ask it statistically and demonstrate your answer numerically (statistically) and, if possible, graphically. Both are possible and not very difficult to do.

For the Group Paper, Oral Report, and Web Site

1. Summarize the data (preferably by question) in graphical and tabular form. Excel is most useful for creating graphs and tables. If you've tabulated your group data in an organized and coherent way in step 1, getting meaningful graphs and tables is really simple. In creating graphs, be creative but not ornate. There are appropriate ways to illustrate data and highly misleading ways. I do NOT want to see any type of graph that uses 3-D rendering, and I don't want pie charts; both create optical illusions that wreak havoc with any attempt to draw inferences from the results. I want to see the results of your STATISTICAL analyses. This means that I'll need to see a greek symbol or two (like Σ , Φ etc) in reporting the results. These statistics, graphs and tables will form the backbone of your written report; the graphs will probably be part of your Powerpoint presentation to the class. It may or may not be necessary to put tables in your Powerpoint. I'm a numbers guy so I like to see tables and I really get excited when I see correctly reported statistics. Draw whatever conclusion you like from that.

2. Interpret the data in light of your focused question about eVoting. What does your intuition and common sense tell you the data (graphs and tables) are whispering to you? Do the statistical and graphic analyses confirm this? If so, explain how the evidence meshes. If not, explain what you think might have gone wrong. What do you think the results mean? Do you think the election changed peoples' minds, hardened peoples' opinions, or left them no better off than if the election hadn't been held at all.

3. What do you think about HAVA (if you don't know what this, find out. It is a critical piece of this story), and how do you think it improved/harmed the election process?

4. What conclusions can you draw from your data?

5. For context, consider the experiences in Washington and in Ohio.

For the Written Report:

6. Your group needs to have:

a. An introduction – a statement of the question/problem that motivates the analysis. Why is the issue important. Perhaps you'll want to discuss HAVA here too.

b. a brief survey of the literature – here is where all the article summaries you did will be essential. Each of you has summarized 3 articles in favor of eVoting and 3

articles opposed. Some articles say much the same thing, while others may offer unique perspectives. Your group's task is to combine all of the pros of electronic voting into a couple of paragraphs (with all references) and all of the cons of electronic voting into another couple of paragraphs (with all references). This gives you a "status of the problem" statement. Keep in mind that your group should have about 36 total references to draw upon here. Some (maybe lots) will be duplicates. You won't be graded on the number of citations (though I'd think that at least a dozen would be a minimum), but you will be graded on how well you summarize them.

c. present a brief statement of your data collection technique. This includes mentioning the survey, how it was developed, and the number of people your group actually surveyed.

d. summarize the data. Here you want to have relatively little text and mostly graphs and tables. You can explain the purpose of each table/graph (make sure each has a number – e.g. Table 4, Figure 7 etc that you can use in the text to reference any particular one) in the text and give a brief "peanut summary" of the take-home message from each of the tables and figures. Don't over-interpret in the data summary section. This section should also be the place where you *include* the statistical analysis, but not interpret it. (That's in the next section).

e. discuss what conclusions you can draw from your sample. What does your sample tell you/me/us about attitudes towards eVoting and the various factors that seem to influence those attitudes or at least seem to be associated with those attitudes. What conclusions do the statistical analyses lead you to? How trustworthy do you think your statistics are? Do you think you've adequately sampled the universe of potential voters? Do you think you've framed the questions correctly? Etc.

f. final thoughts and conclusions. If you had to do this project over again, what would you change and why would you change it. What did you do right? What did you do wrong?

g. references cited in the text – make CERTAIN you follow the formatting guide in the APA Style book both for references at the end and citations in the text. (Chapter 3 – "The Term Paper Unit", pp 23 – 35 should be particularly informative).

For the Oral Report:

7. Your group needs to have:

A Powerpoint presentation of everything above (in condensed form and with bullet points and appropriate graphs and tables). You can condense "b" into one slide that has the "pros" on it and a second slide that has the "cons" on it.

Please be considerate when making your Powerpoint presentation. Animation adds NOTHING (but distraction). Fancy script is hard to read, and fade-in/fade-out can be misused. Try to make your presentation creative, pleasing to the eye, and

informative. We're going to have 3 per day over two days. They will be studies in contrasting styles and, possibly, conflicting conclusions.

For the Web Site:

8. Your group needs to have:

A web site highlighting the most significant findings of your evoting project. While much of the content will duplicate the Power Point presentation, the site should NOT be a link to your Power Point. Independently reproduce the information with hyperlinks and make it something a reader would want to use for research. Imagine students next year, for example.

Post your website on a PSU server using one group member's account. The web page URL should have the format:

<http://web.pdx.edu/~<someoneAccountName>/evoting>

That makes it easy to locate and keeps it separate from your portfolio page.

If you have questions about this assignment, PLEASE DO NOT HESITATE to ask questions early and often.