Transparency Initiative Update

The 2016 PAPOR Mini-Conference

Ashley Kirzinger, Ph.D.

On behalf of the Transparency Initiative Coordinating Committee
Overview

- Quick History of Disclosure/Development of the Transparency Initiative

- What is AAPOR’s Transparency Initiative?
  - Mission
  - Current Members

- What’s next?
  - Recruit new member organizations
  - Spotlighting current member organizations
  - Assess the “effect” of the TI on the field
Disclosure through the years...

- Since 1947, pioneers of public opinion research have been advocating for higher levels of disclosure among survey research organizations.

- In the 1990s, the Gallup organization argued that polling results need to replicate the scientific and scholarly model such that “the manner in which most polling results are in fact reported to the American public doesn’t conform to these requirements or objectives” (Newport, 1992).
The Transparency Initiative

- In 2010, AAPOR launched the Transparency Initiative in an effort to encourage broader and more effective disclosure of research methods by all organizations.

- The goal of the TI is to promote methodological disclosure through a proactive, educational approach that assists survey organizations in developing simple and efficient means for routinely disclosing the research methods associated with their publicly-released studies.

- The goal of the TI is **NOT** to decide which methods are better, more accurate, etc...

- In the words of Tim Johnson:
  
  "The Transparency Initiative will provide the public with more information regarding how surveys are done with the hope that they will be better able to judge their credibility."
The Transparency Initiative

- In 2014, the TI began accepting members with an online application process.

- The TI wrapped up its first official year of operation in early October 2015, having completed processing and admission of 77 survey organizations as Charter Members.

- A complete list is available on TI webpage: [http://www.aapor.org/Transparency-Initiative/Charter-Members.aspx](http://www.aapor.org/Transparency-Initiative/Charter-Members.aspx)

- Since then, we have 60 other organizations who have begun the application process.
Praise for the Transparency Initiative

- Use of Transparency Initiative membership as a methodological standard as part of FiveThirtyEight's 2016 pollster ratings:

- As noted in their methodological section, the pollster ratings use membership in AAPOR’s Transparency Initiative as one of the proxy variables for methodological quality due to the fact that FiveThirtyEight’s own analysis has consistently found that organizations who are members of the TI, release data to Roper Center Archives, and/or members of NCPP tend to have more accurate polls.
Next Steps

• Recruit more organizations (COME TALK TO ME IF YOUR ORGANIZATION ISN’T A MEMBER)

• Spotlight the work of current member organizations (COME TALK TO ME IF YOUR ORGANIZATION IS A MEMBER)

• Educational materials
  – We have AAPOR TI modules (now also ones on qualitative research and content analysis), available here: http://www.aapor.org/Transparency-Initiative/Educational-Materials.aspx
  – …and are developing new ones on explaining the various things we ask people to disclose
Assessing the effect

• AAPOR 2017 Conference will have a panel with various papers assessing the impact of the AAPOR Transparency Initiative on our polling environment

• Interested?

COME TALK TO ME!