

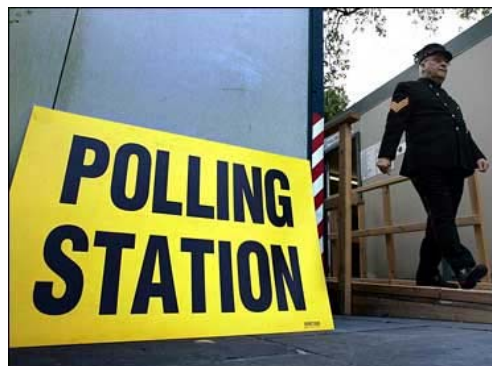
Will Exit Polls Win On Election Night?

Polls Gear Up For Their Big Day, With Rafts Of Questions For Tuesday's Voters

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NEW YORK, Nov. 5, 2006

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(AP)

(CBS) It may seem unlikely, but on Tuesday the offices above an East Coast antique store will be the epicenter of American politics.

Joe Lenski will know the election's results before almost anybody, reports **CBS News correspondent Russ Mitchell**. His company, Edison Media Research, gathers the exit poll information used by a consortium of TV networks and the Associated Press to help quickly determine who won and why.

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"We will be at 1000 polling locations and we will interview more than 100,000 people," Lenski tells **Mitchell**.

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The process begins with surveys conducted outside polling places.

Three times a day that info is called into headquarters and eventually funneled to organizations like CBS News, where it's dissected by **CBS News Director of Surveys Kathleen Frankovic**.

"For example, what was the biggest issue on the voters' minds?" says **Frankovic**. "Were there any major demographic differences in how people voted?"

But in recent years exit polling has been at the center of controversy.

In 2000 bad polling data added to the confusion over who carried Florida. Two years later the same outfit —Voter News Service — had a crippling computer glitch.

Lenski's group took over for 2004 but young pollsters tended to interview young voters, skewing the results. By mid-day, preliminary exit poll data leaked out to the blogosphere, giving the false impression that Senator John Kerry would be President.

"And that is how exit polling got the reputation for having been very wrong when they were a little wrong," says Mark Blumenthal, editor of Pollster.com.

Mark Blumenthal blogs on his website.

"There is a vacuum on elections day in which people are desperate to find out what happened," adds Blumenthal.

Now they'll have to wait even longer. This year exit poll info will be withheld from the consortium until 5 p.m. Eastern time.

"We're going to be extraordinarily careful about what we say about an outcome," says **Frankovic**.

Lenski's team has also shortened the questionnaire, improved pollster training, and moved them closer to voting areas to improve accuracy.

But predicting election results is an inexact science.

"But we learn year after year and we look at our models and re-evaluate every years," Lenski points out.

It'll be up to the public and polling wonks to pick apart the data in the weeks and months to come.

"You don't do this unless you get excited by looking at data, looking at numbers and information," says **CBS' Frankovic**. "You learn something new every time."

Another thing that pollsters are learning is that it will not get easier to gather exit poll data. Nearly 20 percent of voters now cast their ballot by mail, and that number will continue to grow.

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Page 1 of 3 | [First](#) | [1](#) | [2](#) | [3](#) | [Last](#)

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"hey did you all hear the democrats had dead people voting during early voting?"

Get with the times Laurieleemoo. If you want to steal an election, you don't need dead people. The Dibold computers can vote as often as they are programmed to... Why not ask the GOP leadership why they won't let the bill to require a paper record come up for a vote?

Posted by huskerarmy at 03:28 PM : Nov 06, 2006

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I challenge you neo-cons to come off of the hate- filled projections and propaganda to explain to the American voter a few things:

1. Why has the NIA declared Iraq a cause celeb and recruiting bonanza for terrorists?
2. How does the GOP congress justify giving themselves a raise every year but hasn't been able to raise the minimum wage since Bush has been in office?
3. How are exporting jobs and a burgeoning federal debt good for America?
4. Why do the top 2% of tax payers deserve a tax cut in a time of war?
5. Why does Halliburton deserve no-bid contracts in Iraq and New Orleans?
6. Why do D. Chaney and big Oil Company executives get to write the energy policy for America?
7. What makes a GOP majority more important than getting a pedophile away from Congressional pages?
8. Why does your party run racist ads in the South?
9. How does putting our troops in the middle of a civil war make us safer at home?
10. Abramoff, Cunningham, DeLay, Reed, Frist... the list of GOP scandals is

vast. What's up with that?

Posted by huskerarmy at 03:20 PM : Nov 06, 2006

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Huskerarmy,

I bought 'em that way. Thanks for asking. I'm not a new kid on the block, and I agree wholeheartedly that McGreedy fits in the mean-spirited category with the rest of them. I also seem to be in the Dem category by default. We're talking about varying degrees in the loss of integrity, but to read these posts you'd think that all of the Democrats have earned white robes and wings.

Posted by reddboots at 01:09 PM : Nov 06, 2006

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hey did you all hear the democrats had dead people voting during early voting? Boy, I think I'll bring the ghostbusters with me when I go---those dems are scary people bringing DEAD people with them to the polls! Yeah, I heard 10,000 dead people registered and 1,000 of them voted.

Posted by laurielemoo at 01:01 PM : Nov 06, 2006

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Remember Florida and Ohio, save your paper receipt... Oh yea, the GOP leadership won't let that bill come up for a vote...

Posted by huskerarmy at 12:54 PM : Nov 06, 2006

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Remember Chicago, Vote early and vote often.

Posted by GunnerV1 at 12:33 PM : Nov 06, 2006

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I love exit polls- when ever I'm asked how I voted, I always tell them that I'm a Hard leaning Democrat. Then I giggle to myself when I get into my car because I usally (99%) vote stright ticket GOP.

Posted by GunnerV1 at 12:31 PM : Nov 06, 2006

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Redboots,

You haven't been around here much if you have trouble with people saying that Jane McGreedy is "mean-spirited." She is in fact hateful. She cannot refer to a liberal in any other way then as a fascist. And she has no ability to label anyone who doesn't support the Iraq war as anything other than "cowards," veterans included. It's easy to make blanket statements like "both sides are equally bad." In fact it's one of the more clever and stealthy of the GOP's tactics this year, i.e. - stay with the devil that you already know... And historically the Dems are hardly the party of innocence and light; although in truth the GOP does always seems to top the Dems when it comes to corruption and negativity. Regardless, what we are seeing

now is an unprecedented low for political corruption and chronymism. People are mad. I consider myself a liberal first, and a Dem by default. Regardless, I'm hoping for a Democratic landslide in this election.

P.S. - How did your boots get "red?" Just wondering...

Posted by huskerarmy at 11:28 AM : Nov 06, 2006

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Reading these posts is like sitting in a playground at recess. There are posts here that exclaim that of course the Republicans will cheat, they lack all sense of honesty, and that JaneyMcGreev is mean-spirited and rude. Have you looked at all of the posts? I think most of you are mean-spirited and rude. I can't believe that the posting Dems (an assumption I've made) can really hold their party in such high esteem. What short memories we have! Lack of honesty seems to be a prerequisite for political life, and it doesn't seem to matter to which party you belong. So get off your soap box when the topic is honesty in politics.

I can't believe that you are naive enough to think that the Democrats are that different from those evil Republicans! How can they be? Their survival depends on exactly the same thing. Are you really that naive?

As long as we maintain the 2-party system that is controlled on both sides of the aisle by big money/power hungry machines, nothing will change. Why should it?

(BTW, for those of you stamping your feet and screaming that I'm one of those evil ones. I am a Democrat. Not necessarily proud of it, but I don't think I would be proud if I were registered with the other party either.)

Posted by reddboots at 10:53 AM : Nov 06, 2006

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"Republicans are in a unique historical position. They are the first group of people raised on this land, who call themselves Americans, that openly proclaim the virtues of torture, secret prisons, extrajudicial abduction, universal surveillance, and dictatorial government."

.....ouch Searing Truth, NICE.

Posted by getcentered at 10:38 AM : Nov 06, 2006

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