► Rasmussen Polls: 9% approve of Congress' performance

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How did they obtain this number?

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 - "Do you approve of Congress?" is a yes/no question

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(fraction successes vs. number of successes)

- Ask n randomly selected people "do you approve of Congress"?
 - Say x of them answer "yes"
 - Define $\hat{p} = \frac{x}{p}$
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$$\mu = p$$

$$\sigma = \sqrt{\frac{p(1-p)}{n}}$$

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 - How often will \hat{p} lie between .07 and .13?

What will happen as n increases?

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- What will happen as n increases?
- σ for various $n \ (p = .1)$:

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- To cut σ in half, what must you do to n?
- If you randomly poll 3200 people, how often will will p̂ lie between .09 and .11?

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- In polling, standard deviation is also known as sampling error

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- This could happen due to random circumstances
- More likely the case that the survey wasn't random

How should one go about conducting a survey?

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- A simple random survey is:
 - unbiased (each individual has the same chance of being polled)

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 We are trying to make sure that asking the question is a Bernoulli trial

Suppose we ask the first *n* people who come along.

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Problems?

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- Problems?
 - not everyone is equally likely

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- Problems?
 - not everyone is equally likely
 - not independent: people in groups

 Suppose we mail out surveys (or randomly phone people)

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not everyone is equally likely

- Suppose we mail out surveys (or randomly phone people)
- Problems?
 - some people will choose not to respond
 - not everyone is equally likely
- Sampling bias is a bias where some people are less likely to be polled than others

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Two polls during the 1936 presidential election:

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Concluded that Roosevelt would win by a landslide

 For the 1948 election, the Chicago Tribune wanted to go to press early

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 - Bias towards the rich and urban-dwellers



During 2012 election, Gallup and Rasmussen ran polls

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- Gallup reattempted missed calls
- Problems?
- Both companies had skewed results

> After an election, we know the bias for every poll



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FiveThirtyEight's model:

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 - Use previous elections to determine a "bias factor"

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 - Can weight men's answers by .25 to get a better representation