NON-PROBABILITY SURVEYS
A short course sponsored by the Joint Program in Survey Methodology

November 28, 2018
Presented at the Bureau of Labor Statistics Conference Center

COURSE OBJECTIVES
By the end of the course, students will...
- have a basic knowledge of the different types of nonprobability web surveys that exist,
- have an understanding of why nonprobability web surveys are more model-based than probability-based surveys,
- have an overview of state-of-the-art approaches to estimation and variance estimation with nonprobability web surveys,
- know how to conduct a nonprobability web survey (e.g., sample design considerations, weighting, variance estimation)

WHO SHOULD ATTEND
Individuals in government, business, academia, and non-profit organizations who conduct or are considering conducting nonprobability web surveys. This course is designed for people seeking to learn about how nonprobability web surveys compare to more traditional probability-based surveys, when nonprobability web surveys are more or less effective for generating accurate estimates, and best practices. The course focuses on nonprobability sample surveys conducted online with platforms like panels, river samples, or work-for-pay websites. It does not cover other types of nonprobability surveys like respondent driven sampling, scraped social media data, or clinical trials. Some familiarity with survey sampling, estimation, and weighting is recommended but not required.

SUGGESTED READING

THE INSTRUCTORS

COURTNEY KENNEDY is director of survey research at Pew Research Center. In this role, she serves as the chief survey methodologist for the Center, providing guidance on all of its research and leading its methodology work. Prior to joining Pew Research Center, Kennedy served as vice president of the advanced methods group at Abt SRBI, where she was responsible for designing complex surveys, developing data collection methodologies and assessing data quality. Her work has been published in Public Opinion Quarterly, the Journal of Survey Statistics and Methodology and the Journal of Official Statistics. Kennedy has a doctorate from the University of Michigan and a master’s degree from the University of Maryland, both in survey methodology. She received her bachelor’s degree from the University of Michigan. Kennedy has served as standards chair of the American Association for Public Opinion Research and regularly serves as an election night exit poll analyst for NBC News.

ANDREW MERCER is a senior research methodologist at Pew Research Center. He is an expert on nonprobability survey methods, survey nonresponse and statistical analysis, and his research focuses on methods of identifying and correcting bias in survey samples, as well as on the use of machine learning for survey data. He was a co-author of the Center’s major 2016 report on nonprobability research, and
has authored blog posts and analyses explaining methodological concepts such as margin of error and oversampling. Prior to joining the Center, Mercer was a senior survey methodologist at Westat. He received a bachelor’s degree in political science from Carleton College and a master’s degree in survey methodology from the University of Maryland, where he is also in the process of obtaining his doctorate. His research has been published in Public Opinion Quarterly and the Journal of Survey Statistics and Methodology.