

Methodology

The American Trends Panel survey methodology

The American Trends Panel (ATP), created by Pew Research Center, is a nationally representative panel of randomly selected U.S. adults. Panelists participate via self-administered web surveys. Panelists who do not have internet access at home are provided with a tablet and wireless internet connection. Interviews are conducted in both English and Spanish. The panel is being managed by Ipsos.

Data in this report is drawn from the panel wave conducted Sept. 8 to 13, 2020. A total of 10,093 panelists responded out of

11,506 who were sampled, for a response rate of 88%. This does not include three panelists who were removed from the data due to extremely high rates of refusal or straightlining. The cumulative response rate accounting for nonresponse to the recruitment surveys and attrition is 5%. The break-off rate among panelists who logged on to the survey and completed at least one item is 1.7%. The margin of sampling error for the full sample of 10,093 respondents is plus or minus 1.6 percentage points.

American Trends Panel recruitment surveys

Recruitment dates	Mode	Invited	Joined	Active panelists remaining
Jan. 23 to March 16, 2014	Landline/ cell RDD	9,809	5,338	2,302
Aug. 27 to Oct. 4, 2015	Landline/ cell RDD	6,004	2,976	1,334
April 25 to June 4, 2017	Landline/ cell RDD	3,905	1,628	683
Aug. 8 to Oct. 31, 2018	ABS/web	9,396	8,778	6,398
Aug. 19 to Nov. 30, 2019	ABS/web	5,900	4,720	3,023
June 1 to July 19, 2020	ABS/web	1,865	1,636	1,633
	Total	36,879	25,076	15,373

Note: Approximately once per year, panelists who have not participated in multiple consecutive waves or who did not complete an annual profiling survey are removed from the panel. Panelists also become inactive if they ask to be removed from the panel.

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This study featured a stratified random sample from the ATP. The sample was allocated according to the following strata, in order: tablet households, U.S.-born Hispanics, foreign-born Hispanics, high school education or less, foreign-born Asians, not registered to vote, people ages 18 to 34, uses internet weekly or less, non-Hispanic Black adults, nonvolunteers and all other categories not already falling into any of the above. Panelists who had not yet completed the annual profile survey were ineligible.

The ATP was created in 2014, with the first cohort of panelists invited to join the panel at the end of a large, national, landline and cellphone random-digit-dial survey that was conducted in both English and Spanish. Two additional recruitments were conducted using the same method in 2015 and 2017, respectively. Across these three surveys, a total of 19,718 adults were invited to join the ATP, of whom 9,942 (50%) agreed to participate.

In August 2018, the ATP switched from telephone to address-based recruitment. Invitations were sent to a random, address-based sample of households selected from the U.S. Postal Service's Delivery Sequence File. Two additional recruitments were conducted using the same method in 2019 and 2020, respectively. Across these three address-based recruitments, a total of 17,161 adults were invited to join the ATP, of whom 15,134 (88%) agreed to join the panel and completed an initial profile survey. In each household, the adult with the next birthday was asked to go online to complete a survey, at the end of which they were invited to join the panel. Of the 25,076 individuals who have ever joined the ATP, 15,373 remained active panelists and continued to receive survey invitations at the time this survey was conducted.

The U.S. Postal Service's Delivery Sequence File has been estimated to cover as much as 98% of the population, although some studies suggest that the coverage could be in the low 90% range.¹ The American Trends Panel never uses breakout routers or chains that direct respondents to additional surveys.

¹ AAPOR Task Force on Address-based Sampling. 2016. "[AAPOR Report: Address-based Sampling](#)."

Weighting

The ATP data was weighted in a multistep process that accounts for multiple stages of sampling and nonresponse that occur at different points in the survey process. First, each panelist begins with a base weight that reflects their probability of selection for their initial recruitment survey (and the probability of being invited to participate in the panel in cases where only a subsample of respondents were invited). The base weights for panelists recruited in different years are scaled to be proportionate to the effective sample size for all active panelists in their cohort. To correct for nonresponse to the initial recruitment surveys and gradual panel attrition, the base weights for all active panelists are calibrated to align with the population benchmarks identified in the accompanying table to create a full-panel weight.

For ATP waves in which only a subsample of panelists are invited to participate, a wave-specific base weight is created by adjusting the full-panel weights for subsampled panelists to account for any differential probabilities of selection for the particular panel wave. For waves in which all active panelists are invited to participate, the wave-specific base weight is identical to the full-panel weight.

In the final weighting step, the wave-specific base weights for panelists who completed the survey are again calibrated to match the population benchmarks specified above. These weights are trimmed (typically at about the 1st and 99th percentiles) to reduce the loss in precision stemming from variance in the weights. Sampling errors and test of statistical significance take into account the effect of weighting.

Weighting dimensions

Variable	Benchmark source
Age x Gender	2018 American Community Survey
Education x Gender	
Education x Age	
Race/Ethnicity x Education	
Born inside vs. outside the U.S. among Hispanics and Asian Americans	
Years lived in the U.S.	
Census region x Metro/Non-metro	2019 CPS March Supplement
Volunteerism	2017 CPS Volunteering & Civic Life Supplement
Voter registration	2018 CPS Voting and Registration Supplement
Party affiliation	Average of the three most recent Pew Research Center telephone surveys
Frequency of internet use	ATP 2020 ABS recruitment survey
Religious affiliation	

Note: Estimates from the ACS are based on non-institutionalized adults. Voter registration is calculated using procedures from Hur, Achen (2013) and rescaled to include the total U.S. adult population. The ATP 2020 ABS recruitment survey featured 1,862 online completions and 2,247 mail survey completions.

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The following table shows the unweighted sample sizes and the error attributable to sampling that would be expected at the 95% level of confidence for different groups in the survey:

Group	Unweighted sample size	Plus or minus ...
Total sample	10,093	1.6 percentage points
Experienced any harassing behaviors online	3,893	2.5 percentage points
Men	1,746	3.9 percentage points
Women	2,091	3.2 percentage points
White, non-Hispanic	2,594	2.9 percentage points
Black, non-Hispanic	294	8.7 percentage points
Hispanic	655	7.2 percentage points
Consider their most recent experience "online harassment"	1,666	3.9 percentage points
Do not consider their most recent experience "online harassment"	1,427	4.1 percentage points

Sample sizes and sampling errors for other subgroups are available upon request. In addition to sampling error, one should bear in mind that question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of opinion polls.

For details about how the 2017 dataset was collected and weighted, see the 2017 report's [methodology](#).

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Topline questionnaire

**2020 PEW RESEARCH CENTER'S AMERICAN TRENDS PANEL
WAVE 74 SEPTEMBER 2020
FINAL TOPLINE
SEPTEMBER 8-13, 2020
N = 10,093**

THE QUESTIONS PRESENTED BELOW ARE PART OF A LARGER SURVEY CONDUCTED ON THE AMERICAN TRENDS PANEL. OTHER QUESTIONS ON THIS SURVEY HAVE BEEN PREVIOUSLY RELEASED OR HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE.

NOTE: ALL NUMBERS ARE PERCENTAGES UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED. THE PERCENTAGES LESS THAN 0.5% ARE REPLACED BY AN ASTERISK (*). ROWS/COLUMNS MAY NOT TOTAL 100% DUE TO ROUNDING.

	Sample size	Margin of error at 95% confidence level
U.S. adults	10,093	+/- 1.6 percentage points

ASK ALL:

JOKE1 Which comes closer to your view, even if neither is exactly right? [**RANDOMIZE RESPONSE OPTIONS**]

<u>Sept 8-13, 2020</u>		<u>Jan 9-23, 2017</u>
42	Offensive content online is too often excused as not a big deal	44
55	Many people take offensive content they see online too seriously	54
3	No answer	2

ASK ALL:

PROB1a Thinking of some experiences that might happen to people when they use the internet, how much of a problem, if at all, is people being harassed or bullied?²

<u>Sept 8-13, 2020</u>		<u>Jan 9-23, 2017</u>
55	Major problem	62
37	Minor problem	33
7	Not a problem	5
2	No answer	1

ASK ALL:

SMSUEOH In your opinion, should people who have been bullied or harassed by others on social media be able to sue the platforms where the harassment occurred? [**RANDOMIZE ITEMS**]

<u>Sept 8-13, 2020</u>	
33	Yes, they should be able to sue social media platforms
63	No, they should not be able to sue social media platforms
4	No answer

² In the 2017 survey, this was part of a larger battery regarding how much of a problem, if at all, people thought various experiences that might happen to people when they use the internet might be.

ASK ALL:

OHCONS

How effective, if at all, do you think the following steps would be in helping to reduce harassment or bullying on social media? **[RANDOMIZE ITEMS]**

	<u>Very effective</u>	<u>Somewhat effective</u>	<u>Not too effective</u>	<u>Not at all effective</u>	<u>No answer</u>
a. Criminal charges for users who bully or harass Sept 8-13, 2020	43	32	14	10	1
b. Users getting temporarily suspended if they bully or harass others Sept 8-13, 2020	32	37	19	10	1
c. Users getting permanently suspended if they bully or harass others Sept 8-13, 2020	51	29	12	7	1
d. Social media companies proactively deleting bullying or harassing posts Sept 8-13, 2020	40	33	15	10	1
e. Requiring users of these platforms to disclose their real identities Sept 8-13, 2020	48	29	13	9	1

ASK ALL:

SMOH

In your opinion, how good of a job are social media companies doing when it comes to addressing online harassment or bullying on their platforms?

Sept 8-13, 2020

2	Excellent
16	Good
47	Only fair
32	Poor
3	No answer

ASK IF INTERNET USER (XTABLET=2) [N=9,925]:

ON7 Which, if any, of the following have happened to you, personally, ONLINE?³
[RANDOMIZE ITEMS]

	Yes, this has happened to <u>me online</u> ⁴	No, this has not happened <u>to me online</u>	<u>No answer</u>
a. Been called offensive names			
Sept 8-13, 2020	32	67	1
Jan 9-23, 2017	30	70	
May 30-Jun 30, 2014	26	74	
b. Been physically threatened			
Sept 8-13, 2020	14	85	1
Jan 9-23, 2017	11	89	
May 30-Jun 30, 2014	8	92	
c. Been harassed for a sustained period			
Sept 8-13, 2020	11	88	1
Jan 9-23, 2017	8	92	
May 30-Jun 30, 2014	7	93	
d. Been stalked			
Sept 8-13, 2020	12	87	1
Jan 9-23, 2017	8	92	
May 30-Jun 30, 2014	7	93	
e. Had someone try to purposefully embarrass you			
Sept 8-13, 2020	28	72	1
Jan 9-23, 2017	25	75	
May 30-Jun 30, 2014	21	79	
NO ITEMS F OR G			
h. Been sexually harassed			
Sept 8-13, 2020	12	87	1
Jan 9-23, 2017	7	93	
May 30-Jun 30, 2014	5	95	
Yes to any (NET)			
Sept 8-13, 2020	43		
Jan 9-23, 2017	45		
May 30-Jun 30, 2014	39		

³ The question wording in the 2014 survey was "Which, if any, of the following have occurred to you, personally, ONLINE?" which differs from the wording used in the 2017 and current surveys.

⁴ This battery in the 2017 and 2014 surveys was a checklist where people were instructed to "Check all that apply," which differs slightly from the response options in the current survey. As a result, not checking a box (i.e., not responding to an item) in the 2017 and 2014 surveys was coded as people not experiencing that type of harassment online.

ON7 BASED ON ALL RESPONDENTS:

	Yes, this has happened to <u>me online</u> ⁵	No, this has not happened <u>to me online</u>	<u>No answer</u>	<u>Does not use internet</u>
a. Been called offensive names				
Sept 8-13, 2020	31	64	1	4
Jan 9-23, 2017	27	63		10
May 30-Jun 30, 2014	23	66		11
b. Been physically threatened				
Sept 8-13, 2020	14	81	1	4
Jan 9-23, 2017	10	80		10
May 30-Jun 30, 2014	7	82		11
c. Been harassed for a sustained period				
Sept 8-13, 2020	11	84	1	4
Jan 9-23, 2017	7	83		10
May 30-Jun 30, 2014	6	82		11
d. Been stalked				
Sept 8-13, 2020	11	84	1	4
Jan 9-23, 2017	7	83		10
May 30-Jun 30, 2014	7	82		11
e. Had someone try to purposefully embarrass you				
Sept 8-13, 2020	26	69	1	4
Jan 9-23, 2017	22	67		10
May 30-Jun 30, 2014	19	70		11
NO ITEMS F OR G				
h. Been sexually harassed				
Sept 8-13, 2020	11	84	1	4
Jan 9-23, 2017	6	83		10
May 30-Jun 30, 2014	5	84		11
Yes to any (NET)				
Sept 8-13, 2020	41			
Jan 9-23, 2017	41			
May 30-Jun 30, 2014	35			

⁵ This battery in the 2017 and 2014 surveys was a checklist where people were instructed to "Check all that apply," which differs slightly from the response options in the current survey. As a result, not checking a box (i.e., not responding to an item) in the 2017 and 2014 surveys was coded as people not experiencing that type of harassment online.

ASK IF YES TO MORE THAN 1 ITEM IN ON7 (MORE THAN 1 ON7a-h=1) [N=2,484]:

ON7REC Still thinking about the behaviors you have experienced, which of the following were involved the MOST RECENT time something like this happened to you?

[PROGRAMMING NOTE: ONLY INCLUDE SELECTED RESPONSES FROM ON7 AND DISPLAY IN SAME ORDER]

NOTE: RESULTS ARE PRESENTED BASED ON THOSE WHO HAVE EXPERIENCED ANY ONLINE HARASSMENT (ON7A-H=1) [N=3,893]

		Yes, this was involved the most <u>recent time</u> ⁶	No, this was not involved the most <u>recent time</u>	<u>No answer</u>
a.	Being called offensive names			
	Sept 8-13, 2020	54	46	1
	Jan 9-23, 2017	50	50	
b.	Being physically threatened			
	Sept 8-13, 2020	14	85	1
	Jan 9-23, 2017	9	91	
c.	Being harassed for a sustained period			
	Sept 8-13, 2020	12	88	*
	Jan 9-23, 2017	7	93	
d.	Being stalked			
	Sept 8-13, 2020	12	87	1
	Jan 9-23, 2017	8	92	
e.	Having someone try to purposefully embarrass you			
	Sept 8-13, 2020	39	60	1
	Jan 9-23, 2017	36	64	
NO ITEMS F OR G				
h.	Being sexually harassed			
	Sept 8-13, 2020	13	86	1
	Jan 9-23, 2017	6	94	

ASK IF YES TO ANY IN ON7 (ON7a-h=1) [N=3,893]:

ON10 Thinking about your most recent experience, how upsetting was this, if at all?⁷

[REVERSE SCALE FOR RANDOM ½ OF RESPONDENTS]

<u>Sept 8-13, 2020</u>		<u>Jan 9-23, 2017</u>	<u>May 30-Jun 30, 2014</u>
10	Extremely upsetting	12	13
14	Very upsetting	13	14
28	Somewhat upsetting	25	22
27	A little upsetting	26	29
20	Not at all upsetting	23	22
*	No answer	*	*

⁶ This battery in the 2017 survey was a checklist where people were instructed to "Check all that apply," which differs slightly from the response options in the current survey. As a result, not checking a box (i.e., not responding to an item) in the 2017 survey was coded as that person not experiencing that type of harassment online in their most recent experience.

⁷ The question wording in the 2014 survey was "Overall, how upsetting was this, if at all?" which differs from the wording used in the 2017 and current surveys.

ASK IF YES TO ANY IN ON7 (ON7a-h=1) [N=3,893]:

YOU1 Still thinking about your most recent experience, do you consider what happened to you to be "online harassment"?

Sept 8-13, 2020

43	Yes, I consider it to be online harassment ⁸
36	No, I do not consider it to be online harassment
21	Not sure
*	No answer

Jan 9-23, 2017

36
37
27
*

⁸ The response options for this item in the 2017 survey read "Yes," "No" or "Not sure," which differ slightly from the wording used in the current survey.