

Regardless of Election Outcome in Ontario, Polling Transparency and Accountability is Already in a Better Place

Canada's Marketing Research and Intelligence Association (MRIA) New Member Disclosure Rules Make Sure Everyone Can See What Worked or Didn't for Betterment of Citizens, Media and Peers

TORONTO, June 7, 2018—On May 30, 2018 Canada's Marketing Research and Intelligence Association (MRIA) published its updated Member Code of Conduct with new requirements and penalties for those members and their firms who regularly release results into the public domain. While intended to bring about more consistent and rigorous transparency for results released by all members on any subject matter at any time, this especially applies to those who issue opinion polls during election periods.

To date, 23 public survey research member firms that regularly issue public opinion polls have complied with the new disclosure requirements and their names with a click to their site is available at <https://mria-arim.ca/polling> along with copies of the new requirements and other background materials. This is the first time in North America that such rigorous standards for polling has also included the requirement that the names of compliant member firms be affixed to a special association web page for media and citizen access and scrutiny.

"Regardless of the real outcome on election night in Ontario versus the opinion polling results in the lead up to it, we will have, for the first time ever, a fully transparent, accessible and consistent set of comparable results from our MRIA members," said MRIA Chair Mark Wood.

"Methodologies for new technologies can only really be tested in actual elections, not in the off-season," he said. "Over the past decade, not only here but around the world, polling and marketing research firms have had to adapt to rapidly changing ways of reaching citizen-consumers to provide the most accurate feedback possible. This has especially been a challenge when the electorate are close in their choices which leaves room for even the smallest level of ballot box volatility to tip the scales to something unexpected," he said.

As was reported in the MRIA release of May 30, 2018, the "RTDNA Canada supports updates to the MRIA Code of Conduct which strengthens the transparency and accountability of polling firms and their data and further enhances the credibility of the information used by the media in Canada," said Ian Koenigfest, President of The Radio Television Digital News Association (RTDNA) of Canada. "This is a strong first step to reducing the misreporting and misrepresentation of polls and a positive attempt for polling companies and the media to collaborate on the dissemination of verified data."

“Some discrepancies in output and predictions may still occur because of different methodologies, interpretation or voter volatility but the Report recommends other measures for peer collaboration to publicly answer this if it happens. It also draws a roadmap to address mutual areas of interest and responsibility between polling and media leaders and we will actively explore those in the months ahead,” MRIA Chair Mark Wood said.

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The Marketing Research and Intelligence Association (MRIA) is a Canadian not-for-profit association representing all aspects of the market intelligence and survey research industry, including social research, competitive intelligence, datamining, insight, and knowledge management. Members include over 1,800 practitioners, small to large research houses, and the many buyers of research services, such as financial institutions, major retailers, insurance companies and manufacturers. The industry accounts for almost three quarters of a billion dollars in market research activities annually. Founded on November 21, 2004 after the membership of the three Canadian associations representing the industry voted overwhelmingly in favour of merging, it presents a unified voice for the industry; it pulls together all of the products and services formerly offered to the public and the respective members of the now dissolved Canadian Association of Market Research Organizations (CAMRO), the Canadian Survey Research Council (CSRC) and the Professional Marketing Research Society (PMRS).