

Ipsos Reid Donates Significant National Polling Data to Wilfrid Laurier University

*Data Represents Opinions of 98,000 Canadians
Over Nearly Twenty Years*

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Wilfrid Laurier
University



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Waterloo, ON – Ipsos Reid is pleased to announce that it is donating three sets of nationally significant opinion-poll data to Wilfrid Laurier University – a gift that represents a goldmine for researchers looking for insight into the views of Canadians during important periods in the country’s recent history.

The announcement marks Ipsos Reid’s first-ever donation of polling data and signals the beginning of a relationship that will see the company provide Laurier with a regular stream of data donations.

“By giving this important cultural artifact to Laurier, the university will have the ability to tell Canada’s story through the eyes of the millions of people we’ve had the privilege to interview,” said Darrell Bricker, President and Chief Operating Officer of Ipsos Reid Public Affairs and a Laurier graduate. “We want to give academic researchers what they desperately need: access to high quality primary data, and we want to see our research have a life beyond the short-term commercial purpose for which it was created.”

The first raw data-set represents 55 national telephone surveys of 1,000 respondents each that were conducted monthly between 1990 and 1995. The second is the 2006 Canadian federal

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election-day poll – the largest conducted across the country. It contains information on 90 socio-political and demographic variables from more than 36,000 respondents. The third data-set is Ipsos Reid’s recent exit poll from the October 2007 Ontario provincial election, which included 7,000 respondents.

Taken together, the three sets of data represent the opinions of more than 98,000 Canadians over nearly 20 years.

“This poll data is extremely significant,” said David Docherty, Laurier’s dean of arts and a political science professor. “We can now trace and analyze changes in opinions over time, which is critical to understanding voting behaviour, national behaviour, and how Canadians relate to the state and to each other.”

“The data set from the early ’90s captures an important period in Canadian history,” he added. “The GST had just been in for a little while, the Charlottetown Accord debates occurred, the Free Trade Agreement was signed, and massive immigration was taking place.”

The primary user of the Ipsos Reid data will be the Laurier Institute for the Study of Public Opinion and Policy (LISPOP), but researchers and members of the community will have access to the raw data through LISPOP.

“With this raw data, researchers and reporters can run their own analysis about particular issues in recent Canadian history, which wasn’t possible with the summary data previously available,” said LISPOP director Steven Brown. “For example, we can look at gender gaps on particular issues over time; we can go back 20 years to see how much interest Canadians



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have shown in the environment as a problem; or we can examine the views of Canadians on capital punishment and how that's changed over time."

The polling data is also significant because it is among the most detailed research available representing the social and political opinions of specific groups, such as gays and lesbians or supporters of the green movement. "Ipsos is by far the largest collector of data in Canada, and their large sample sizes mean that we can look at 'rare' populations that aren't adequately represented in smaller polls," said Brown.

The Ipsos Reid data is the first donation to be submitted to Laurier under the Cultural Heritage Designation awarded to University Archives and Special Collections by Canadian Heritage in 2006.

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