

Oops! New Hampshire

 blogs.lse.ac.uk/polis/2008/01/09/oops-new-hampshire/

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Most of the British public went to bed thrilled by the TV news excitement at the prospect of an historic victory for Obama in New Hampshire. They woke up to be told that Hillary had actually won it in a 'dramatic' result.

This is not the first time that American elections have been marred by misleading polls. Sometimes they even get the real vote wrong. It is a complex process at a caucus or a primary. What people actually do in the booth may be quite different from what they tell pollsters or canvassers. So all the more reason for journalistic caution.

To be fair to BBC North American editor [Justin Webb](#) the strap on the [Ten O'Clock News](#) said 'predicted victory' for Obama. And Webb himself pointed out how unprecedented it was that Obama's team was suggesting a ten point lead. But generally the coverage on all the channels was moving rapidly to analysis of what had gone wrong for Hillary and more guff about how Barack was the 'change' candidate.

Even the wonderful US media/politics commentator (and Clinton supporter) [Jeff Jarvis](#) was starting to speculate as to whether Obama was the "first candidate to be elected by the Internet."

As it happens, it now looks like Iowa was the exception and that national polls are reasserting themselves more quickly than the reporters on the ground realised. I look forward to hearing explanations from the pollsters and the media about why they allowed themselves to get so misled and why they told the story so wrong. Luckily we now have 24 hour news channels and the Internet so no news team is ever 'wrong for long'. But there's another ten months of this to come and we deserve better.

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