

# Characteristics of Respondents to a Web Survey of the General Public

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# Introduction

- 143 to 166 Million Internet users in U.S.
- About 54% - 60% of total U.S. population
- 66% of U.S. population uses computers
  
- Question: Can web surveys of the general public be a viable survey mode?

# Introduction

- Spring 2001 RDD survey on air quality issues
- Summer 2001 web survey of listed households on air quality issues
- Similar but slightly different questions
- Why a web survey
- Opportunity to compare responses to the two survey modes

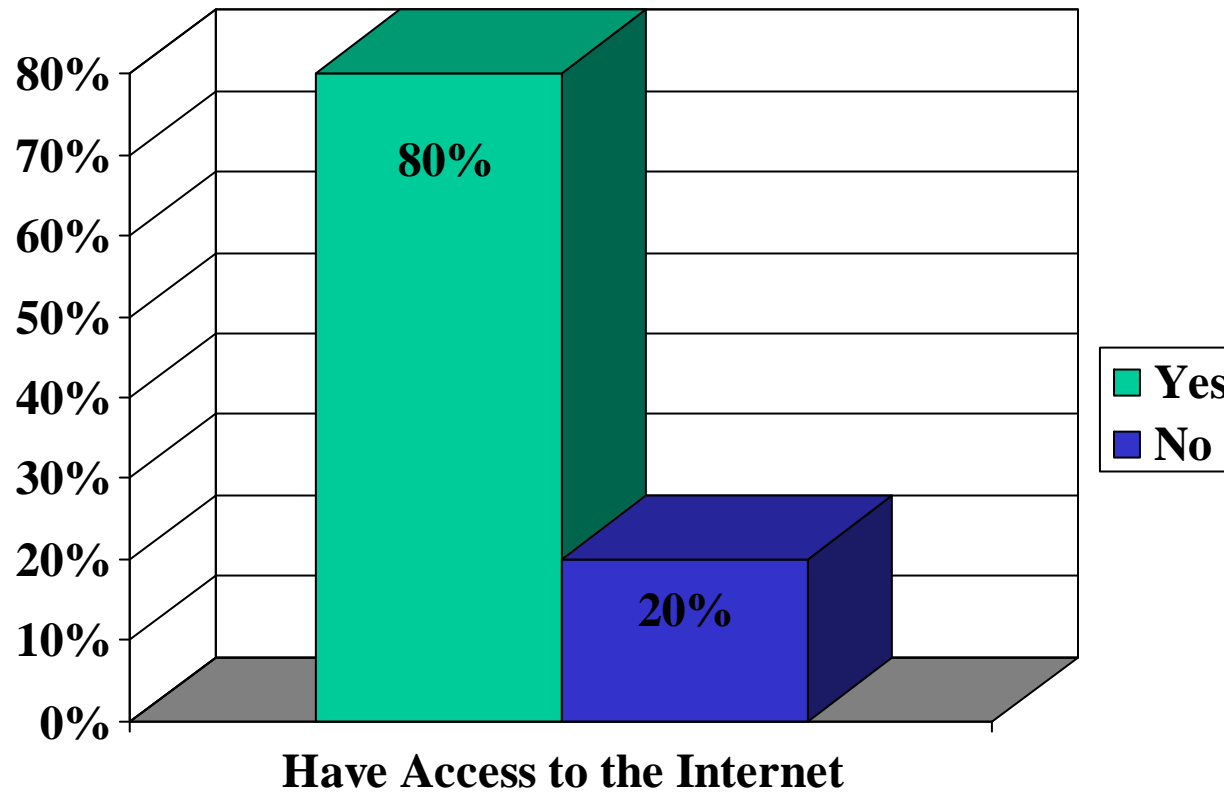
# RDD Survey of Washington State Households

- Purpose was to assess the views of Washington State residents on air quality issues
- Survey Topics:
  - Solving regional air pollution problems
  - Improving scenic visibility
  - reducing motor vehicle emissions
  - Preventing air quality violations
  - Reducing risks from toxic air pollution

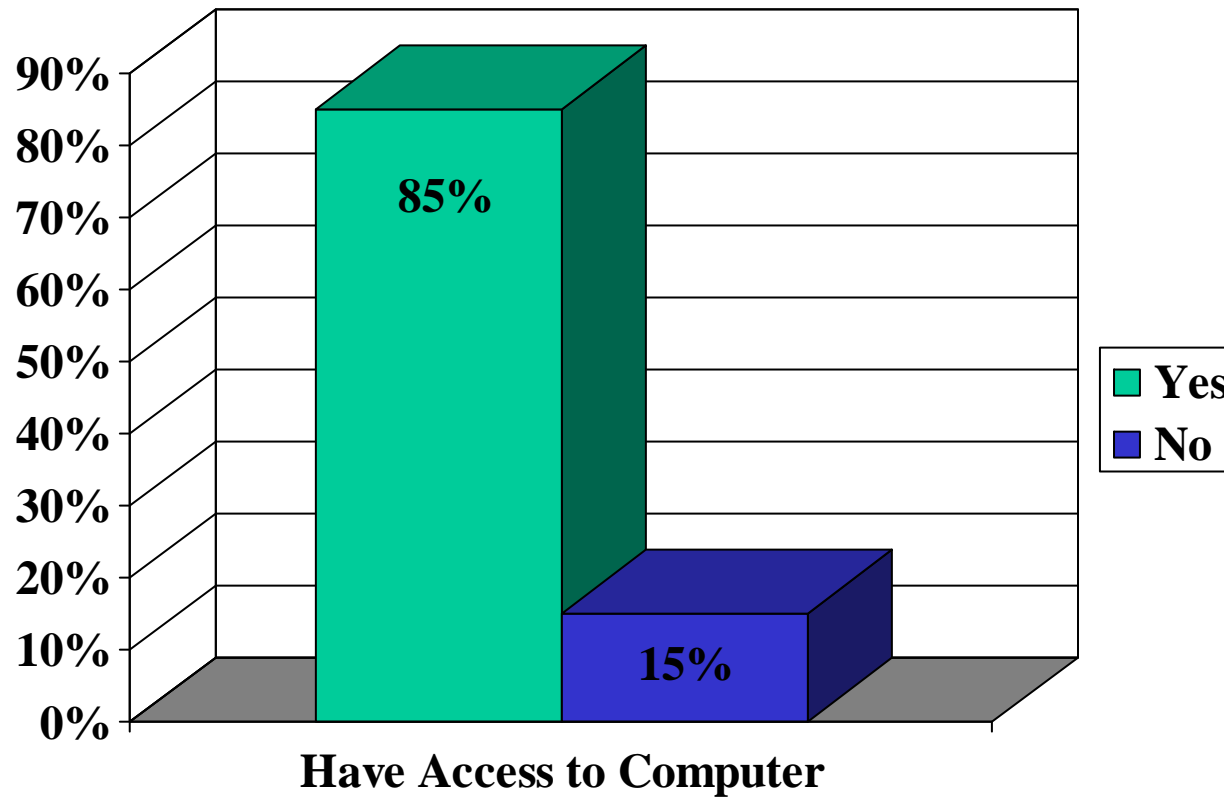
# Methods

- April-May 2001 RDD sample
- Selection of most knowledgeable adult
- Interview length = 17 minutes
- 80 questions
- Completed 1,101 interviews
- 47% Cooperation rate
- 31% Response rate

# Have Access to the Internet



# Have Access to a Computer



# Internet Surveys

- Developed after the telephone survey
- **Purpose**: To assess public perceptions of air quality, health effects, environmental consequences, and strategies for controlling air pollution.
- Random sample internet survey
- Public internet survey
- Developed web survey of 30 questions

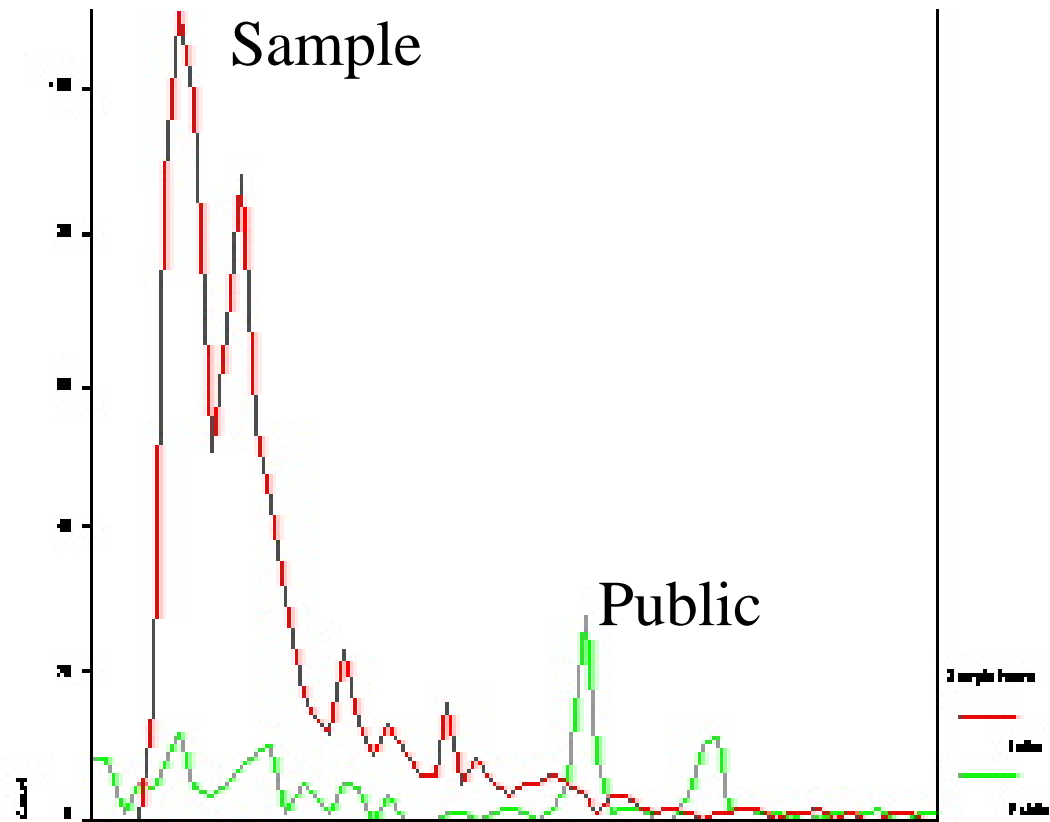
# Sample Internet Survey

- All Listed Washington State households
- Selected 10,000 households
- Mailed letter, inviting participation in the survey
- Used an ID number to control access to survey
- Offered \$100 incentive – lottery drawing
- Started on June 14, 2001
- Ended on August 18, 2001
- Obtained 854 completed questionnaires
- 9% response rate

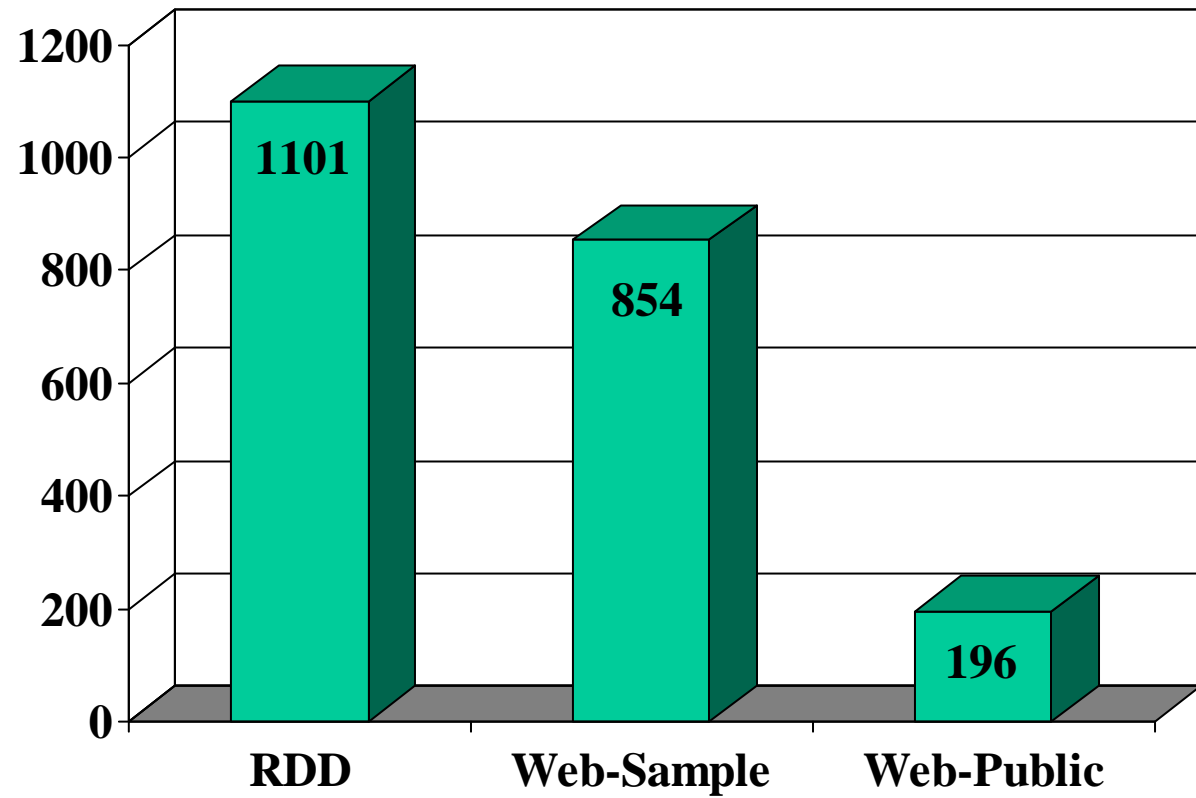
# Public Internet Survey

- Available to anyone who encountered the website
- No ID used to control access
- Responses may not be representative
- Obtained 196 completed questionnaires

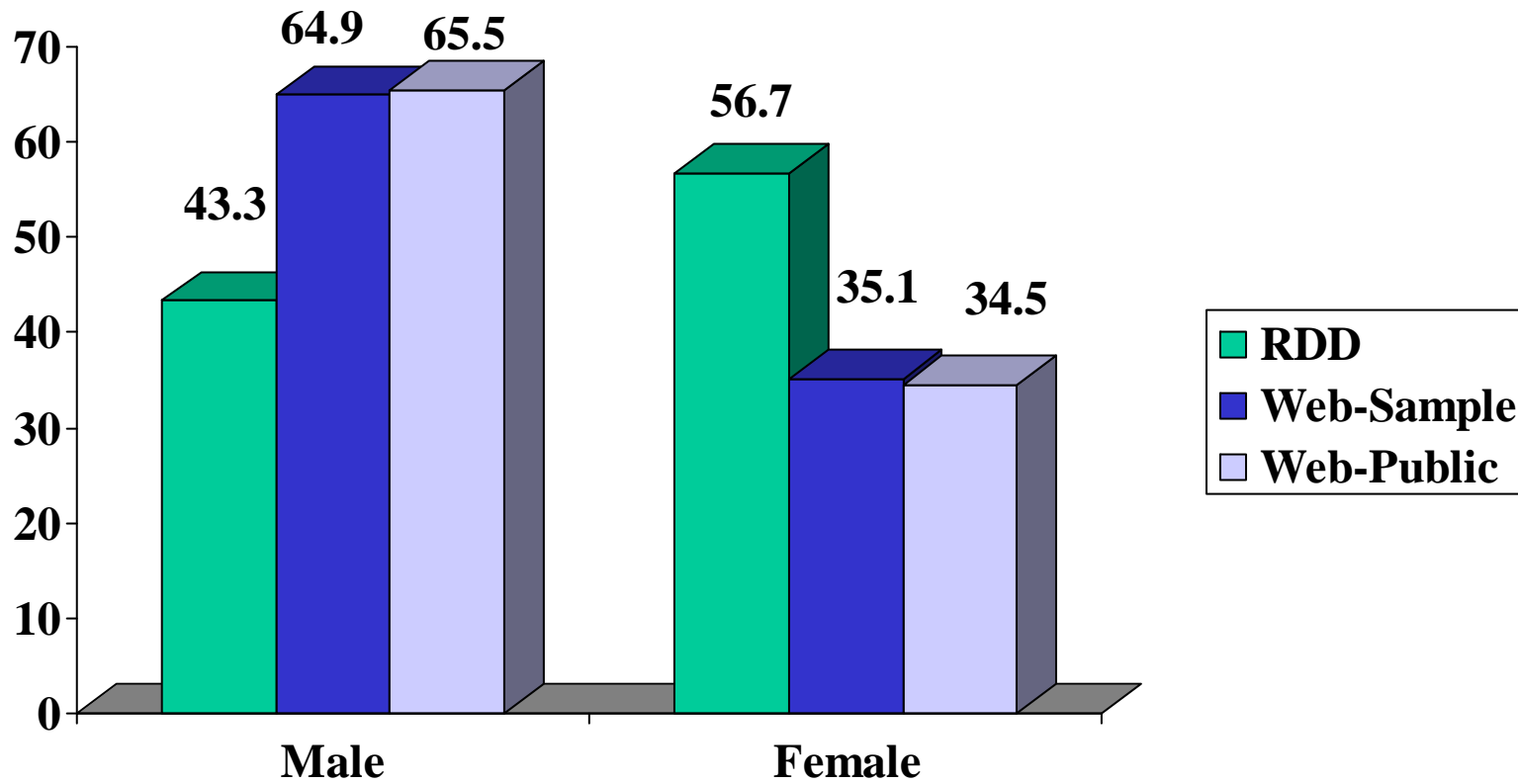
# Daily Web Survey Responses



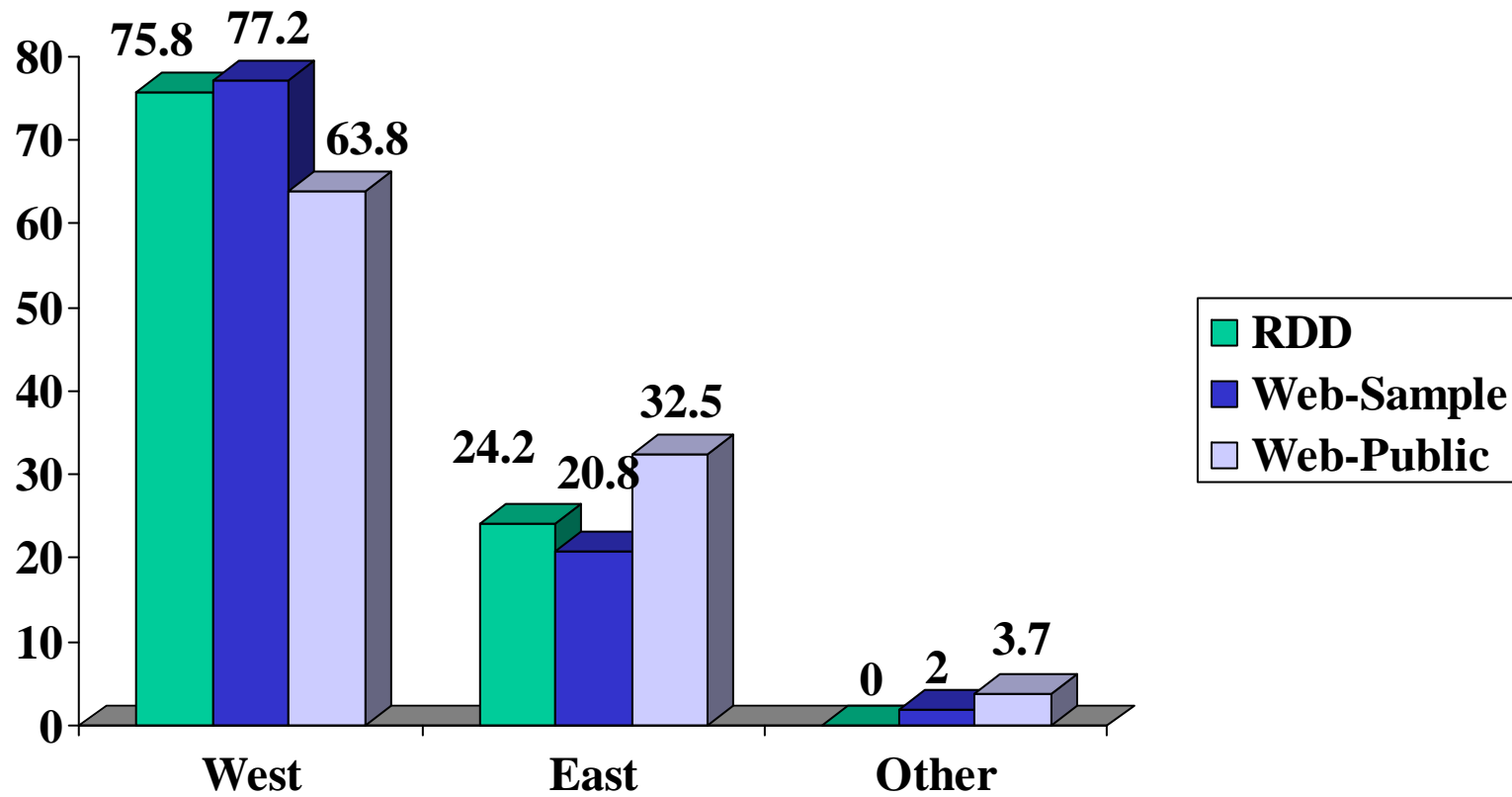
# Survey Samples



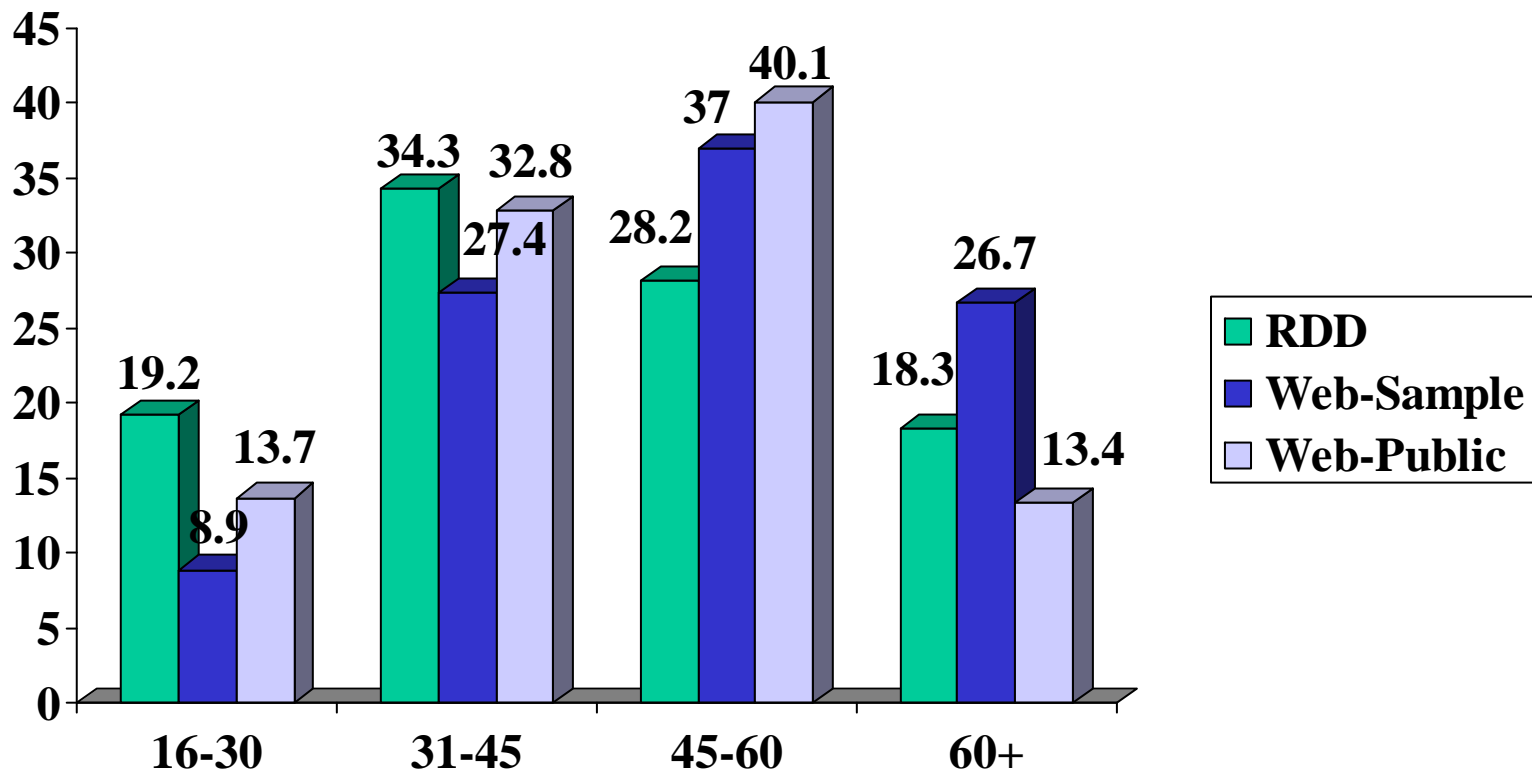
# Gender



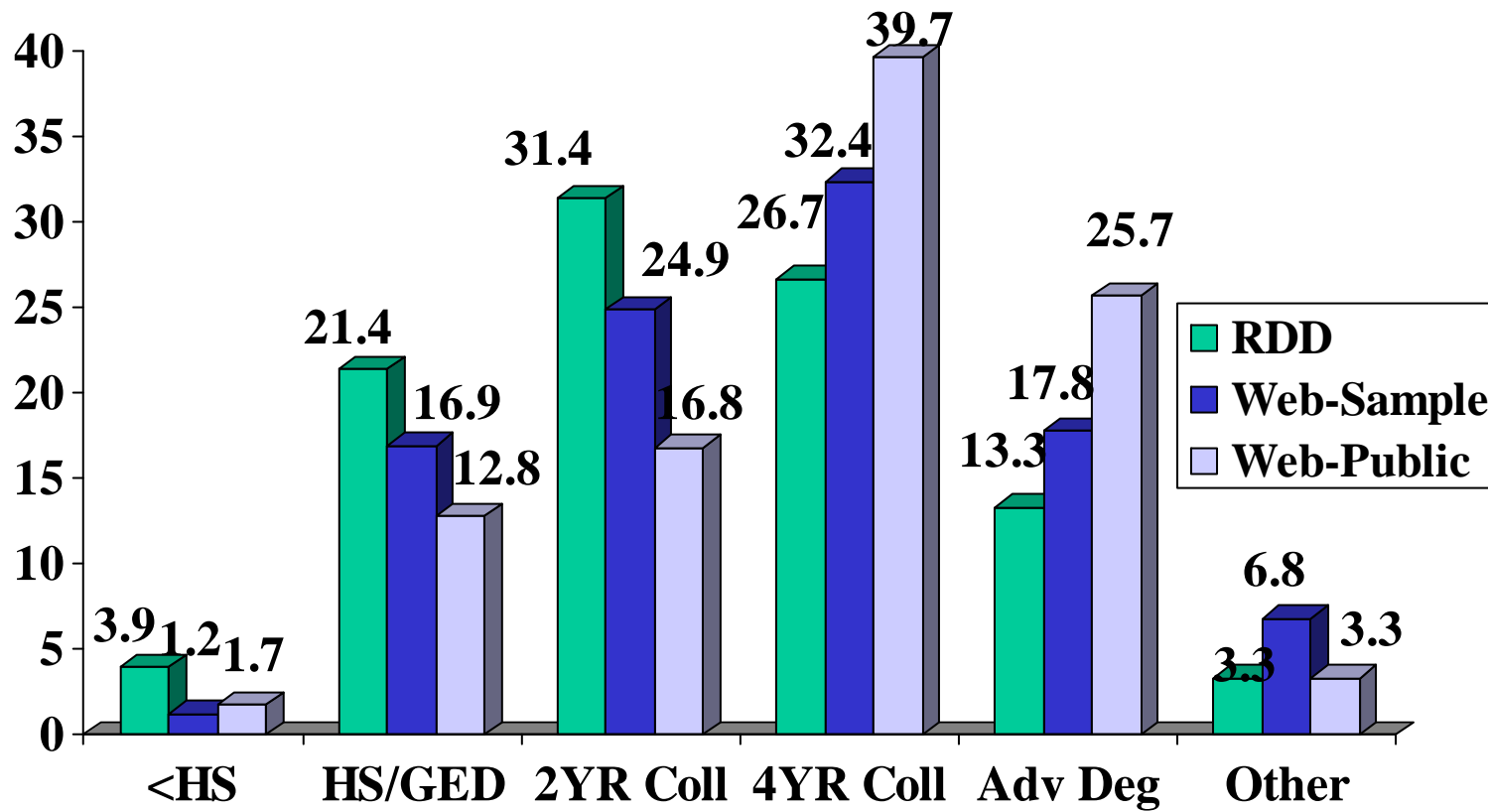
# Region



# Age



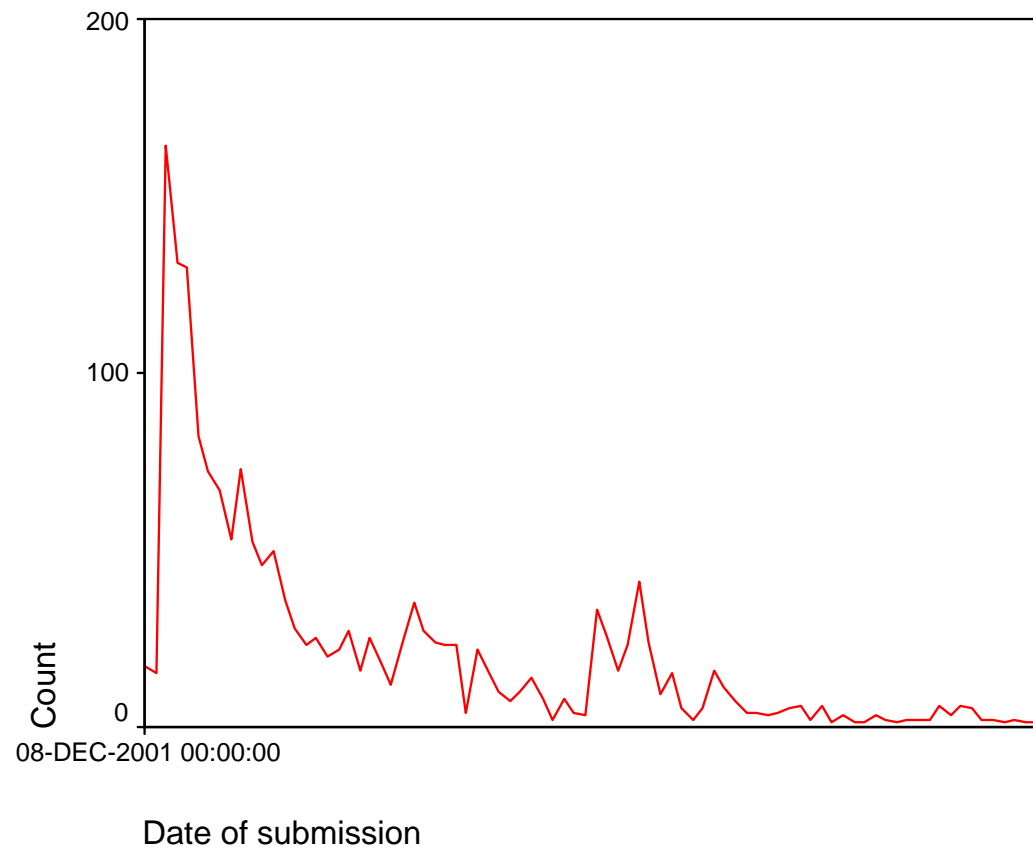
# Education



# Web & Mail Survey

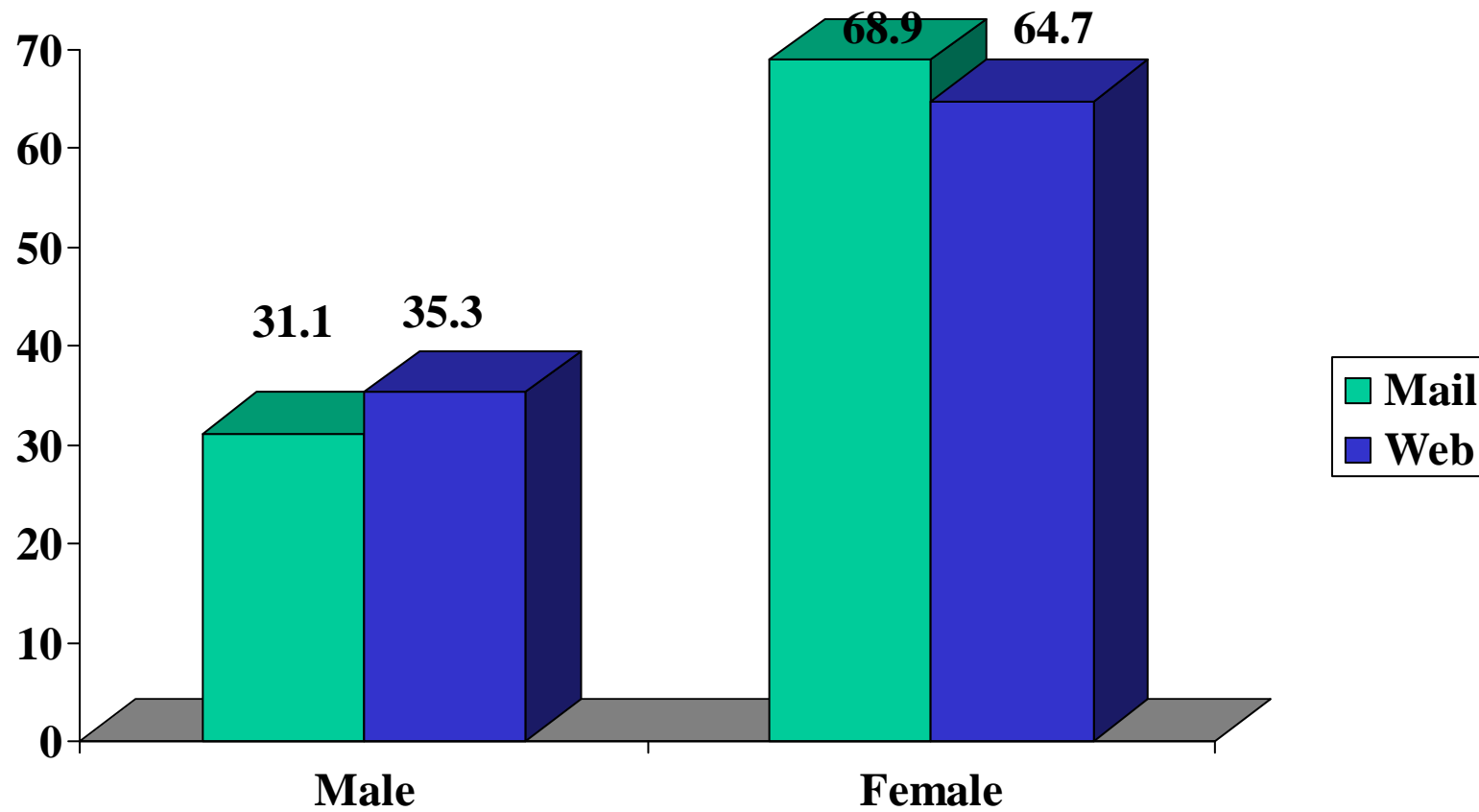
- Prior letter mailed to 12,562 students receiving scholarships –invited to complete 62-question survey on the web.
- \$100 incentive – lottery drawing
- 10% response to web survey (N=1228)
- Sent mail questionnaire to nonrespondents
- 927 returned the questionnaire & 554 more completed it on the web
- Final 21.6% response rate

# Daily Web Survey Responses

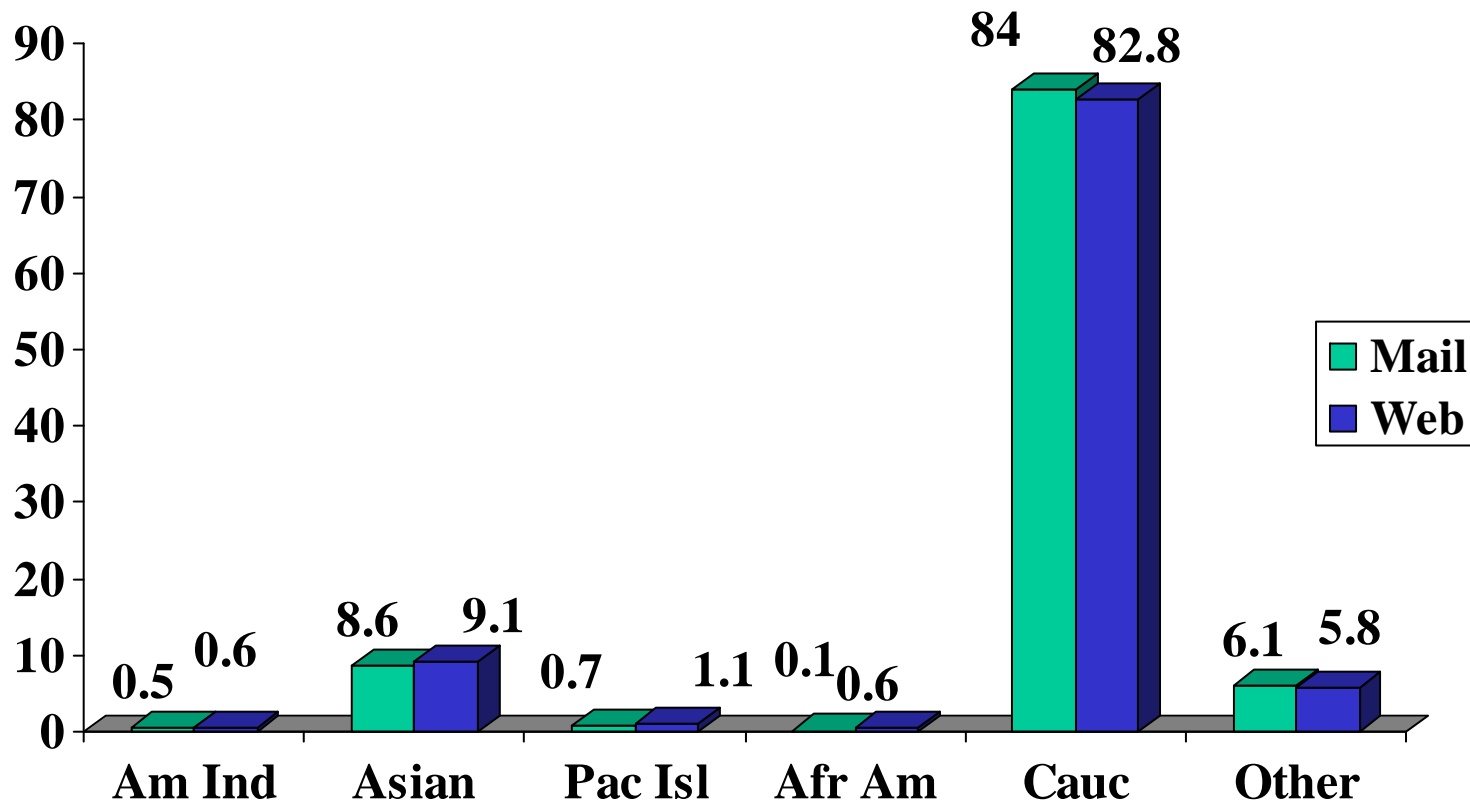




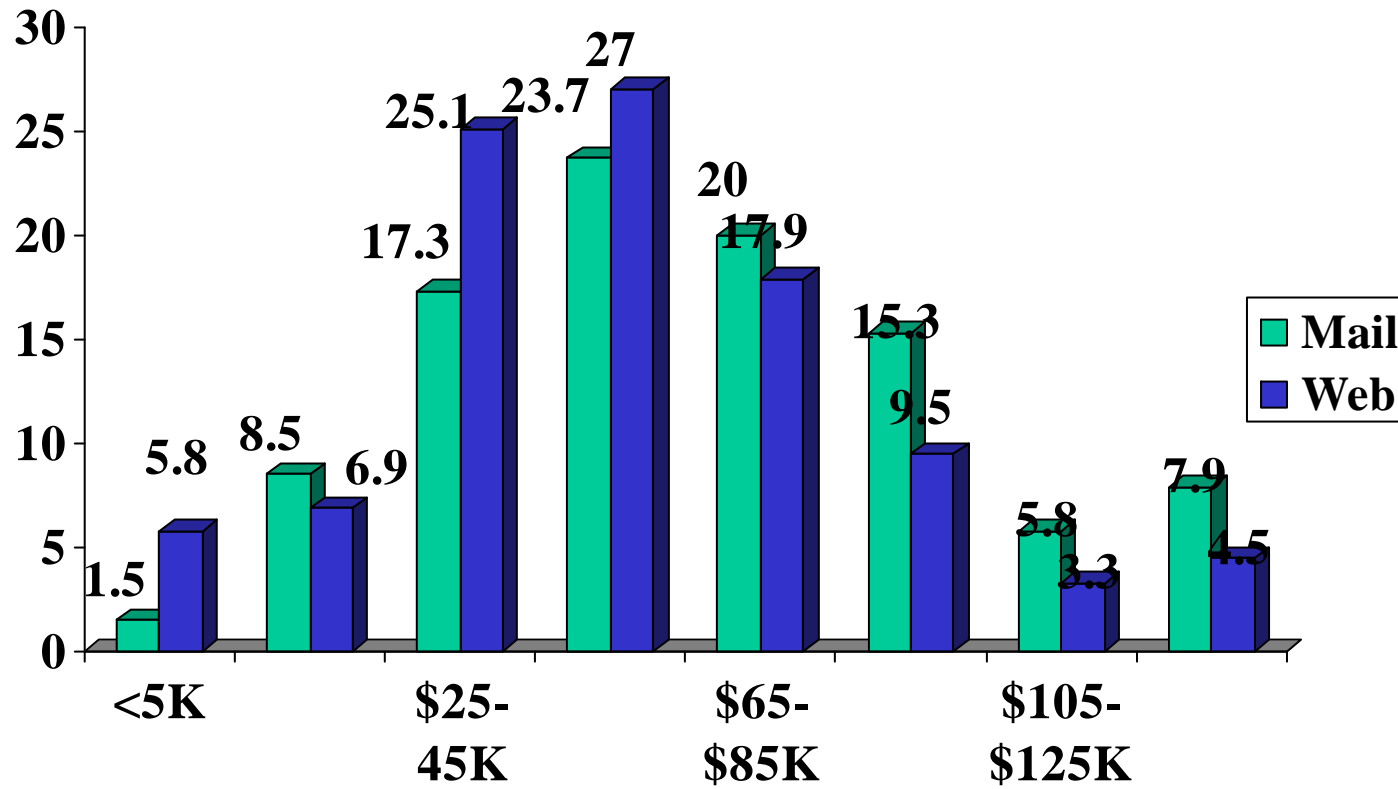
# Gender



# Race/Ethnicity



# Income



# Conclusions

- Low response rate for web survey with no follow-ups.
- Rate of responses to web survey is similar to mail questionnaire returns
- Web survey respondents are more likely to be male, more educated, and older.

# Conclusions

- Mail survey follow-up can improve overall response rate
- Probability samples do better than self-selected respondents.
- Suggests possibilities for combining RDD, mail, and web survey modes for best overall response rates and low coverage error.