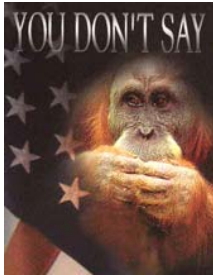


## You Don't Say!



In the 1960's there was a TV quiz show called "You Don't Say" in which contestants tried to convey the name of a famous person or place by giving clues leading to words that sounded like part of the name. The clue-givers were not allowed to use anything that might give away the answer. Contestants had to connect the dots.

The show's trademark line was: "*Remember, it's not what you say that counts; it's what **You Don't Say.***" (applause and cut to a Tide commercial)

I get the sense that many of our institutions have adopted this tag line in the way they approach surveys and other fact finding missions.

This practice is, of course, most egregious in political polls, which often frame questions in such a way that it's obvious which party is conducting the poll.

RoboVoice:

*"Homer Shifty, along with his fellow liberal Democrats in Congress, has consistently voted against motherhood and apple pie. He believes we need to increase the budget deficit, release more prisoners and put more people out of work. How likely are you to support Homer Shifty?"*

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Recently, Arizona's two largest energy utilities spent a fair amount of time and resources to gauge the pulse of Mr. & Mrs. John Q. Public about their attitudes and preferences relating to energy generation, associated environmental considerations and related costs.

In the most recent fact finding mission, APS and the Morrison Institute for Public Policy asked the usual array of questions and presented a series of mind-numbing charts and graphs (I'm thinking Arlo Guthrie's classic song *Alice's Restaurant*) to illustrate ratepayer's innermost feelings over the course of four identical surveys.

What emerged is a not-all-that-surprising story: People are not crazy about coal; they like the idea of investing in renewable energy; they don't want to pay much for the privilege.

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I wonder how Mr. & Mrs. Public would have responded if they were asked a **different** set of questions:

- Are you aware that the utilities will be increasing rates to recover the substantial investments required, among other things, to retrofit aging coal plants and build new gas plants?

- How willing are you to pay an additional \$100 to \$150 per year (representing a 5% rate increase for a typical residential customer) for a scenario that does NOT reduce the amount of coal burned and does NOT increase the amount of clean energy generated?
- How willing are you to pay an additional \$40 per year (representing a 6% annual increase for a typical household) for a scenario that further increases the available cable TV content one could possibly watch in a given day?
- Did you know that thousands of Arizona jobs have been created in the past 2 years with companies that provide products and services related to clean energy, energy efficiency and effective resource management?
- Why are most of the solar panels and wind turbines being deployed in the U.S. imported from Europe, Japan and China?
- Why is there a strong correlation between the short-term cost of nurturing clean energy in Germany, Spain, Denmark and Japan and the development of robust clean energy industrial economies in these countries?

Sometimes it's not what you ask that counts; it's what you *don't ask*.

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