

Re: VOTE on whether $1/\infty = 0$

Source: <http://sci.tech-archive.net/Archive/sci.math/2004-07/3687.html>

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"|_|erc" <gotch@beauty.com> wrote:

> > *Does $1/\infty = 0$?*

>

> *Thanks to all participants and Kent for his insightful rebuttal on voting*

> *and maths.*

For anyone in sci.logic who may be confused, Herc began his poll in sci.math two days ago, with the following post:

"|_|erc" <gotch@beauty.com>

wrote:

> *Please don't justify your answer or cite reasoning to detract from the*

> *next voters opinion.*

>

> *Does $1/\infty = 0$?*

>

> *$\infty = \text{infinity}$*

> *$0 = \text{zero}$*

> *$= = \text{equals}$*

> *$1 = \text{one}$*

>

> *If you're a regular professor here let others vote 1st so as not to*

> *influence the result.*

>

> *Just post YES or NO to be counted*

>

> *Thanks*

> *Herc*

I'll presume that he thinks it's OK now for "a regular professor here" to reply. And I feel somewhat compelled to do so since I see that my own words have been "taken in vain", so to speak.

> *No is what I thought that is why I was surprised when Barb Knox claimed*

> *yes.*

>

> *With all the other bizzare interpretations of maths I was taught that*
> *people around here take as correct I had to check.*

You thought a poll excluding any "regular professor here" would be a good way to check! Bah. :-(

I will say, however, that the results of the poll do not really surprise me, and yet, as explained below, they sadden me somewhat.

Suppose you had taken a poll asking "Does $i^2 = -1$?", for example. I doubt that anyone would have responded "No". Why? Because they would naturally have interpreted the question in a reasonable context, _one in which the question made sense_! Of course, had someone wished to be difficult, they could have said "No" and justified their answer easily by saying "In the real number system, i does not exist and so it is mea