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Marketing Research Review

JULY/AUGUST 2005

Internet research issue

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> Software review: Dimensions 3.0

> The care and feeding of an online community

> Online results vs. phone results: differences linger

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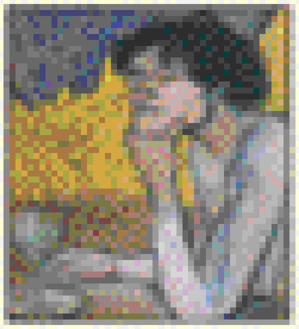
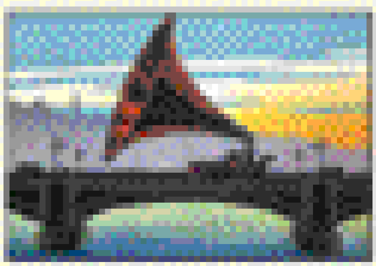
The Art of Abstract Consumer Opinions



The Art of Recruiting

The Art of Modern Technology



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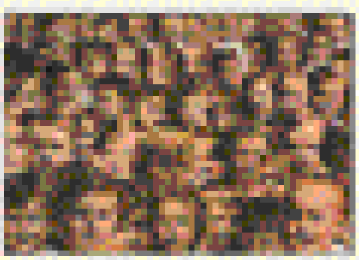

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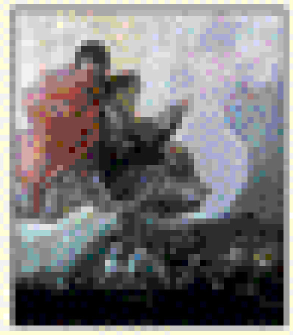

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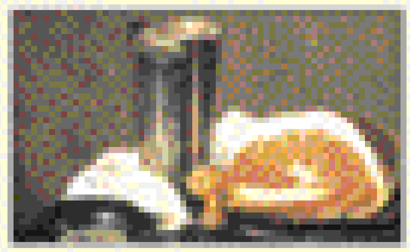

The Art of Fairness

The Art of Survival

BALTIMORE RESEARCH

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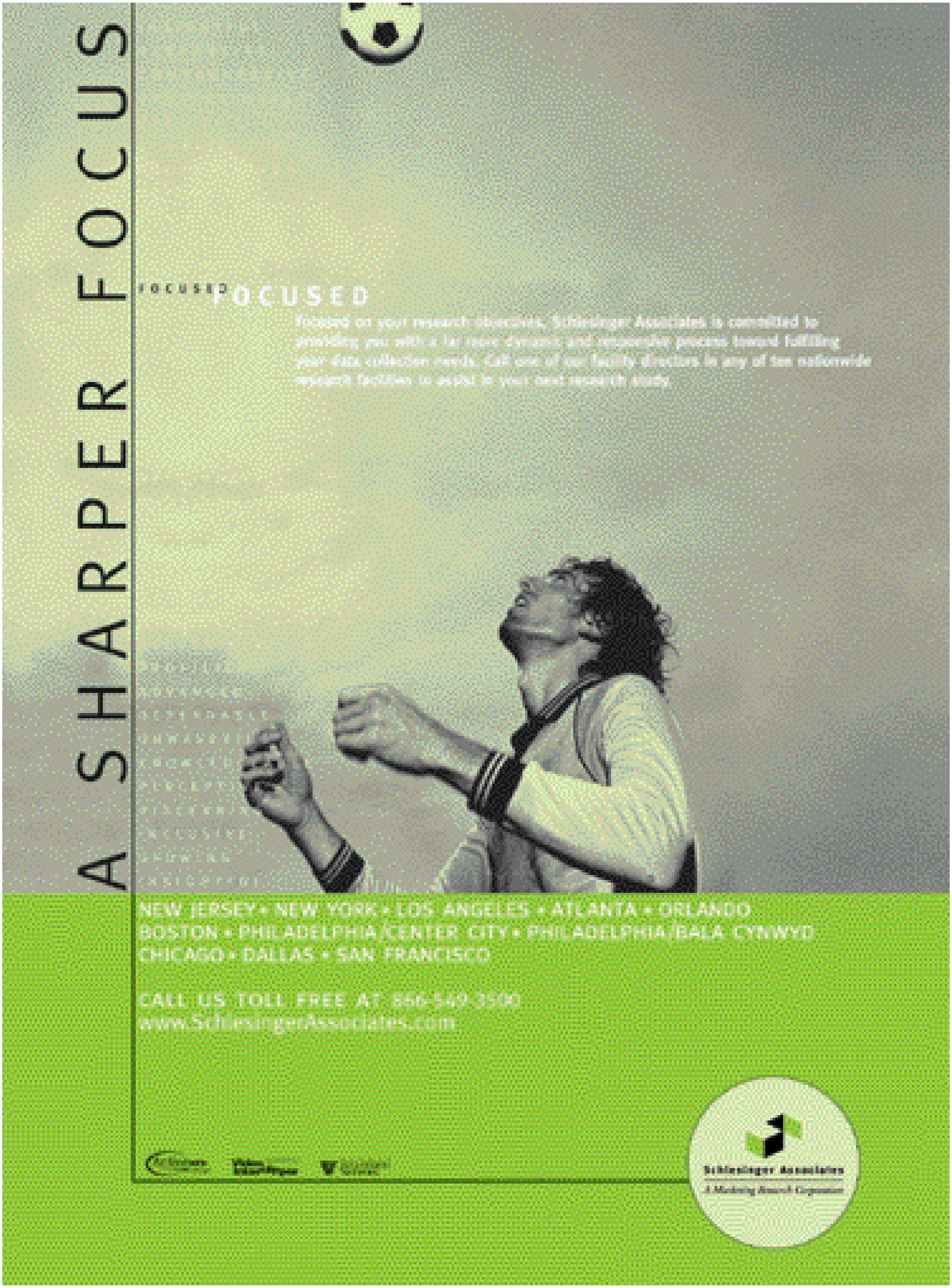
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In case you missed it...

news and notes on marketing and research

How to become consumer-centric, the P&G way

Marketers are talking a lot these days about wanting to establish relationships with consumers. At many firms, these sentiments come off as flavor-of-the-month lip service. But as a *Wall Street Journal* profile of Procter & Gamble CEO/über-marketer A.G. Lafley showed, P&G's research has helped it develop products that form strong bonds with customers.

A section on P&G brand Tampax's Pearl tampons, for example, mentioned that the individual tampons are packaged in non-crinkle plastic, which means that "teenage girls can open them in a bathroom stall without anyone knowing." What better way to forge a long-term relationship with a customer than by easing their fears or helping them avoid embarrassment?

The article implied that the idea for non-crinkle plastic arose from research, and based on P&G's recent history, odds are that it did. The act of talking to consumers is one crucial step but it doesn't mean much unless you also listen to what they are saying.

Lafley seems to have mastered the art of observing and listening. While on a visit to P&G's South American headquarters in Caracas, Venezuela, he and other execs ventured out for some ethnographic research to find ways to undermine Avon Products Inc.'s stronghold on the local cosmetics market. They visited the apartment of a 29-year-old woman and talked with her about her beauty and hygiene products. Noticing her well-thumbed Avon catalogs, complete with dog-eared pages marking interesting products, Lafley said, "Her entertainment is looking at the Avon catalogue at night, and we need to remember that."

The article made it clear why P&G is the poster child for consumer-centric marketing and it offered proof of the impact that a CEO can have on a huge company. Since Lafley took over in 2000, the company's stock price has doubled and earnings have increased, on average, 17 percent a year.

Focusing on consumer wants and needs isn't easy, but P&G is proof that it can be very profitable.

"P&G Chief's Turnaround Recipe: Find Out What Women Want," *Wall Street Journal*, June 1, 2005

The penny is in the mind of the beholder

Contrary to popular belief that the ".99" part of a price such as $19.99 makes the difference in purchasing behavior, new research by Vicki Morwitz, NYU Stern professor of marketing, and NYU Stern doctoral candidate Manoj Thomas finds that it's the left digits - the numbers that come before the .99 - that determine whether or not consumers perceive a penny reduction as a bargain.

For their study, Morwitz and Thomas conducted five experiments in which a statistically significant sample evaluated how high or low they perceived a product price to be. The participants either saw product prices that ended in nine (e.g., $19.99 and $23.59), or prices that ended in zero (e.g., $20.00 and $23.60).

In half the cases when the price ending changed from zero to nine, the left digit changed and the price became lower (e.g., $20.00 changed to $19.99). For the other half, the left digit stayed the same (e.g., $23.60 changed to $23.59).

In the condition where the left digit changed, participants thought the price with the nine ending (e.g., $19.99) was much cheaper than the price with the zero ending (e.g. $20.00). However in the condition where the left digit did not change, participants perceived the nine- and the zero-ending prices (e.g., $23.60 vs. $23.59) to be essentially the same.

These results demonstrate that the "left digit effect," changing the left digits to a lower number (20 to 19) rather than the right digits (.60 to .59) is what affected the participants' perception of the price. The research suggests that the human mind converts numerical symbols to analog magnitudes, processing the numbers from left to right.

What does this mean for consumers? You're still saving the same penny, but the next time you go to the mall, you'll know that it's the "left digits" - in other words, the dollars, not the cents - in the price that make you feel like you're getting a bargain.

Morwitz and Thomas' research, "Penny Wise and Pound Foolish: The Left-Digit Effect in Price Cognition" was featured in the June issue of *Journal of Consumer Research*.

Researchers need the soft skills

Seventy percent of surveyed market research executives acknowledge that "soft" interpersonal skills such as negotiation and listening are critical competencies for market research professionals - yet most organizations do not have training programs or systems to monitor and develop these skills in their research staff.

Training and development gaps in market research programs are one of the insights that emerged in a study from Best Practices, LLC, Chapel Hill, N.C., which sampled 85 market research organizations across 20 industries.

The study probed best practices that market research organizations use to train and develop effective market research staff. Findings include:

- Market analysis, competitive assessment and launch-tracking were identified as the top three of 22 skills and competencies important to high performance.
- More than 50 percent of market research professionals have a master's or Ph.D.
- More than 95 percent of senior market research managers identified market trends and changes as the top two topics about which researchers must provide insights to business leaders.
- Nearly 90 percent of market research heads identified "anticipating future business needs" and "challenging brand thinking" as other top activities most valued by their internal business customers.
- More than 80 percent of market research leaders identified essential marketing management and brand management skills lacking in their research staff.

Are spirits haunting the beer industry?

A May article in *Ad Age* sounded last-call for beer, citing a list of societal factors and marketing blunders and triumphs that have helped hard liquor knock beer off its bar stool. Sensing that a creeping sameness had rendered beer marketing flat (and, some would say, tasteless), spirits makers in the late '90s began advertising on cable and radio (new media for them) and spent millions on on-premise marketing. Their goal was to demystify and inject some fun into their product offerings. At the same time, the lovely ladies of *Sex in the City* introduced the younger generation to cosmopolitans and consumers became more and more interested in the finer things in life. Suddenly a bottle of Bud didn't seem to measure up.

It's way too early to play taps for the brewers. The industry has long been buffeted by trends of one kind or another and managed to survive. But the rising of the spirits offers a lesson on how one group of marketers can exploit another group's flaws and find real success.

"The Death of Beer," *Advertising Age*, May 2, 2005

Stay-at-home and working moms have conflicting views

Apart from different schedules and daily routines, working moms and stay-at-home moms are more different than we think - at least when it comes to their views. The second annual "Voice of Mom" poll, conducted by ClubMom, a national membership organization for moms, found that working moms and stay-at-home

moms hold varying perspectives on a variety of topics ranging from raising children to the war in Iraq.

The poll finds that almost all moms would choose family over careers. Only 8 percent of moms report that if money were no object they would still work full-time and 60 percent say they would work part-time.

One thing almost all moms agree on is that motherhood is a hard job (81 percent). As suspected, working moms and stay-at-home moms believe theirs is the harder job. Two in five working moms (42 percent) say that being a working mom is harder, while 46 percent of stay-at-home moms feel that theirs is the more challenging job.

Furthermore, moms believe that their personal choice is what is best for their children. More than half of working moms say that children of working moms do just as well as the children of stay-at-home moms (57 percent), while 58 percent of stay-at-home moms disagree, saying the children of working moms would be better off with their moms at home.

In turn, stay-at-home moms think their children are doing better than working moms and are more likely to give their children an "A" on the following: sense of values (67 percent of stay-at-home moms vs. 56 percent of working moms); overall sense of well-being (68 percent of stay-at-home moms vs. 55 percent of working moms); schooling and academics (67 percent of stay-at-home moms vs. 56 percent of working moms).

In spite of their differences, both working and stay-at-home moms believe that society values working moms more. Interestingly, stay-at-home moms are more likely to agree with that statement (62 percent) compared to working moms (55 percent).

Moms have made peace with their decisions to work or not work outside the home and are happy with their choices: 65 percent of working moms say they had planned to work prior to having children; 66 percent of stay-at-home moms say they had planned to stay at home with their children. Moms who planned to work but are now stay-at-home moms are more satisfied with their lives: 43 percent give themselves an "A" when it comes to their overall satisfaction with life (vs. only 33 percent of moms who planned on staying at home but ended up working).

By and large, stay-at-home moms (75 percent) and working moms (70 percent) agree that having children has made their marriage much stronger. Surprisingly, when asked to pinpoint the biggest strain on their marriage since having children, stay-at-home moms are more likely to complain about "less time alone to spend with their spouse" (42 percent of stay at-home moms vs. 34 percent of working moms).

Overall, stay-at-home moms tend to give their overall satisfaction with life, their health, and their marriage higher grades than working moms.

Giving Themselves an "A" On...

	Working Moms	Stay-At-Home Moms
Overall satisfaction with life	33%	52%
Overall health	37%	45%
Marriage	38%	59%
Job as a mom	45%	51%
Religion and spirituality	37%	56%
As a wife/ partner	32%	41%
Overall well-being	26%	39%
Sex life	21%	33%

Working moms think they are doing a better job as an employee than as a mom: 60 percent give themselves an A on their job as an employee vs. only 45 percent who say their job as a mom deserves an A.

In addition to how they grade themselves, working moms and stay-at-home moms differ on social issues. Working moms are more in favor of sex education in public schools (80 percent) vs. stay-at-home moms (65 percent). Stay-at-home moms, however, are more in favor of the war in Iraq (64 percent) compared to working moms (41 percent).

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names of note

Susan Taylor, founder of *Taylor Research* in San Diego, died on May 12 after being diagnosed with leukemia in January. From its beginnings in 1956, Taylor grew her company into an organization of up to 100 part-time employees and a full-time staff of 12. "Susan

Taylor

was one of those few kind souls that some of us are fortunate enough to meet in our lifetimes. She was a pioneer of woman-owned businesses in San Diego," says Michael Casinelli, president of Marketing Information Masters. Throughout her career Taylor received a number of awards, including the 1987-1988 Market Research Association Outstanding Service Award; the 1998 Market Research Association President's Award; and in 2001 the award for Small Business Administration Women-Owned Business of the Year. She was also active with San Diego's Rachel's Women's Center, a Catholic Charities-operated facility that provides services and accommodations for homeless women.

Gaku Sasaki has joined *Synovate Healthcare* in Japan as general manager, custom research services division.

The *Seattle Sonics & Storm* has promoted **Ben Wilson** to director of marketing research.

The board of directors of *Harris Interactive*, Rochester, N.Y., and **Robert E. Knapp** have mutually agreed to Knapp's resignation as chairman and CEO of the company. Concurrently, the board appointed President **Gregory T. Novak** as acting CEO, and appointed Independent Director **George Bell** as chairman of the board.

Walker Information, Indianapolis, has hired four new employees: **Marla Mast** as analyst; **Shellie Miller** as project director; **Lori Paul** as accounting specialist; and **Andy Smith** as LAN system administrator. In addition, **Krista Roseberry** has been promoted to consultant.

FocusVision Worldwide, Stamford, Conn., has named **Dan Foreman** managing director of its new European office. At the Stamford office, **Bree Heffner** has been named controller, **Robert Edwards** and **Aaron Bonner** have been named video streaming project monitors, and **Lauro Luo** has been named software/Web developer.

Geoffrey Broderick has joined *J.D. Power and Associates*, Westlake Village, Calif., as vice president, planning and development.

Atlanta mystery shopping firm *Shop'n Chek Worldwide* has named **Janet M. G. Ackerman** to its executive management team as director of international.

Voxco Corporation U.S.A., New York, has added **Dean Wilson** and **Stephen Myers** to its staff.

With the retirement of **Steven Wilson** as president and CEO of *VNU Advisory Services*, VNU has named **Joseph Willke** as his successor.

InsightExpress, Stamford, Conn., has named **Fern Schapiro** executive vice president of client service and marketing.

Lyra Research, Newtonville, Mass., has named **Peter Mayhew** senior European analyst.

Joe Hamner has been named vice president, sales, at *ABI Research*, Oyster Bay, N.Y.

Robert Sapinkopf has been named senior director, customer and market knowledge, at *US Foodservice*, Columbia, Md.

Sapinkopf

Call

Orem, Utah, data collection firm *PGM, Inc.* has named **Marv Call** client development representative.

Market Probe, Milwaukee, has named **Sharon Pappas** director of research-EES division.

Jade Cusick has been promoted to senior vice president, client service group director at New York-based research firm *Ziment*. In addition, **Andrea Alfonsi** has been promoted to vice president, senior director of client service.

At the Naperville, Ill., office of *Millward Brown*, **Eileen Campbell** has been promoted to the newly created position of president, global development. Campbell took up her new role on June 1st and also became chairman of Millward Brown North America. Taking over the management of Millward Brown's North American business is **Mary Ann**

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product and service update

Web site handles incentive payments

Denver-based Incheck, LLC has launched a new Web site, www.incheckonline.com, which interacts directly with online research surveys to expedite incentive payments. Incheck is a volume check-writing company now giving market research companies billing options including credit card, bank transfers or direct client billing. Through the researcher's Web site, Incheck provides survey respondents a direct link to Incheck's site which will offer payment via check or ACH bank transfer and online payment tracking. For more information call 303-296-9593.

Inquisite 7.0 now shipping

Austin, Texas-based Inquisite Inc. has unveiled Inquisite 7.0, a survey system featuring an enhanced graphical builder to simplify the creation of electronic forms and help users streamline the process of data collection and analysis. New Web services integration capabilities provide "set-and-forget" automation which allows feedback data to complement other enterprise systems. Inquisite is available both as a hosted ASP solution and as a product directly installed in a customer's environment. For more information visit www.inquisite.com.

They've died but their appeal hasn't

Marketing Evaluations, Inc./The Q Scores Company, a Long Island, N.Y., research firm, is now offering findings from the 2005 Dead Q study, a survey used to evaluate the public's interest in dead performers who have made large contributions in acting, comedy, music, sports, etc. Dead Q has been conducted every two years since 1997. Among those highly-recognized personalities with the strongest appeal from the 2003 Dead Q study are Fred Rogers, Walter Payton, Elvis Presley, Lucille Ball and Bob Hope.

All Q Score studies are national surveys and are conducted via mail questionnaires. This year's Dead Q study includes 169 personalities. For more information visit www.qscores.com.

Full set of AutoVIBES reports ready

Harris Interactive, Rochester, N.Y., and Kelley Blue Book Marketing Research, Irvine, Calif., have released The AutoVIBES Demographic Reports, a set of 12 studies providing insight into consumer groups' vehicle shopping attitudes, opinions and behaviors based on generation, ethnicity and lifestyle. The information in each report is drawn from interviews with more than 25,000 in-market vehicle shoppers who are within 12 months of purchasing or leasing a new vehicle and provides data and analysis regarding a variety of purchase consideration factors.

The complete set of AutoVIBES Demographic Reports consists of 12 separate reports under three series categories: Generation, Lifestyle and Ethnicity. The Generation series contains reports for Generation Y, Generation X, Baby Boomers and Pre-Boomers. The Lifestyle series contains reports for Singles without Children, Married with Children, Married without Children, Affluent Buyers and a Gender report detailing the differences between male and female shoppers. The Ethnicity series is divided into African-American, Hispanic-American and Asian-American reports. For more information contact Kelley Blue Book Marketing Research at 949-268-3074 or Harris Interactive at 877-919-4765.

Simmons launches TV BehaviorGraphics site

Simmons, Deerfield Beach, Fla., has debuted a revamped Simmons Television (TV) BehaviorGraphics site, www.tvbehaviorgraphics.com, a behavioral targeting system that identifies customers of products and services based on their television viewing behavior.

With versions available for adults, teenagers and children, TV BehaviorGraphics is based on consumer preferences for broadcast, cable and syndicated television programming. Introduced in 2002, it was developed through an integration process that merges the Nielsen National Television Index and National Hispanic Television Index with the unified Simmons National Consumer Survey. Adults from both datasets are then pooled together based on common television viewing patterns. The result is a single system of behavioral segments that reflect the media and marketplace preferences of both general-market and Hispanic consumers. For more information visit www.tvbehaviorgraphics.com.

Two new products from ESRI

ESRI, Redlands, Calif., is now shipping BusinessMAP 4, the latest version of its database mapping solution. BusinessMAP turns information from databases, contact managers and spreadsheets into color-filled maps for making better business presentations and decisions.

BusinessMAP 4 enhancements include: ring study analysis - analyze and reveal the demographics of an area surrounding a location; drive-time analysis - create up to three drive zones around a location that are defined by the time it takes to drive to or from a given location; and print preview - visualize how maps will print including various legend options and various sizes from wall charts to day-planner sizes.

BusinessMAP 4 includes existing features such as color-coded analysis, territory creation, searching by geography, and plotting database points

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Transparent

News notes

NetRatings, Inc., New York, has filed patent infringement lawsuits against **Coremetrics, Inc.** and **Omniture, Inc.** The complaints, filed in the U.S. District Court for the District of Delaware, allege that both Coremetrics and Omniture are infringing four patents owned or controlled by NetRatings. The NetRatings patent portfolio, which relates generally to the collection, analysis and reporting of information concerning computer usage activity, includes U.S. Patent Nos. 5,675,510; 5,796,952; 6,108,637; 6,115,680; 6,138,115; 6,643,696 and 6,763,386. Four of these patents were asserted in the lawsuits against Coremetrics and Omniture.

Acquisitions/transactions

United Business Media has completed the sale of its market research business NOP World to GfK for £383 million in cash. UBM intends to return £300m of the proceeds to shareholders – all of it by way of a special dividend of approximately 90p per share. In order to maintain comparability of the UBM share price and earnings and dividend per share before and after the payment of the special dividend, the board intends to seek shareholder approval to implement a consolidation of UBM's issued ordinary share capital. Subject to shareholder approval, the special dividend and consolidation was to be completed by the end of June.

Harris Interactive, Rochester, N.Y., has completed the sale of its Japanese operations to Minoru Aoo, former president of Harris Interactive Japan (HIJ), in a management buyout. The transaction includes the licensing rights for transitional use of the applicable Harris names and trademarks until June 2006, and for ongoing consulting services from Harris Interactive. In addition, the company has the ability in the future to work with HIJ in order to provide research services in that region to its customers. During the third quarter of fiscal 2005, Harris announced its intention to sell its Japanese subsidiaries and recorded a mostly non-cash loss of $3.3 million in discontinued operations related to the disposition. While the company did not expect the final charge to differ materially from the one previously recorded, any final adjustments were to be reported within discontinued operations for the fiscal fourth quarter ending June 30, 2005.

Millward Brown has acquired Korean research consultancy **Media Research Inc.** The company is headquartered in Seoul and has offices across South Korea. It will continue to be managed locally by Koo-Ho Chung and will be known as Millward Brown Media Research.

Nielsen Media Research International, New York, has acquired **BBC De Media en Reclame Bank B.V.**, an advertising intelligence company in the Netherlands. Financial details were not disclosed.

Germany-based **GfK Group** has completed the acquisition health care research firm **GfK V2**, recently adding the remaining 49 percent of the firm to go along with the 51 percent stake it has held for nearly two years. With the companies acquired following the takeover of NOP World – GfK Market Measures, GfK Strategic Marketing Corporation and GfK V2 – GfK has organized its U.S. health care activities under the name

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Calendar of Events September-November

ESOMAR will hold its annual congress on September 18-21 in Cannes, France. For more information visit www.esomar.org/congress2005.

The American Marketing Association will hold its annual marketing research conference on September 25-28 at the Marriott Copley Place in Boston. For more information visit www.marketingpower.com.

The Council of American Survey Research Organizations will hold its annual members-only conference on September 28-30 at the Four Seasons Hotel, Toronto. For more information visit www.casro.org.

The Australian Market and Social Research Society will hold its 2005 national conference on October 9-11 at the Sydney Convention & Exhibition Centre, Darling Harbor. For more information visit www.amsrs.com.au.

The Qualitative Research Consultants Association will hold its annual conference on October 19–22 at the Beverly Hilton Hotel. For more information visit www.qrca.org.

ESOMAR will hold its annual Latin American conference on October 23-25 in Buenos Aires, Argentina. For more information visit www.esomar.org/latinamerica2005.

The Marketing Research Association will hold its annual fall education conference and technology forum on November 2-4 at the Hyatt Regency in New Orleans. For more information visit www.mra-net.org.

IIR will hold its annual market research event on November 6-10 at the Sheraton Palace in San Francisco. *Quirk's* readers can receive a 15 percent discount on registration fees by using the code XM1728QUIRKS and registering via phone at 888-670-8200 or via e-mail at register@iirusa.com. For more information visit www.themarketresearchevent.com.

ESOMAR will hold a conference on qualitative research on November 13-15 in Barcelona, Spain. For more information visit www.esomar.org.

ESOMAR will hold Consumer Insights 3 on November 15-17 in Barcelona, Spain. For more information visit www.esomar.org.

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By Joel Zeiler

Mail surveys - the right alternative

Frequently characterized as a poor alternative to telephone, personal, and even online interviews, mail surveys are given little thought by most survey researchers. Mail surveys have been criticized for their low completion rate, lack of flexibility and self-selection bias. In fact, the main and only benefit we as researchers associate with mail surveys is usually their low price - viewing mail surveys as the methodology to consider only when funding is unavailable for personal, telephone or online interviewing.

Are there drawbacks to mail surveys? Sure!

One major one is that they are not conducive to fast turnaround. While questionnaires can be mailed out quickly, high completion rates are best achieved by allowing respondents to choose a convenient time to fill out the survey. This process is generally expedited by sending out follow-up postcard reminders. But mail surveys usually require more in-field time to complete than online, telephone or personal surveys.

Another shortcoming is the inability to ask very specific or aided questions because they may affect the results of earlier questions. Some respondents will read through the entire questionnaire before filling it out, while others will go back and add or change previous answers based on questions found later in the survey.

Lack of depth in open-ended questions is another mail survey drawback, but no more so than with an online survey. Because an interviewer cannot offer follow-up probes, mail survey open-ends frequently have very short and general responses.

Many advantages

Do these drawbacks justify the negative image of mail surveys? Absolutely not!

While mail surveys are, in fact, usually less expensive than other interviewing methods, one should reconsider and not overlook the many other advantages mail surveys offer.

Editor's note: Joel Zeiler is executive vice president at Monroe Mendelsohn Research, Inc., New York. He can be reached at joel.zeiler@mmrsurveys.com.

Possibly the most important benefit of mail surveys is the ability to reach groups that are not easily accessible by personal, telephone and online interviews.

Some of these groups include business professionals or affluent adults, who are more likely to have unpublished telephone numbers, to receive a profusion of spam and other junk e-mails, and less likely to be home when called or to spend time completing a long interview when reached.

Also included in these hard-to-reach groups are physicians, who are not likely to take time from busy office hours to complete a telephone interview. Others may not have Internet access or may choose to use their non-working computer hours more productively.

However, everyone gets their mail, and if properly approached and com-

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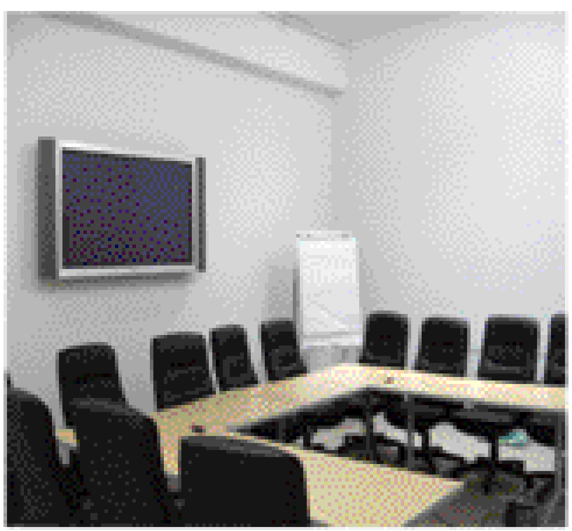
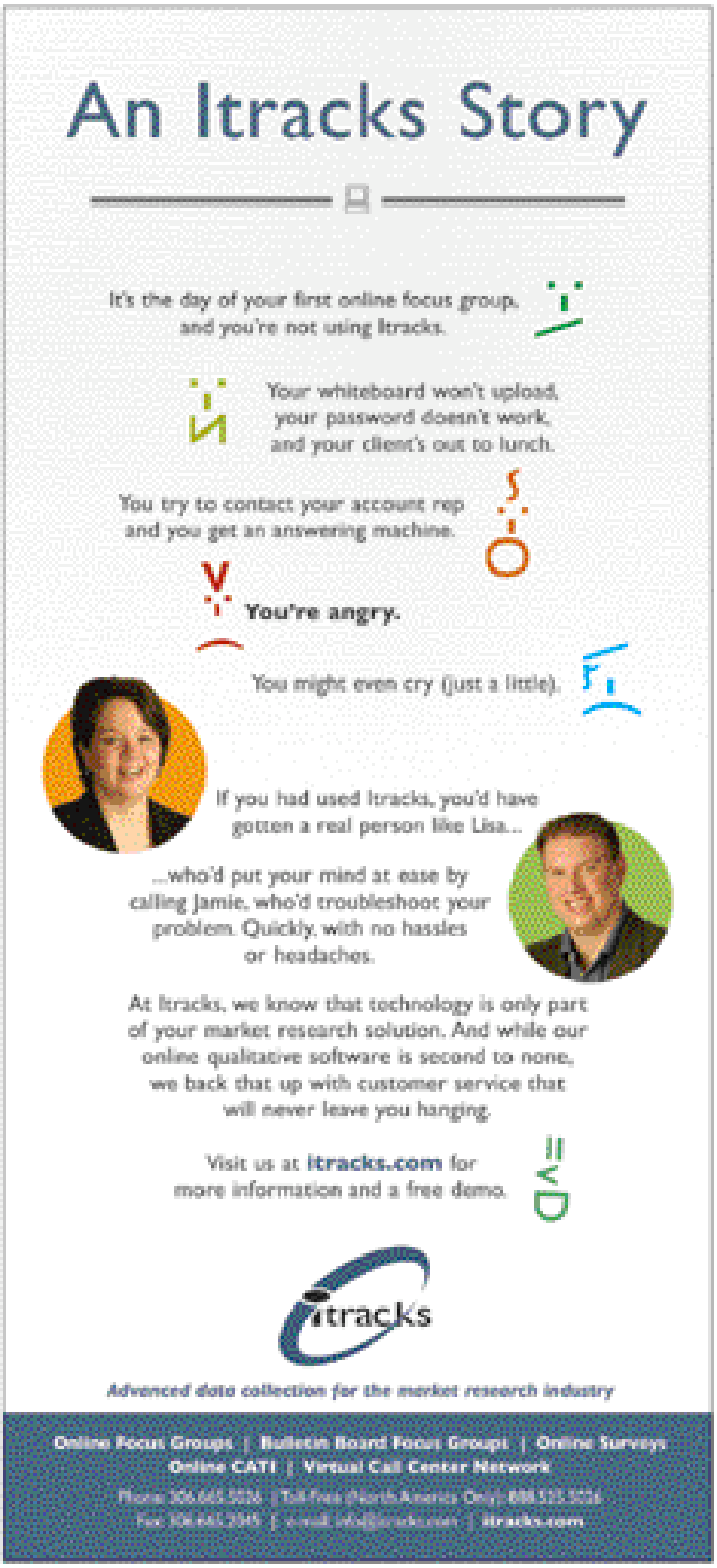


New Expanded Focus Group Facilities

50 Respondent Seating/ 20 Viewer Seating

New Global Call Center

40 CATI Stations/Web Surveys



pensated, these hard-to-reach people may be more likely to sit down and spend time to complete a survey at their convenience.

A comprehensive mail study we've conducted every year for the past 25 years has averaged a completion rate of about 55 percent – a level higher than that achieved by most telephone and personal interviews, and far superior to the 5 percent to 10 percent levels common to online surveys. Our 2004 completion rates for mail surveys with physicians average above 50 percent. And completion rates in the 70 percent to 80 percent range are achievable among less difficult-to-reach target groups.

Mail surveys also provide respondents with the opportunity to look up information or conduct "pantry checks" or audits of prior bills, expenditures, income levels and many other items.

The promise of anonymity is another benefit. While personal and telephone interviewers may indicate that all information collected will be kept confidential, blind mail surveys absolutely guarantee it. This is particularly important to someone who may be asked to provide information of a confidential or personal nature.

And, despite their drawbacks, mail surveys have withstood scrutiny in terms of their accuracy and reliability, and the process compares favorably to the sampling flaws of some newer, more technically advanced methodologies. To this end, mail surveys, when conducted properly, have passed the acid test as evidence in legal proceedings.

Right alternative

It is hoped that this article will help shed some light on why mail surveys should not be a researcher's choice of last resort, but rather the right alternative to personal and telephone interviewing. The benefits of mail surveys should be weighed along with those of other interviewing modes in terms of the research issue, the target group and other project parameters. | Q

By Cara L. Woodland

The power of a question

Questions can be powerful statements that reveal more than just an interest in gaining information. According to Christopher W. Miller's *Focused Innovation Technique*, only 20 percent of questions asked are genuinely seeking information. The remaining 80 percent of questions are used as ways to offer, accept or reject an idea. Questions demonstrate the bias of the person asking them. To illustrate the point, look at the examples below.

Question: "Where is the bathroom?"

Offer: "What if we made it in color?"

Accept: "Did you know that we can easily make it in color?"

Reject: "Do we have the budget or time to make it in color?"

All research begins with a question to be answered. The way the question is posed will impact how the data is collected and interpreted. Within qualitative research, there are many ways to gather information to answer a research question. By its nature, qualitative research is subjective, and bias can easily be introduced. The response the respondent gives will be remarkably different depending on how the research is set up, questions are posed and the research is closed. The following is a Top 10 list of qualitative research rules of thumb to help alleviate bias within the research.

1. *Prepare the research team before interacting with respondents.* Assign roles to researcher team members and know how to use any equipment before starting the research. Determine who is leading the interview, taking notes and handling the equipment. Determining these items once the research has begun can cause undue stress and make the respondents uncomfortable.

2. *Set expectations and build a rapport with respondents before jumping into the research topic.* The leader of the research should introduce the research team, their roles, indicate how long the research will last, state the purpose of the research and tell respondents how the data is going to be collected. Ideally, the research leader should be the one to build rapport with respondents and sit closest to them.

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3. *Actively listen to respondents instead of just hearing.* Active listening is a practiced skill that requires energy and focus. Active listening is listening to learn, empathize and connect with respondents.

4. *The research leader should begin the research discussion broadly and then move towards more specific topics.* This format allows respondents to warm up and also helps prevent the research team from leading respondents to a particular answer or topic.

5. *Stay away from asking yes-or-no questions.* When these types of questions are asked, some respondents will only give you a yes-or-no

answer with little clarification. If a no answer is received, it closes the door for the research leader to rephrase the question in another way without appearing condescending toward the respondent.

6. *Ask open-ended and story-laden questions.* There is not a right or wrong answer in qualitative research, but even after being told this, respondents will still search for subtle clues from the research team for the "right" answer or answers that seem to please the team. The research team needs to stay away from questions that guide respondents toward a particular answer and taint the research. Leading questions tend to start with words like "do," "are," "can," "could" and "would." These questions can always be rephrased into an open-ended format starting with words and phrases like "who," "what," "when," "why," "how," "tell me" and "describe for me."

7. *Do not sell a product or pet idea to respondents during the research.* If at any point respondents feel pressure to buy or agree with the research team, they will no longer be as open and responsive. The research team will have broken respondents' trust that the discussion was for research purposes only. This type of behavior can easily give research a bad name, similar to telemarketing.

8. *Stay away from company jargon, acronyms and marketing language.* Customers have a language of their own, and the research team needs to assume respondents will not understand the words used internally within the team's office. Instead the team should listen intently to respondents' descriptions and use their language during the conversation.

9. *Use qualitative research techniques such as*:

• Probe for feelings and emotions such as happiness, anger, annoyance, sadness.

• Ask the respondent to tell a story. The research team is much more likely to remember stories from the respondent than random quotes and observations. This could take the form of having the respondent tell about one of his/her best or worst experiences or make up an ideal scenario.

• Engage all five senses. Allow the respondent to describe not just what happened but to relive the experience through sights, sounds, smells and feelings.

• Use projective techniques such as analogies to explain how a person feels about a topic. An example of a projective question would be if the product were a car, what kind of car would it be and why, etc.

• Continue to ask why, why, why. The ladder of abstraction will help the team to better understand the underlying motivations of a person's behavior.

• Use communication techniques such as clarification and confirmation to gain more insight into what the respondent is trying to tell you. This is a way to test the team's understanding of the respondent's answer.

10. *Close the research.* Just as the beginning of the conversation needs to have expectations set, the respondent also needs closure. The research leader should always thank respondents for participating, pay them if applicable and communicate the next steps in the research process.

Be thoughtful

The goal of all qualitative research is to have respondents feel as comfortable as possible, in order to gain the best insight into the research question posed. There are countless methods that could be used to answer the research question, but if the data is not collected correctly, the results are tainted. The techniques listed above allow the research team to be thoughtful when approaching respondents and take action to prevent further bias from being introduced to the research. | Q

> software review

By Tim Macer

DimensionNet/ Dimensions 3.0

It's been quite a wait, as even the people at SPSS admit, but the arrival of Dimensions 3.0 in May adds several more vital pieces that were missing from this particular jigsaw puzzle. The grand project is not yet finished, but it now looks like a recognizable picture with a few gaps in it, rather than a handful of puzzle pieces optimistically linked together before you've even got the border set out. The two big advances of this version over its predecessors is a fully-fledged and Web-enabled end-user interface - giving the Dimensions software its own front door and its own customer-friendly reception area for the first time - and support for CATI. Until now, Dimensions was Web- and paper-only; for CATI you needed to use one of SPSS' legacy tools, chiefly Quancept or Surveycraft.

The sheer scale of the Dimensions initiative demands awe, if not respect - it is clearly the most costly and probably the most complex piece of MR software ever developed. It started life as Vision 2000, which SPSS announced at its 1999 user conference - a name that has come to haunt it in the subsequent six years.

But while other software companies were producing complete, menu-based systems where syntax and scripts were banished into a rarely-visited back room, early Dimensions software, by stark contrast, seemed to be getting complex and more technically demanding. This strategy appealed to the larger research companies with the developers in-house to tame this beast, but left the SMEs and the middle ground scratching their heads. Significantly, it left North America's backbone of fieldwork houses and in-house users out in the cold, looking for a way in.

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SPSS DimensionNet and Dimensions 3.0 by SPSS (www.spss.com/dimensions)

Pros	Cons
• User-friendly multimodal survey authoring and execution for paper, Web and now CATI	• CATI does not support dialers or key-board-only input for interviewers
• Access to all the programming and process automation capabilities within Dimensions	• Documentation mostly provided as help files
• A good balance between ease of use and sophistication	• Still need to do some programming to achieve all the benefits

In from the cold

Version 3 flings that front door wide open and it is the recent upgrading of DimensionNet which makes the difference, by banishing the complexity to the back room again with an approachable and user-friendly front-end for researchers and non-technical users.

DimensionNet, although largely the subject of this review, is not actually a product at all, if you define a product as something you pay for. You get it free as a unifying wrapper around any of the Dimensions "mr" modules, such as mrInterview, mrPaper, mrTables or mrTranslate.

It gets off to a good start by presenting a very helpful library of all your current and past projects instead of having to hunt through folders on shared drives to locate specific files. Some potentially disastrous consequences awaited naive users who messed with the files in these folders. Now these can be controlled centrally and hidden from view to all except the few who need to mess.

The most obvious innovation in DimensionNet is its new questionnaire authoring tool. The interface design is pleasing and uncluttered. You work on a kind of mode-neutral questionnaire, because in Dimension 3 you could be interviewing simultaneously on the Web, on paper and on CATI (more on that later). In future, other interviewing modes will come too. The developers seem to have applied the 80/20 rule to the kinds of questionnaire constructs you are allowed to create directly from the questionnaire editor. Most everyday things are possible but there are still a lot of irritating restrictions that I hope future releases will resolve. For example, you cannot perform any calculations on your questions, and once you have added sample, you cannot retrospectively apply any filters to it.

Is that all it does?

Overall, the questionnaire-builder tool is beguilingly simple, to the extent that you can see all there is to it in a couple of hours and find yourself thinking, "Is that all it does?" But of course, there is more, hidden from view - all those mind-boggling things the Dimensions developers at SPSS have been working on for six years, in fact.

No tool can hope to do everything, and those that try to end up being difficult to learn and no longer well-aimed at their target audience. It is a tension that the DimensionNet approach manages very satisfactorily. In between tasks, even in between questions, you can introduce snippets of Dimensions script, which is SPSS' special Visual Basic-like language for market research activities, or even real VB. So everyone is happy: researchers can focus on questions, analyses and research issues in their design without having to become programmers, and the technical people are still in demand to write the clever stuff, but without the boring bits. That is the plan, anyway.

Once a script has been created it can be stored in a library for anyone to call up. It is just a pity that scripts always rely on a small element of syntax to kick them off, and could not be invoked by non-techy users through a button or drop-down menu.

Unusually among its peers, Dimensions incorporates complete version control so that you can both change questionnaires at any point and also roll back to a previous version if you need to. It is an impressive and much needed feature. Furthermore, multiple waves of the same study can be consolidated automatically and there are also simple, error-free tools to help link unrelated studies with common questions or components into a composite view for reporting. While Dimensions still takes a survey-centric view of research, these capabilities are helping to flex the definition of what a survey is, deal with trackers and create meta-surveys from existing and unrelated datasets.

And CATI made three

MrInterview is a from-the-ground-up multimodal data collection product, which until Version 3 was fine if you only ever wanted to combine Web and paper surveys. Mercifully, Version 3 also introduces the support for CATI that has been stretching the patience of Quancept and Surveycraft customers to breaking point. Or rather, it almost does.

At the authoring stage, CATI is simply another mode that you can apply to your survey, and at the execution stage, mrInterview now contains a broad range of grown-up CATI features such as centralized sample allocation and distribution, user-definable call-back rules, integrated quota control. Everything is very flexible, so all the rules can be changed, as can all the assumptions about the roles and permissions of supervisors and interviewers. You could create your own subgroups of both and give them enhanced capabilities, or clip their wings for safety's sake. And most helpfully, all the menus of options and rule sets are populated with carefully thought out default sets to deal with the "80 percent" of what people do in CATI anyway.

While increasingly the other MR software providers have tended to go for standard database reporting tools such as Crystal Reports to provide system and survey management reports - which means investing in another set of skills and tools - Dimensions cleverly uses its own reporting tool, mrTables, to deliver real-time reporting to supervisors through their DimensionNet Web interface. Again, a slew of "standard" reports are provided, but these can be changed or supplemented with your own reports, which any tab specialist will be able to write. One current lack is record-level reporting, to examine individual responses, which needs to be addressed as a priority.

Quancept users can migrate gradually to CATI in Dimensions, as their existing Quancept scripts can be used with mrInterview, but Surveycraft users will be disappointed that this luxury does not extend to them.

For serious CATI users, the new mrInterview probably contains a couple of problem areas that SPSS will not be addressing until a subsequent release, notably integrated telephony, for dialer and also voice recording, and the fact that interviewers need to use the mouse to select responses, rather than the time-honored numbered code punched in on keyboard or keypad. However, that will be fixed later this year, as SPSS makes the interviewer interface Section 508-compliant, which will mean being able to perform all selections from the keyboard or the mouse.

Far-reaching

The system is totally Web-enabled as

it works within the Microsoft .Net framework and is therefore location-independent, enabling work to be shared between offices, enterprises and outworkers. It is a true multi-user system and impressively manages all the contention that could arise if two or more people try to work on the same survey at once. They can, but only one user can make changes, even through others can be viewing at the same time.

The same administration tool that defines roles for interviewers and supervisors lets you define users and permissions for researchers and clients too. You can use this to provide logins for clients to view results or to specialists to perform particular tasks such as entering language translations. It is a pity that you cannot customize the appearance of the client access pages: They remain branded as a free ad for SPSS.

Also on the downside, testing routing and previewing a questionnaire is clumsy, which slows down error detection and the final polishing stage considerably. It is also unfortunate that the documentation for this and all SPSS software now appears principally in the form of online help. I miss the good read during which you have a chance to deepen your knowledge and expertise. And despite everything, this tool still only supports two of the four common interviewing modes: paper and Web.

Won the show

Todd Myers, vice president and director of technical services at Opinion Research Corporation (ORC) in Princeton, N.J., has recently taken his firm through detailed software review, with a view to replace two disparate data collection tools for Web and for CATI with one multimodal solution. "SPSS won the show," he says. "What got us was the Data Model and all the efficient ways it offers to manage all the research data we collect. We have struggled for a long time to store categorical data in a database and access it efficiently. The Data Model provides us with a way to transform and access the data without starting from scratch with our own programs."

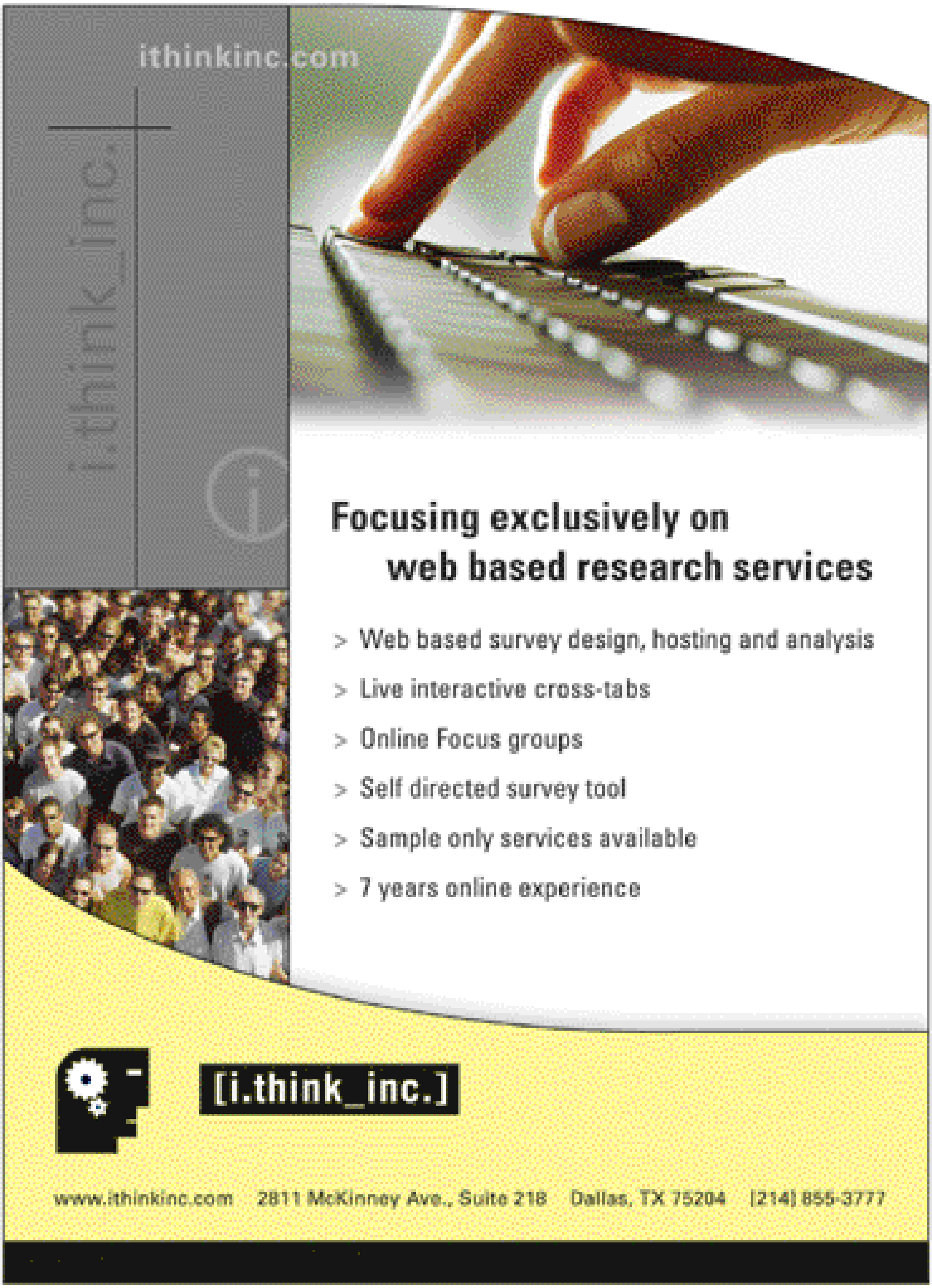
ORC decided to wait until 3.0 was released, for both the CATI and overall interface and ease of use improvements in the new version. "The features in general are extremely strong," Myers says, singling out Dimensions scripting, which he sees providing the ability to automate much of the research process and "pump things through from data collection, through cleaning and out to reports or, these days, the Web."

SPSS has "have done a nice job of building a VB-like scripting language that is aware of market research," Myers says. It was, however, a concept that was more readily understood by those in his team with a database or programming background, but which, initially, some of his most experienced script writers, with 10 or 20 years behind them, found a struggle and even a worry to grasp. After a specific session with SPSS aimed at this group, they were able to understand it and see how they could benefit from this new approach.

"Their learning curve will be a bit slower, but I have not seen anything that says they will not get there. They see the ability to automate scripts as a real advantage," Myers says. However, it does mean that some rudimentary database and programming skills will be featured in ORC's person spec for future hires to the scriptwriting team.

Dream is reality

Another break from the past is the cost. SPSS has revamped its price model and now offers affordable entry-level pricing to attract back the SME and in-house users it seemed to have deserted for a while. I have already seen this make Dimensions much cheaper than its high-end competitors, who have been enjoying a few good years while the Dimensions vision lay over the horizon. The dream is reality. It's not a vision anymore. | Q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online research

By Allen Hogg

Lingering differences

After more than a decade of Web surveys, online findings still depart from phone survey results

A check of the *Quirk's Marketing Research Review* online article archive shows it was a decade ago when the U.S. research community first began debating the merits of using the Internet as a data collection method. Not long after, reports began being published from parallel surveys conducted simultaneously on the telephone and on the Web.

One might expect that in 2005, researchers would have a solid grasp on how online respondent populations are likely to differ from those reached through telephone interviewing - and how study results are likely to be affected by the different survey methods.

There remains, however, uncertainty among many researchers about how their study results might change when switching from phone to online data collection. Some research companies tout being able to project from online samples to the general population, leaving clients disappointed when they find the demographics of Internet survey respondents differ from the known profile of their target populations and the responses to their Web questionnaires don't resemble those obtained in previous phone surveying.

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One reason definitive knowledge has not emerged is that the populations that can be reached through commercial sample providers have continued to shift as Internet penetration has increased and online panels have evolved their recruitment methods. The populations that can be reached through telephone surveying might also be changing, as ever-greater percentages of the public decline to participate in research, screen calls, or cannot be reached because they have shifted to exclusive use of mobile telephones.

Population and methodological differences

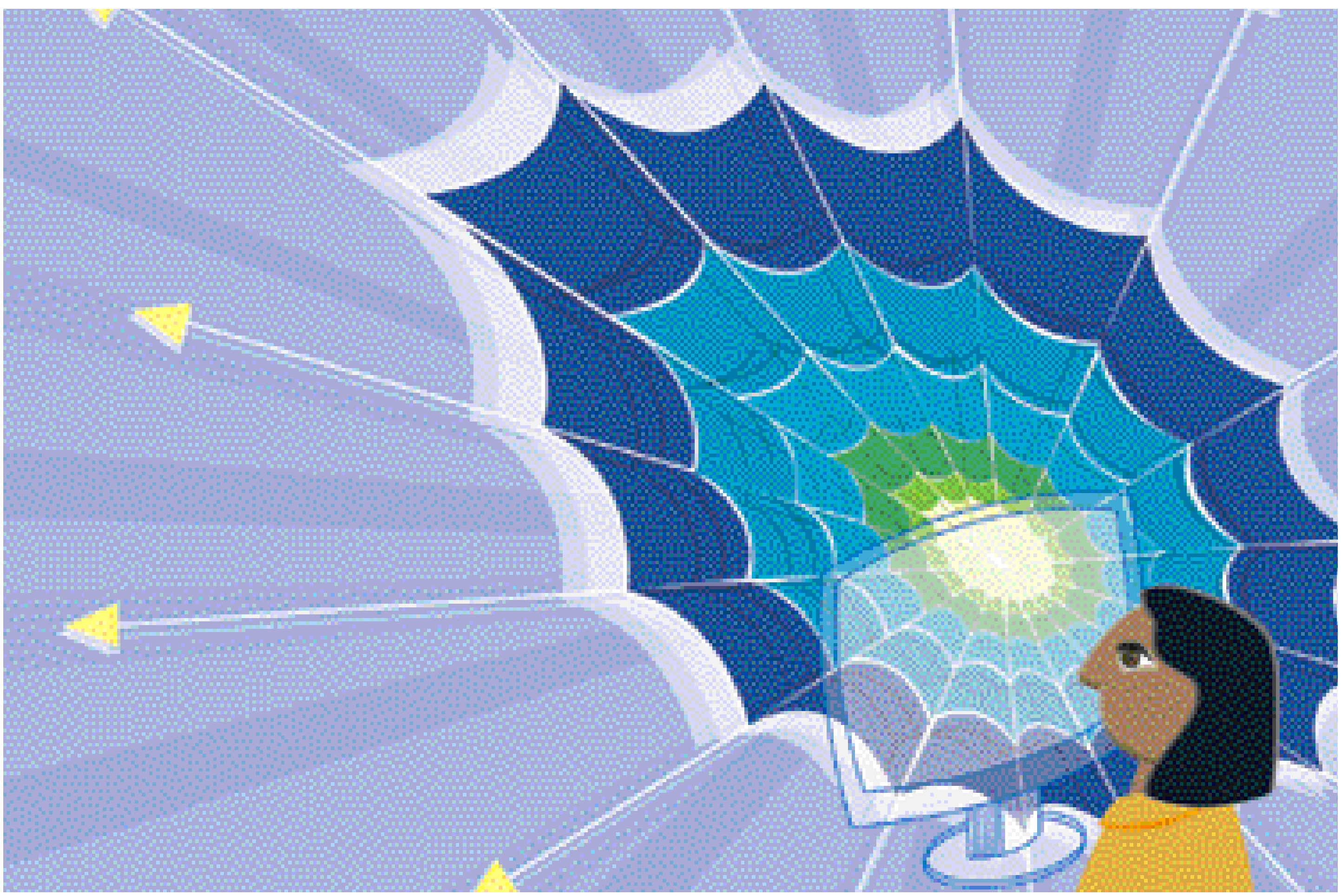
Millward Brown began its parallel surveying in 1997. Summarizing findings across parallel studies conducted during just the last few years, however, probably sheds better light on how Web and phone results are likely to differ in 2005.

An investigation of two dozen side-by-side research efforts Millward Brown conducted in the U.S. between 2001 and 2004 shows that, despite the shrinking percentage of Americans who do not have Internet access, the population that completes a Web survey can still differ in important ways from phone respondents if appropriate controls aren't put in place to prevent such deviations.

Researchers should also expect persistent changes in responses driven primarily by the difference in data collection method. It has long been recognized that a person will respond in different ways to a self-administered and an interviewer-administered survey. There can, for example, be a tendency to present more "socially desirable" responses when speaking with interviewers. Web surveys also allow for presenting visual stimuli in ways phone surveys cannot, which will have an effect on results.

It is hoped that Millward Brown's experience with parallel Web and phone research will be relevant to a large number of researchers. The organization's side-by-side surveys have centered on consumer experience with brands and marketing communications in a number of different product categories, including foods and beverages, home and personal care products, clothing, automobiles, health care devices, telecommunications and Internet sites and services. Consequently, screening requirements have varied considerably from study to study.

The parallel studies have also involved a number of different online sample suppliers. Millward Brown does not rely on a single online sample partner but instead helps clients choose the most appropriate and cost-effective source for



each Internet study that Millward Brown programs and hosts. The findings here include results obtained from members of the Lightspeed Consumer Panel, Survey Sampling International's SurveySpot panel, and the Greenfield Online panel, as well as from respondents going to the Opinion Place survey site. In some of the parallel studies, no single provider could be found to meet the study's ongoing online sample needs, so Millward Brown surveyed individuals from multiple sample vendors in order to keep the respondent mix consistent over time.

Demographics

An unfiltered set of respondents from any of these online sample sources will probably not match the demographic profile of U.S. adults. Most obviously, those who join panels or go to survey sites are predominantly women. It is not, however, difficult to get an equal number of men and women to take any particular survey, if that is what is desired. A panel will simply send out e-mail invitations to the appropriate proportions of men and women, and Millward Brown will use a quota management system to ensure that the right balance between the sexes is maintained among those completing the questionnaire. In none of the parallel studies that we have hosted in the past few years has the percentage of female respondents been significantly greater online than it was on the phone.

On other demographic characteristics, it can be easy for subtle differences in distributions of phone and Web respondents to emerge if controls aren't set up carefully. For example, without quota controls in place, online respondents can tend to cluster more around the middle of the adult age scale than phone respondents do.

Online respondents can also cluster more around the middle of the household income scale than phone respondents. (Even though people with high incomes disproportionately have online access, members of households with annual incomes greater than $80,000 can actually be under-represented among members of online communities who agree to take surveys for what are typically nominal incentives.) In many cases, education quotas will be more appropriate than income quotas for controlling online respondents, as differences in education classifications between online and phone respondents are typically greater than differences seen in reported income levels – not surprising considering that a certain degree of literacy is required to complete online surveys.

Media usage and psychographics

Of course, the greatest difference between respondents completing a Web questionnaire and those completing a telephone interview is that all the online respondents must have access to the Internet and be willing and able to complete the survey. Even when telephone respondents have been restricted to those with Web access, online respondents will tend to report greater usage of the Internet.

Although some researchers have expressed concern that online respondents are using the Internet in lieu of other media, we have not found evidence to support this. When media usage has been examined in parallel studies, a higher percentage of online respondents have indicated watching television in the prior week, with more reported hours of viewing than phone respondents. There may be a stigma associated with heavy TV viewing that makes phone respondents less likely to admit to interviewers how much television they watch, but online respondents have also reported more magazine and newspaper readership than phone respondents.

Even if phone and online profiles match perfectly, there still might be psychographic differences between the populations taking phone and Web surveys. A 23-year-old single white male with a college education and a full-time job who has joined an online panel or gone to a survey site might express opinions and exhibit behaviors different from his counterpart who takes a call from a marketing research firm and agrees to complete a survey – and both of these people might be different from their counterpart who does neither.

Demographic weighting has not, for example, eliminated the tendency for online respondents to be more likely than telephone respondents to favor niche and trendy products in some categories. Compared with telephone respondents, online respondents might also be more variety-seeking. For example, a greater percentage of Web respondents have said that they are willing to buy new brands of products that they had not heard of before entering a store.

Brand awareness measures

Because most of the parallel surveys conducted by Millward Brown have been continuous tracking studies designed to provide feedback on the effectiveness of marketing communications and its impact on perceptions of the client's brand, key metrics typically include brand awareness.

Although the correlation coefficient between unaided awareness of products among online respondents and unaided awareness of those same products among phone respondents has been a very high .94, unaided awareness online has averaged about four percentage points higher than unaided awareness on the phone. This difference is likely driven by the questionnaire settings. Although phone interviewers are trained to probe for additional brands when respondents stop volunteering them, respondents might be uncomfortable keeping the phone silent for too long as they rack their brains to think of, say, another model of sport utility vehicle. The online respondent facing a screen of blank text boxes, on the other hand, might see it as a challenge to fill them up and keep thinking about the question longer.

In terms of aided awareness, scores from online respondents are again, on average, four percentage points higher than those of phone respondents, and the correlation coefficient between scores from the two methods is again very high at .90. There has, on average, been no difference seen in total awareness scores for well-known products with awareness levels greater than 90 percent. Instead, the online edge in total awareness is primarily seen for products at a middle level of awareness - and may be driven in part by Millward Brown's standard to use logos or package shots instead of or along with brand names when asking respondents if they are aware of products.

Marketing communications

When respondents have been asked directly whether they have seen any advertising or marketing communications for particular brands, the correlation coefficient between phone and online awareness scores has again been high: .92. On average, however, the awareness scores among online respondents has been seven percentage points higher than the awareness score among phone respondents.

When respondents have been asked about awareness of advertising or communications through individual media, the results have varied. As might be expected, online respondents have been half-again as likely as phone respondents to say they are aware of Internet communications about particular brands. Online respondents have also been more likely to indicate awareness of communications through direct mail and, to lesser extents, radio, magazines, newspapers and television. Telephone respondents, on the other hand, have been more likely to indicate awareness of communications about a brand through such low-tech means as outdoor advertising and word-of-mouth.

Respondents also are often asked if they are familiar with specific television advertisements and if they can recall the brand that was advertised. In the parallel studies examined, the percentage of online respondents correctly naming the brand that was advertised after saying they have seen the commercial was, on average, 39 percent, compared with just 27 percent for phone respondents. A prime driver of this difference is likely the fact that phone respondents have been read verbal descriptions of the ads, while Internet respondents have typically been exposed to visual stills from that commercial.

Brand imagery

Another key feature of many of Millward Brown's parallel surveys has been a section asking respondents to indicate which of a series of statements apply to the client's brands, as well as to the brands of its key competitors. On these items, people taking phone surveys have generally responded more positively than those completing online questionnaires. For the best-known client brand in each study, phone respondents have, on average, said 46 percent of the statements read apply to that brand. By contrast, those completing surveys on the Internet have, on average, indicated that only 38 percent of the statements listed apply to the best-known client brand.

Some commentators have talked about the "intense candor" of Web respondents, even when compared with individuals responding by other self-administered means, such as mail surveys. This could be one factor driving down the number of times respondents will indicate that a statement applies to the brand.

The layout of the survey on the computer screen is, however, likely also contributing to the differences seen. On the phone, respondents are asked about the statements one at a time, with probing if a respondent associates just one brand to a particular statement. On the Internet, these statements are often presented along with the brands that could be chosen in a single grid. Online respondents asked to "check all that apply" in such situations might be inclined to report fewer brands than phone respondents. Indeed, negative statements as well as positive statements are more frequently associated with brands by telephone respondents.

Despite the absolute differences in number of endorsements, it should be noted that there is still a high correlation (.86) between the percentage of respondents associating a statement with a particular brand on the phone and the percentage of online respondents associating that same statement to that particular brand. When brand imagery responses are analyzed to determine strengths and weaknesses of particular brands, it is a very rare case when something that is identified as a substantial strength of a brand by one set of respondents is deemed a weakness of the brand by respondents whose views were gathered through the other data collection method.

Measuring "reality"

Identifying that phone and online survey data can be different does not, of course, mean that one data collection method is better than the other. Although telephone surveys have been a trusted tool of the research industry for many decades now, when results of Internet questionnaires differ from phone study findings, it could be that the online responses are coming closer to estimating the actual opinions and behavior of members of the population of interest.

To arrive at such a conclusion, it is necessary to have information about the target population that is known through something other than the survey process. Millward Brown clients, for example, will sometimes have sales data indicating the market shares of their own and competitive brands. In several of the parallel tests investigated, this share data has been compared to reported purchase and awareness figures from the surveys.

When this has been done, the correlation coefficient of a brand's share and its performance on the selected online survey measure has been greater than the correlation coefficient for the comparable phone results as often as not. Neither data collection method has emerged as the consistent winner when efforts have been made to line up study findings with what is otherwise known of the reality the survey has been designed to estimate.

In other words, the fact that results from online questionnaires are likely to differ from parallel phone survey findings does not mean that they are somehow worse. For some sorts of questions, Web surveys might inspire more thoughtful, honest responses – and the use of visual prompts can spur more accurate recollections. Given cost and timing advantages that online data collection typically provides, researchers wishing to survey U.S. populations that can be reached through commercial online sample providers might be hard-pressed to justify avoiding the Internet at this point in its history.

When tracking studies or previous survey waves have been conducted on the telephone, however, it still is a good idea to engage in a period of parallel research so that changes resulting from the shift in methods can be separated from real changes in the population that have taken place over time. If the online sampling has been designed carefully, researchers should then be able to proceed forward with results from the initial Web surveying serving as a new benchmark. | Q

online research

Feeling insecure about your image?

By Harley Rivet
and David Bradford

A look at preventing the copying of visual stimuli in online research

Online methods of conducting research have greatly extended the reach of projects where presenting stimuli is of key importance. Traditionally, projects that involved visual stimuli (concept tests, product/package design, advertising etc.) often required that respondents be mailed packages or be brought into a focus group facility. Although these options are still very viable, the increasing demand to turn projects around quicker and cheaper is being answered by conducting more and more studies online, where visuals can be easily presented and data gathered relatively quickly from dispersed respondents.

An increasing proportion of online surveys, online focus groups and online bulletin boards are incorporating images, not only as part of the research, but also as a way of making research more engaging to respondents. However, the accessibility the Internet affords researchers to conduct studies with stimuli must also be balanced with the security concerns that presenting images over the Internet brings up.

With today's technology, digital images can be easily duplicated and distributed in a matter of minutes. This article will discuss some of the key things to be aware of when using images in online research, the security measures that can be taken to protect images, and recommendations regarding the appropriate approach depending on the sensitivity of the material and resources available to the researcher.

• Internet security

The Internet is a terrific medium for sharing and accessing information. That said, there is also no surefire way of protecting content displayed on the Internet. But there are measures one can take to deter and inhibit the theft of online content. Sensitive images can be encoded with a watermark that indicates copyright information and can possibly also be tracked in the event they are being distributed without authorization. More elaborate methods may involve hosting images on a secure, password-protected Web server, or, more advanced yet, converting images into an encrypted format that requires a browser component like a plug-in, third-party software download, or Java applet to view the content. The latter are more appropriate when trying to control access to images, but in the case where you are conducting an online survey and want as many respondents' opinions as possible, the focus shifts to pro-

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tecting content from duplication and redistribution.

• Concerns over presenting confidential topics with today's technology

Just as researchers can now reach more potential respondents using the Internet, respondents in any study have the ability to share information over the Internet very quickly with greater numbers of people than at any other time in history. Digital technology has created new challenges for researchers who need to present stimuli of a confidential nature in both online and traditional research environments. Online studies present greater potential risks since the respondent is on their own at their computer, and they have a variety of ways available to them to copy materials.

• Ways of copying Web-based stimuli (print screen, save as, copying, etc.)

There is no shortage of ways for any respondent to copy materials they are exposed to on the Web. Almost all browsers provide an easy way to copy images with a few clicks of a mouse and those images can then be pasted from the clipboard into a variety of software programs. In most operating systems, all it takes is a couple of quick keystrokes to do the same thing. With most of the world running computers on Windows, the "print screen" button on the keyboard offers yet another way to capture what is on a Web page and then paste it elsewhere. Even if these functions are disabled or not functional, there is nothing that would prevent a determined respondent from taking a photograph of something shown on their computer screen with a video or digital camera and then copying or sharing these images with anyone they want. There are sophisticated software programs that will capture multiple images within an exercise such as an online survey, online qualitative study or a usability test. There are also many software programs available that allow for editing of a stimulus to make it more difficult to trace a purloined image.

• Qualitative image presentation and potential exposure risks

Concern over security of materials presented to respondents in qualitative studies is nothing new, according to Pierre Bélisle, an experienced Canadian moderator and analyst of qualitative research. "While unauthorized capture and duplication of digitized works is an issue, the issue of image security has always been around. Clients have always been concerned about revealing proprietary materials such as new product concepts and about focus group participants walking out with study materials, so they have sometimes sought to bind participants with non-disclosure agreements. At the end of the day, I'm not sure how much we should concern ourselves with this beyond reasonable due diligence. If a client's security concerns are so great that he/she would rather shoot all the participants after the focus group, then perhaps they shouldn't be doing research at all."

Online qualitative studies pose somewhat less risk than online quantitative studies due to the smaller numbers of respondents involved and the somewhat greater control over stimuli exposure. Telephone recruiting is also more likely to be used for online qualitative studies and this can provide an additional level of personalized contact and scrutiny. Many online qualitative studies use client-supplied telephone lists of their own customers which allow more opportunities to include signed non-disclosure agreements. This would be much more costly and difficult to manage with many quantitative studies due to the numbers of individuals involved, and may not be possible to do with certain online panel sources. Check with your recruiting source to see if it is possible to get signed non-disclosure agreements as part of the recruiting procedure.

Synchronous online qualitative studies usually involve fewer numbers of people, and most software developed specifically for online qualitative research allows for the moderator to control the stimuli that is presented. The moderator will have control over what the respondent sees in the whiteboard, and if a stimulus is presented in a separate browser window, the moderator can also close it so exposure to stimulus is controlled for the amount of time it is visible. In the synchronous online study, the moderator can also quickly eject any respondent who raises suspicion by their comments or if the client observer has concerns. In most cases, they are communicating with six to eight respondents, so greater attention can be paid to their comments or any suspicious inactivity. The research is also conducted within a shorter time frame, with 90 minutes being fairly standard. It is also possible to combine telephone interviews with online stimuli presentation, achieving greater moderator control over the frequency and length of time for exposure to stimuli.

Asynchronous studies or real-time qual/quant studies will usually involve larger numbers of respondents, so there are increased risks and less control over the length of time for exposure to stimuli, unless additional programming is done. Asynchronous online qualitative studies using a bulletin-board format allow respondents to participate at their own schedule, so additional programming is required to prevent stimuli from being seen multiple times or to limit the exposure time and frequency.

• Quantitative image presentation and potential exposure risks

The higher the number of respondents involved, the greater the chances that something could be copied and distributed. "We advise our clients that security on the Web is no better or worse than security in the mail," says Bernie Klug, senior vice president, interactive operations, at research firm TNS North America. "In both methodologies your stimulus is placed out of your control. There are a number of techniques that can be used to make it difficult for a respondent to 'steal' the image. Use of Java applets, password protection for survey access, and confidentiality agreements are good techniques to keep honest respondents honest. Clients must carefully assess the risks of exposing sensitive ideas before proceeding with any form of research."

Quantitative studies frequently utilize the numerous online panels that are available, so it would be important to include willingness to download any required protection plug-in in your screening criteria. This additional requirement could potentially reduce incidence if there is reluctance to install plug-ins in order to participate in a study.

• Software and programming solutions

There are a number of software solutions available for protecting online images from being copied, and some market research companies have even developed their own proprietary technologies. The solutions range in price and complexity, and choosing the appropriate solution for your needs should be in proportion to the value or sensitivity of the content being displayed. Other factors to consider are the technical resources you have available to you, the technical savvy of your respondents to perhaps download a plug-in that prevents them from copying a displayed image, and the accessibility issues that arise from incorporating protection technologies that may not be readily compatible with typical browser settings.

At present, most of the available software solutions require the respondent to download a plug-in that will allow them to view an image while disabling their ability to copy or save it to their computer. These software solutions are continuously making advances to allow for easier implementation and access by respondents. If purchasing a software program to encrypt and host protected images is beyond your budget or technical infrastructure, some online data collection providers may already have solutions they can offer you that will save you the worry.

Since an online data collection provider's business is programming surveys and/or hosting online focus groups, established firms will likely already have a software package or process for protecting images you wish to display. One of these techniques is allowing an image in an online survey or focus group to only be displayed for a certain amount of time. In the case of an online survey, a timing mechanism is pre-programmed into the application so that an image will disappear after a certain number of seconds. The goal here is to only present images long enough to enable the respondent to answer a question. Another technique involves the proprietary formatting of images into an HTML document that protects them from being copied. Although respondents will still be able to click on a picture and save it to their computer, the image will not be visible when they go to open it. These techniques still do not provide complete security, and in the event your stimuli are very confidential, other measures may need to be taken.

• Wetware solutions

When software or technical solutions are not sufficient measures for protecting online images (i.e., they do not protect against respondents taking a picture of their computer screen with a camera), additional options are to involve legally-binding confidentiality agreements that can be enforced if images are copied or leaked, or implementing strict qualification criteria when recruiting respondents for research. Respondents can be sent non-disclosure agreements they must sign before participating in a research project, or the same type of process can be administered online by having respondents check "agree" or "do not agree" to the terms of a research project prior to being given access to a survey or focus group. In the event that the nature of the stimuli is highly confidential, then perhaps foregoing an online approach is the best option.

Recommendations

Image protection and digital rights management is still in its infancy and, therefore, many more advancements are sure to evolve. Jupiter Research predicts that U.S. companies will increase spending on digital rights management software to $274 million by 2008. There are a number of things to consider and the measures taken should be in proportion to the value and sensitivity of the content being protected. Below is a checklist of things to consider when online image security is of key concern:

1. If appropriate and possible, print

a copyright notice in very small type onto the face of the image itself - unless this significantly detracts from the presentation you intend. You may wish to also watermark your images and perhaps embed an invisible copyright statement inside the image data.

2. Name your images something traceable like "ABC.Research_001.jpg" and not simply "image4-01.jpg." This allows you to go to google.com and do searches based on the file name to see if others are using your image as-is, and/or hosting your content on a Web site.

3. For mid-grade protection you can choose a system or data collection provider that prohibits right-click saving, and/or a system that uses either an applet or plug-in which can also prohibit printing, PDF capture, and other copying methods.

4. At the high end you would use a system which combines many of the above-mentioned procedures and also ties in a non-disclosure agreement that respondents must accept.

Any system that uses a plug-in or Java applet may cause compatibility problems with certain browsers, so it's important to know your intended audience. Too much protection may make your content unviewable by your actual audience.

One final thought: If you require a 100-percent guarantee that images will not be copied, we would not recommend putting them online. The extra steps that can be taken will help but will not eliminate the possibility that a stimulus can be copied. Any exposure, regardless of whether it takes place face-to-face or online, means that this person or group will now have some knowledge of it and could potentially share it with others. | Q

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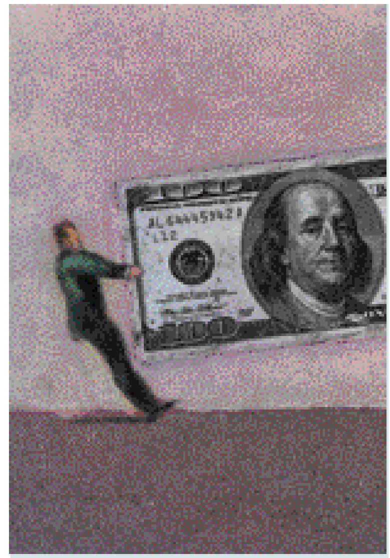
online research

Strange bedfellows or friendly neighbors?



By Julianna Berry

Umbria Communications in Boulder, Colo., captures and analyzes unsolicited opinions culled from the musings of nine million bloggers per day using language processing technology.

Invoke Solutions in Wellesley, Mass., provides a software platform that gives online focus groups a whole new meaning, accommodating up to 175 participants and 30-40 observers with high performance and real-time analytics.

MarketRx in Bridgewater, N.J., applies sophisticated analytics to pharmaceutical company data, combines it with primary research data using its physician panel, and delivers sales optimization projections to 16 of the top 20 U.S. pharmaceutical manufacturers.

What's the common thread between these companies? They are private market research organizations that have all obtained venture funding since 2001. And they're not the only ones.

Venture capital and market research

Key component

Market research has never seen the level of venture involvement that high-tech, communications or bio-tech have enjoyed. However, venture capital has been a key component in the growth of many companies that have pioneered new research methods.

In the dot-com era of the mid-to-late 1990s, venture capital investment swelled to record highs, peaking at over $100 billion invested in 2000, and dropping off sharply around 2001 when the high-tech investment bubble burst. By 2003 less than $20 billion annually was invested. During the heady investment period of 1995-2001, several market research companies obtained venture funding, particularly those positioned to lead the industry toward online data collection.

A partial list of companies funded from 1995 to 2001 reads like a Who's Who in online research brand awareness: Greenfield Online, MarketTools (Zoomerang), Harris Interactive, E-Poll, Insight Express. Many of those former start-ups are now brand-trusted incumbents in a fairly mature online survey business.

As higher-bandwidth consumer Web usage has become mainstream, new possibilities for more directly connecting companies and consumers emerge, creating entrepreneurial opportunities and corresponding venture interest. And indeed, though venture investment levels in general, and in market research specifically, are much lower today than in 2000,

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MarketTools: a case study

First founded in 1997 with nearly half a million in individual or "angel" investment, MarketTools obtained its first institutional round of venture funding in November 1998, raising $4 million from ComVentures and Capstone Ventures. In December 1999, MarketTools raised $25 million more from a syndicate of six VC firms, with Dominion Ventures leading the round. InterWest Ventures, Monitor Clipper Partners, and Oak Hill Venture Partners were other new entrants. In March of 2001, several additional new investors joined forces to raise another $20 million, notably including two of their clients as corporate venture investors, General Mills and Procter & Gamble.

With nearly $50 million raised, how is MarketTools doing today? According to Beth Rounds, senior vice president for business development, MarketTools has enjoyed 75 percent year-by-year growth since 2002. Most of its business is custom research services performed under the MarketTools shingle for corporate and manufacturing clients in the consumer packaged goods industry. Zoomerang, its online self-service survey administration platform, accounts for approximately 15 percent of its annual revenue. "One advantage we've had," says Rounds, "is that we're still a relatively young company, born out of the Internet. Traditional market research firms have legacy systems they have to battle - tremendous investments in infrastructure and technology. MarketTools wasn't encumbered in that way, and it's remained much more nimble."

Rounds believes that MarketTools' competitive edge lies in its abilities to make deep inroads into their clients' organizations. "Manufacturers are looking for consumer insight systems that are multi-faceted. They want to be able to mine the information and make it easily usable, in almost real-time, with the ability to immediately import it into Power Point for management presentations. The question has been, how do you use technology to enable that? If you've got the panel, the people and the technology to do everything from exploratory to heavy-duty confirmatory work, and you embed your systems into the organizations at large companies, you've got a compelling offering."

MarketTools is still private and has not yet made the big exit that VCs seek. But Steve Bowsher, general partner with InterWest Partners in Menlo Park, Calif., and an investor in MarketTools, says, "We fully expect MarketTools to be a win. MarketTools has continued to achieve significant levels of growth." And even if online surveys are no longer the hot new thing, Bowsher says, "We'll still remain competitive. People are still using them and increasing their use of them. MarketTools is well-positioned because it got its lead when they were the new thing."

some innovative companies offering market research products and services are still attracting investor attention.

Standing start

What do VCs look for? "Venture capital looks for companies that can go from a standing start to a highly valued company in five years," says Steve Bowsher, general partner with InterWest Partners in Menlo Park, Calif., an investor in MarketTools (owners of the Zoomerang brand) and in RHK. "A lot of sectors need to build companies over a longer time, and though they can build valuable companies, it may not be in a venture-like time frame."

Anthea Stratigos, co-founder and CEO of Outsell, Inc., an advisory firm tracking the information industry, agrees. "VCs are looking for the next Google, Yahoo or Apple. They're looking for the next big thing. They want companies that can scale up quickly, which may not be a realistic goal for most market research companies. Those that are fundamentally reengineering the way market research is done may have those rare instances of scale."

A successful exit strategy is a key criterion for venture investment. Some of the bubble-era investments have already exited well. Harris Interactive went public in December 1999. WebSideStory had an initial public offering in February 2004. Greenfield went public in July 2004. MarketTools remains private with strong growth (see sidebar).

Why would a VC invest in market research now? Steve Bowsher of InterWest Partners explains, "Though market research is a fairly mature industry, growing at close to gross domestic product rates, the segment of Internet research is increasingly grabbing a larger portion of the market, and can achieve near venture-rate returns."

There are other reasons for venture capitalists to add research firms to their portfolios. Hugh Tietjen, a partner in Rutherford Group, founded Computer Intelligence (now Harte-Hanks Market Intelligence) in 1969, and today sits on the boards of three market research companies: RHK, Primetrica and Current Analysis. He believes investors build relationships with market research not only for big exits, but also "to give them a window on the industry." Tietjen says VCs invest in specialty market research "to have access to top-level analysts, which helps them, when making another equity investment, to get the background information they need. It also helps them look good to entrepreneurs, perhaps justifying higher prices, because of the expertise they bring."

Tietjen says that most of the VCs on the board of RHK were investors in other telecom startups. When Gartner Group was started, Bessemer Venture Partners was the only VC firm involved, and since they were actively making IT investments, a relationship with Gartner made sense.

Three types

When VCs are looking at market research companies to invest in, they look for three types of opportunities, according to Outsell, Inc.'s Anthea Stratigos:

1. Verticals: companies doing in-depth research into new, emerging or growing vertical markets, such as pharmaceuticals, telecommunications, optics.

2. Methods: companies developing new tools or methods of data collection, such as online surveys and newer paradigms.

3. Customer experience management: companies enabling market researchers to obtain data and perform analytics on their own customer interactions, especially over the Web.

Recent investments bear out this three-pronged theory.

• <u>Vertical markets</u>

MarketRx and RHK are examples of market research companies that have hitched their wagons to specific industries of present interest to the investment community.

MarketRx

According to President and CEO Jaswinder (Jassi) Chadha, pharmaceutical companies spend nearly $30 billion per year on marketing. "We help our customers improve their returns on that investment." What distinguishes marketRx from other companies providing pharma research, Chadha says, is a suite of proprietary tools that can mine mountains of data already captured by pharmaceutical companies. "It's a data-rich industry. I can't think of any other industry that tracks more information. You can look at that history and do a good job of predicting what the future will be."

MarketRx boasts Pfizer, Merck, Bristol-Myers Squibb, Johnson & Johnson, AstraZeneca, Novartis and many others on its client list. It has raised $14 million in venture funding so far, yet its current assets are greater than the amount raised. "That's very attractive to any investor," says Chadha. "We're leveraging the capital and not spending it."

RHK

RHK, which tracks the optical telecommunications equipment industry, raised $6.3 million from three venture investors and a private fund in June 2000, when the optical industry was still growing rapidly. Its clients include Siemens, Alcatel, Marconi, Lucent, Ciena, Cisco, Nortel, Fujitsu, NEC, Hitachi, Agilent, Mitsubishi and many others.

CEO John Soden is himself a venture capitalist by background. Soden believes that technologies that shape future research aren't the vehicle in market research to start a business. "The primary issue is, who are the clients, what is the information they need, and how do you get close to them? It's more likely that a sustainable customer advantage can be gained by first focusing on a specific customer decision-making issue or process than on the delivery method."

• Methodology

The founders and investors involved with Umbria Communications and Invoke Solutions would probably disagree with Soden. Both companies are developing Internet-based technology platforms that could radically reinvent the way market research is done. Both see extensions of their platforms beyond traditional market research and into other corporate functions. Both are growing rapidly, and both have raised rounds of venture funding as recently as the first quarter of 2005.

Umbria Communications

Howard Kaushansky, founder and CEO of Umbria Communications, believes that a blog-based market research company was the inevitable convergence of two realities. The first is that traditional market research relies on answers to questions, which cannot escape bias, and which are point-in-time bound. The second is that the explosion of Web log (or blog) usage has created a vast universe of unbiased, spontaneous consumer opinions, waiting to be profitably harvested. "Companies compete today less on product differentiation and more on brand and image," says Kaushansky. "Competing on brand means your momentum within public opinion becomes critical."

Umbria's platform mines over nine million Web logs each day, searching for references and comments on their clients' products. Using sophisticated linguistics algorithms, it can derive gender, location and other demographic specifics about the bloggers, and provide clients with weekly updates on attitude shifts regarding their products. In the fourth quarter of 2004, Umbria saw 400 percent sales growth.

"When you marry notions of 'what are people talking about' with 'who is doing the speaking,' you end up with very structured, very traditional-looking market research," says Kaushansky. "You get focus group-level information, weekly, without bias, from thousands of consumers rather than seven or eight."

Tom Washing, managing partner at Sequel Venture Partners, is an investor in Umbria. (Sequel also invested in Harris Interactive.) Washing says, "Customers are ecstatic about the information they're getting. It's more organic. They can be more of the 'fly on the wall' that they really want to be."

Invoke Solutions

Invoke Solutions has raised over $20 million over a series of several rounds since its inception in 1999. It grew in revenue by 70 percent in 2004 and projects over 100 percent growth for 2005, with customers such as Nestle, Pepsi, Marriott and Unilever. But it didn't set out in the beginning to be a market research company at all.

The founders were trying to solve the problem of prohibitively sluggish performance in online learning systems once more than a few participants were signed in. They developed a platform where today up to 175 users can participate in a session, viewed by 30-40 observers who can redirect the dialogue if desired. Suddenly the application to market research and online focus groups was obvious.

An Invoke session combines some of the strengths of online focus groups and online surveys with high speed and performance, regardless of users' processor speed. Executives can observe the sessions as they take place, ask questions on the fly, and see the results instantly, polling the audience for agreement with individuals' statements.

"We can submit individual responses anonymously back out to the pool and say, 'Thumbs up, thumbs down, do you agree with this?'" says Corey Torrence, Invoke's CEO. "Our objective is to have Invoke become a verb for Global 2000 companies. We've had clients say to us: 'There are certain major decisions we don't like to make without Invoking the issue first.'"

Torrence sees an opportunity to use the Invoke platform for other functions besides product or concept testing. Clients now use Invoke internally for employee feedback studies. Invoke markets this service as its "Human Resource Management" offering, which has seen a growing demand. "I'd like to say we dreamed up this new offering, but I can't," says Torrence. "A client actually approached us and said, 'This would be really helpful with some of our employee issues. We feel we can't get a finger on the pulse of key issues disrupting our workforce.'" Company executives believed, based on an earlier focus group and an internal survey, that compensation was the root of the morale problem, but found after Invoking the question that compensation wasn't even on the Top 5 list of employee concerns.

• Customer experience management

As technology has enabled companies to become more responsive to individual consumers, a new hybrid technology has emerged: customer experience management, which straddles the divide between customer relationship management and market research. These platforms use various means to harvest user feedback throughout the online experience.

While such companies use a variety of terms to describe themselves - and generally "market research" isn't one of them - these means of delivering and utilizing customer experience data have secured funding from numerous investors for several start-ups. Telespectrum Worldwide (IPO 1996), CusomerLinx (first funded 1998, still private), Vividence (first funded 1999, acquired 2004 by Keynote Systems), and Satmetrix Systems (first funded 1999, still private) are all examples of such companies.

The future?

What do VCs see as the future of market research investment opportunities? David Brown, managing partner of Oak Hill Venture Partners in Menlo Park, Calif., says, "Armed with the ability to use IT, market research is going global. Venture capital's future involvement will probably increasingly take the form of growth private equity or later-stage venture investment, with a lot of consolidation of smaller companies taking place."

Mike Krupka, a managing director at Bain Capital in Boston and investor in Invoke Solutions, is less concerned with industry than opportunity when assessing potential investments. "If we found a highly differentiated technology that we thought could be big, focusing only on the market research industry, that's fine. It could just as easily be selling to the milk industry, or to real estate. We don't think any industry is bad; we just look at the opportunity."

Good reason to invest

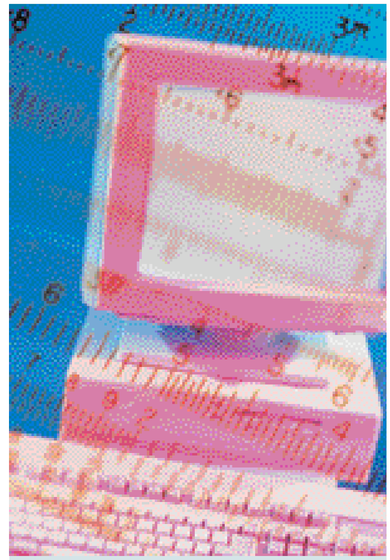
Natural ties connect the venture and research communities. Whether for strategic alliances with top-level analysts, or for purely financial wins, VCs have good reason to invest in research. Many venture capitalists perceive themselves as market researchers, reviewing hundreds of start-ups per year, and performing deeply-drilled due diligence research on industries of interest.

While it is unclear whether venture investment in market research will ever again rise to the levels enjoyed prior to 2001, venture capital will continue to have a presence in the research industry, using its capital and its strategic insights to influence where and how research is performed. | Q

online research

But will they buy it?

Using an online perceptometer to test television ads



By Ed Erickson

Some of us can remember recruiting hundreds of consumers to hotel ballrooms to watch commercials projected on a big screen to provide researchers with feedback via a handheld dial known as an audience meter. Economic downturns, research budget cuts and a host of other forces conspired to curtail the use of this useful but expensive form of research.

Today, we are seeing a resurgence of interest in the technique. The increasingly widespread adoption of broadband Internet access has prompted an increase in the use of "perceptometers" which track moment-by-moment reaction to television ads using Flash or streaming video (Figure 1). This use of technology has eliminated most of the cost and logistical issues associated with the old central-location studies, making it a viable ad testing option. Since we first demonstrated these techniques publicly at the ARF Week of Workshops in 2000, a number of varieties of this online methodology have emerged.

Along with this rise in the use of the technique comes the obvious question: What do these curves mean? Looking at a curve move up and down, one can quite easily pick out the parts of the ad that a viewer did or didn't like. However, most would agree that the measure of an ad's value isn't whether or not people liked it, it is whether or not people took the desired action as a result of seeing it.

Asking the simple question "So what does a curve that looks like that mean?" led us to the line of research discussed here. Admittedly, we've related self-reported purchase intent to the curve profiles, not actual purchase behavior, but the relationships we've uncovered are important nonetheless.

The research

We examined data collected on 14 different television ads in mature consumer product and service categories. Each ad was for a well-understood, low-to-moderate involvement product or service and was comparable in terms of the viewer's level of effort required to process the information. For each ad, we collected second-by-second spontaneous reaction, followed by an overall rating for purchase intent, relevance and believability. In all cases, respondents were screened to be in the relevant market, so any effects of surveying those with no interest in or use for the product or service advertised were eliminated.

We found that the relationship between the curve and the summary measures of purchase intent, relevance and believability could be best

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Figure 1

described using the average levels and slopes of three segments of the spontaneous reaction curve as well as the overall average level and slope of the curve (Figure 2).

Not surprisingly, purchase intent, relevance and believability are all strongly correlated. However, it isn't reasonable to expect that a judgment is made about the three items simultaneously but rather in sequence. We believe the sequence of processing the ad is relevance, believability and then purchase intent.

The relationships uncovered resulted in three important findings:

1. Viewers make an almost immediate decision about the relevance and believability of an ad.

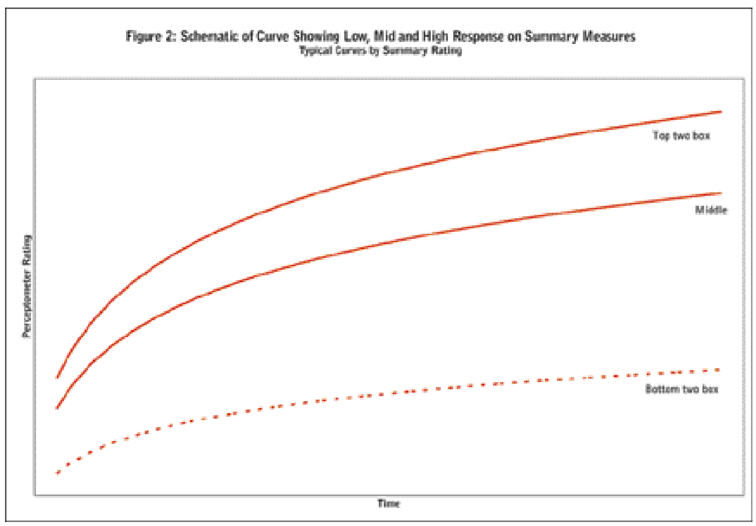
2. The final third of an ad is the most influential in terms of ultimate judgment of purchase intent, relevance and believability.

3. Women are more likely to process more of the information in an ad than men when making purchase decisions and evaluating relevance and believability.

Snap judgments

We examined the spontaneous response curves over the first third of an ad (five seconds for 15-second ads, 10 seconds for 30-second ads) and found a strong relationship between the level and slope of the curve and all three of our summary measures. Higher average levels and the more positive slopes of the curves indicated greater relevance, believability and purchase intent. Figure 3 shows how the initial reaction to the ad relates to the summary measures. Purchase intent, relevance and believability relate similarly to the curve profile, so only a single figure is shown for brevity.

The data clearly show that viewers are making snap judgments about the ads. Analysis of about 1,500 individual curves showed that they either rose at the start of the ad or they didn't rise at all. We did not see any examples of a high rating on any summary measure accompanied by a curve that remained low and flat for any extended period during the ad.



We did not examine specifically what about the ads resulted in the viewer's reaction but we clearly saw a pattern across several different product and service categories. These findings suggest the need for a strong "What's in it for me?" opening to an ad.

It is interesting to note that, while viewers seem to decide if an ad is relevant to them very quickly, the initial reaction alone has little predictive power with respect to relevance, purchase intent or believability. In fact, the ability to predict these measures improves more than fourfold when the rest of the ad is considered.

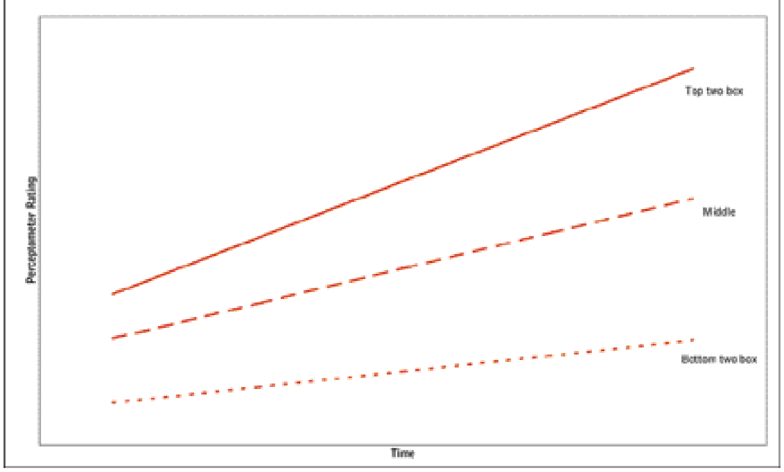


Figure 3: Initial Portion of Curve Relationship to Summary Measure
Curve Slope by Summary Rating

What they see last sticks with them

Our analysis of the perceptometer curves and the summary evaluations of the ads shows that the final third of the ad is the most influential on purchase intent, relevance and believability. As with the initial reaction, a higher average level and a more positive slope for the segment of the spontaneous reaction curve is associated with greater purchase intent, relevance and believability.

The average level of spontaneous reaction during the final third of the ad was the single most important measure in predicting the respondent's summary evaluation of purchase intent, relevance and believability. The influence of the final third of the ad was between two-and-a-half and five times greater than the second most important factor.

In Table 1 and Table 2, the least influential predictor is set equal to 1. The values for the other predictors represent the number of times more influential each predictor is relative to the least influential. Items without numbers do not influence the rating.

The key finding here is that, likely due to the low-involvement nature of the products advertised, the summary judgment is very strongly influenced by the last thing the viewer sees. The lesson for marketers is to finish strong with their ads.

Men and women process information differently

Experience tells us – and academic research confirms – that men and women process marketing information differently. Women tend to process greater amounts of information and apply greater deliberation to decisions than men. We found that men's sum-

Table 1: Relative Influence of Curve on Summary Evaluation			
	Purchase Intent	Relevance	Believability
Average level in first third	2.1		2.5
Average level in middle third		1.0	
Average level in final third	13.0	4.8	9.2
Overall average level			
Slope in first third			
Slope in middle third	1.0		
Slope in final third	1.0		1.0
Overall slope	4.4		4.1

Table 2: Relative Influence of Curves on Summary Measures by Gender						
	Purchase Intent		Relevance		Believability	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
Average level in first third						2.6
Average level in middle third				1.0		
Average level in final third	4.3	15.3	1.0	4.0	3.3	9.9
Overall average level						
Slope in first third						
Slope in middle third		1.5				
Slope in final third	1.0	1.0			1.0	1.0
Overall slope		3.7				4.5

mary measures are influenced almost exclusively by the final third of the ad, where women's summary measures are influenced by the holistic impact of the entire ad.

The lesson we draw from this finding is that advertising aimed at women needs to build its argument throughout the ad, while ads aimed at men need to be much more focused on a strong finish.

Implications

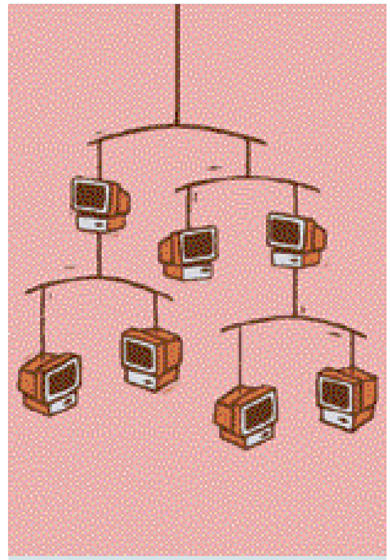
These findings have some important implications for both the conduct of ad research and the development of advertising creative.

First, we can use the relationships explained here to determine question flow in a survey. It is a simple matter for any competent research firm with reasonably sophisticated online technology to detect and act on the pattern in the real-time perceptometer data stream. This pattern recognition can then be used to direct the line of questioning. For example, when a classic low-believability curve is detected, the follow-up questioning can explicitly address reasons for the lack of belief. Alternatively, when a high purchase intent curve is detected, follow-up questioning can be directed to understand timing and dollar value of purchases.

Second, these results provide some insight to marketers in terms of ad execution. The findings of this research clearly show the snap judgment that is made with respect to relevance of an ad. This argues strongly for ads to open with a compelling answer to "What's in it for me?" We've also shown the importance of the final impression, suggesting that marketers should close with a compelling reason to take action. Finally, due to gender differences in information processing, ads targeting women should take care to build the argument for the product or service throughout the ad, while those targeting men should focus more heavily on the strong close. | Q

online research

A communal effort



By Paul J. Strasser
and Michael T. Foley

Ask a group of typical research professionals about online research panels and chances are you'll hear variations on the same response: "Those people are just in it for the money" or "The same people are in multiple panels all over the world," most likely followed by, "Panels are not representative." Before you accept the conventional wisdom on these topics, we'd like to share our experience managing a global online community, PlanetPanel.

The perceptions above are generalizations that don't necessarily capture the full story of online research communities. Panel members are not a homogenous group of survey-takers trolling the Internet looking to make a fast buck. And recent reports, papers and articles suggest that, compared to random-digit dialing, results from high-quality online panels can be representative in nearly all ways, except in markets where online penetration falls below certain thresholds. But that's a topic that has been dealt with before.

Misperceptions about online panels may be a lingering hangover from the past, when many of the early methods for conducting online consumer research were not much more than glorified e-mail lists or only focused on a narrow segment of tech-savvy consumers. However, most modern online research vehicles are high-quality dynamic communities which attract an interesting mix of respondents.

Here's another new wrinkle to enliven the debate. Consumers increasingly are expressing a preference for online surveys versus telephone surveys (see Figure 1). A study among MSI-ITM's PlanetPanel members shows that nearly all (98 percent) prefer online surveys to telephone surveys. Surprisingly, more than half say they no longer participate in telephone surveys because online surveys are less intrusive, more convenient and more private (see Figure 2). This suggests that online panels are reaching a segment that won't be accessible by telephone. So while online research will never cover the offline population, online communities may be the best way to cover the growing and increasingly influential online population.

Online communities require ongoing care and attention

But let's get back to the "they're only in it for the money" premise. Is this true? Our extensive studies of community members indicate that in fact financial gain is not the main motivator for many. Participants derive a variety of benefits from sharing their opinions in a global online community - money could be one of them, but is definitely not the only one.

Three types of value-seekers in online communities

As part of an ongoing effort to understand the needs of our online commu-

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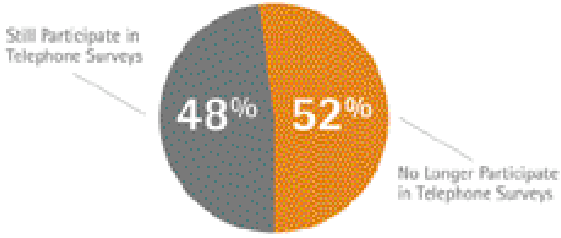
Figure 1

Participation in Telephone Surveys

(Among PlanetPanel® Members)



Source: PlanetPanel® Member Satisfaction Study – Fall 2004

Figure 2

Reasons for Preferring Online Surveys to Telephone Surveys

(Among PlanetPanel® Members)

Top Reasons	% Agreeing
I can complete online surveys at my convenience	94%
I do not like to be interrupted with telephone calls	54%
Online surveys are more private	50%
Online surveys offer drawings and incentives	44%
I can choose topics that interest me online	28%

Source: PlanetPanel® Member Satisfaction Study – Fall 2004

nity, we continuously monitor members. This includes regular satisfaction studies, short satisfaction diagnostics at the end of each survey and one-to-one interviews with selected members who are choosing to leave. Not surprising: We learned that on a basic level, consumers are looking for value in return for information they provide. Perhaps more surprising: Not all of our online community members define value in purely monetary terms. We segmented three primary types of value seekers: Mavens, Online Connecteds and Pay-to-Play.

Mavens are highly motivated by the opportunity to give opinions and influence product decisions. This manifests in their interactions with friends and relatives as well as behavior in an online community. They see market research as an easy way to give information to companies on the types of products and services they'd like to see them develop. Not only do Mavens like to give opinions, but they also want to understand how those opinions are acted upon and hear about the new products and services that are developed as a result of their participation in market research studies.

Online Connecteds are more motivated by the ability to connect to others than the opportunity to offer opinions or earn money. Connecteds want to belong. The more a panel experience feels like a true community, the more satisfied they feel. They visit the community home page often to see what's new, find out about the latest winners or review results of instant polls. They like to know about fellow members and the people running the community. Many appreciate the regular survey invitations telling them that their participation is urgently needed.

The Pay-to-Play group is focused on participating in an equitable exchange: I give you valuable information and you give me something worthwhile in return. Cash is preferred, but non-financial rewards would also be considered, as long as they deem the reward to be of sufficient value – a fair exchange for their contribution. Some prefer a small reward for each survey; others prefer the opportunity to win a much larger prize in a drawing.

Beyond segmenting types of value-seekers, our studies of community members also revealed that long-term members are more likely than new members to mention "expressing my opinions" and "improving products" as reasons for being in the panel and less likely to reference financial incentives (see Figure 3).

This suggests two implications. First, the impact of monetary incentives may decrease over time and other participation motivators may take on greater importance. Or, in the long run, Mavens and Online Connecteds may be more likely to remain active in an online community.

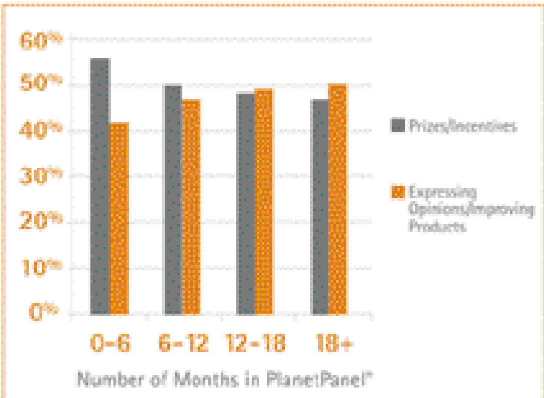
Future research will shed more light on this. One conclusion is clear, however: maintaining online community satisfaction and participation is a complex and evolving challenge which requires a multi-faceted approach to address a diverse set of needs and expectations.

Community manager – a new discipline emerges

To effectively leverage an online community as a rigorous data collection resource, you need an in-depth understand-

Figure 3

Main Reasons for Participating in PlanetPanel®



Source: PlanetPanel® Member Satisfaction Study – Fall 2004

ing of members and the dynamics of their response behavior.

At MSI-ITM, we have developed a new discipline to address this: community manager. This function focuses not on clients and research studies but on understanding the needs of community members in order to facilitate high-quality response.

At the core of community management is relationship-building. Since members vary in their expectations and motivations around panel participation a "one size fits all" approach won't work in the long run. And, one needs to consider cultural preferences when meeting expectations around the world. A two-way relationship, with both sides communicating about what's expected, is most productive.

The community manager's job is even more important given the empowerment of online panel members. If a community experience is not satisfying, members can simply quit and join a panel that is satisfying. Thanks to the Internet, it's very easy to discover other online communities and just as easy to shift your allegiance.

We believe online research communities are here to stay. With Internet penetration increasing around the world, the convenience of online interviewing and the intrusiveness of traditional telephone surveys, it is likely that the Web will be the data collection vehicle of choice for our audiences.

But we can no longer expect survey respondents to complete questionnaires with nothing in return. Nor can we expect the convenience of the Web to overcome the intrusiveness of an excessively long interview. We can't disregard the needs of panel participants just because we encounter them online. Online panel members are real people, with real power. Successful online research panels must be viewed as a community of individual members, with different needs, motivations and expectations. Understanding those needs and exchanging the appropriate value in return for the information we seek is critical. | Q

Pick your peaks

How to improve the accuracy of Internet ad tracking

By Charles Young

The Holy Grail of advertising research might look something like a cross between a blender and a calculator. It would take all the variables in the mix and magically calculate an exact return on investment for advertising. For now, the measure many large advertisers rely on is in-market awareness of their advertising. The measurements provided by tracking studies are key performance indicators which senior management uses to assess the success or failure of advertising campaigns. Consequently, the size of the advertising budget, and even job performance reviews, are tied to these numbers. The accuracy of these advertising measurements, therefore, is of critical concern to advertising and brand managers and their agencies.

For many companies, continuous advertising trackers, such as those offered by Millward Brown, Ipsos, TNS and other large research suppliers, are frequently one of the most expensive items in the research budget. Data collection for many of these is now being moved from the telephone to the Internet.

There are two main reasons why ad trackers are being moved online. The first, of course, is the ability to obtain significant economies in the cost of data collection. But the second is the ability to switch from a recall-based to a recognition-based form of advertising awareness measurement.

There has been a long-running debate in advertising research circles as to the relative merits of recall versus recognition as the best way of tapping into consumer memories of advertising. Recall was the first report card measure used in commercial pre-testing and it is still widely used today. Those who favor a recall approach use the commonsense argument that for advertising to be effective it must first lodge itself in memory - a necessary, if not sufficient, condition for advertising to work. This is particularly relevant given the standard argument that the real payout for the advertising investment is to be found in its long-term effects.

But there is more than one way to tap into consumer memories of advertising. Those who favor recognition argue that a consumer's inability to recall or actively retrieve the memory of a television commercial days or weeks after seeing it is not a valid indicator of whether or not the consumer has in fact seen the ad or whether that ad has indeed made a lasting impact on their stored impressions of the brand. Indeed, recogni-

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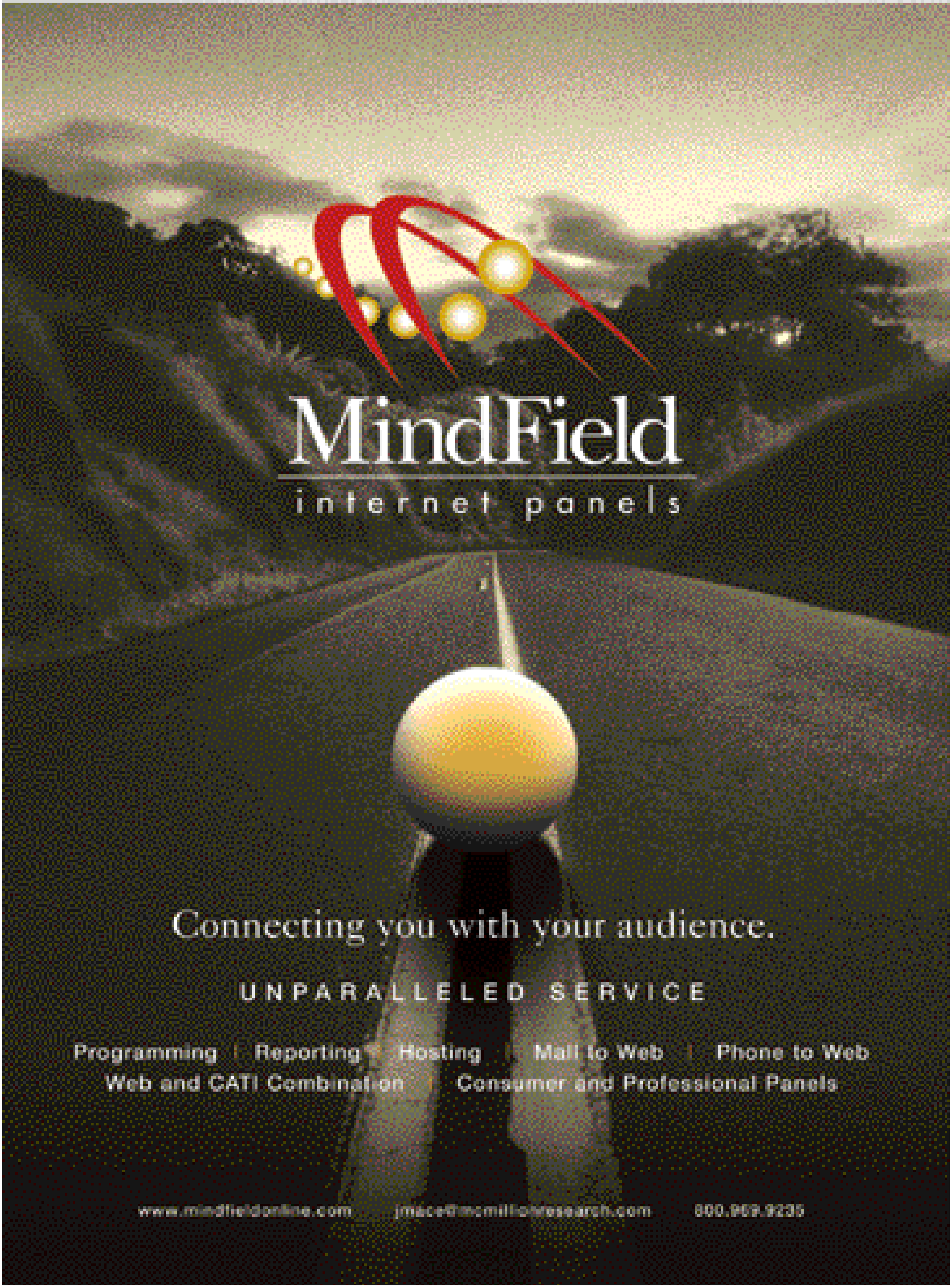
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tion-based awareness measures are usually quite a bit higher than those produced by recall.

In commercial pre-testing, for example, Ipsos-ASI, the category leader, uses recognition as a complementary measure to day-after recall, and finds, on average, that consumers will report roughly twice the level of ad awareness with recognition as opposed to a recall approach.

As a nod to recognitionists, therefore, telephone-based trackers have sometimes fallen back on the idea of using verbal descriptions of an ad to cue recognition.

However, verbal measurements do not reliably capture visual experience. Imagine if you had to find someone in a crowd that you had never met before. Think of how much more difficult it would be to recognize that person if all you had to go on was a written paragraph describing the person you're looking for…as opposed to having a picture of the person. Verbal recognition is simply not the same as visual recognition.

The main reason verbal methods have been used in the past to track television advertising has been simple economics: for the past generation, the telephone was cheapest way to collect tracking data – but you cannot show consumers pictures over the telephone. With the Internet, you can combine telephone's low cost with the ability to show images.

Most research companies now tracking advertising over the Internet use a visual approach to measuring television advertising awareness. The most common method is to use a storyboard, typically comprised of either four or six de-branded still photos taken from the commercial, to stimulate recognition.

Initially, for early adopters of Internet tracking, the reason for using storyboards rather than playing full video was based on bandwidth restrictions. But now the main rationale for storyboards as the preferred approach is based on interview length. You can gather more data on more advertising executions using still photographs, which the respondent might spend a few seconds looking at, than you can if you have to download ad films.

Quite useful

This ability to measure ad awareness by individual execution can be quite useful in our age of fragmented media and integrated marketing. Advertising managers are beginning to demand more insightful information from their expensive tracking studies. They want to know more than simply how many consumers have seen the ad campaign. Increasingly, they are beginning to ask more precise questions such as, "Which of my ads has the consumer seen?" In other words, "Which are the strong performers in my advertising mix, and which are the weak performers?" These are questions that recognition-based measurement – but not recall-based measurement – can now begin to address, time permitting.

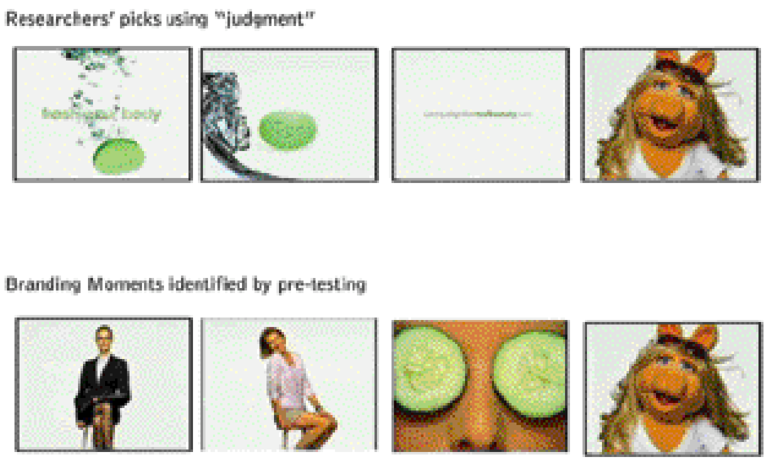
A previous article I published in *Quirk's* ("The Eye is Not a Camera," March 2003) confirmed the validity of using storyboards as a substitute for full video in commercial awareness tracking. This article described a method for choosing the right still photos to use in constructing the storyboard for the recognition measurement. But choosing the wrong photos, as I will show below, can lead to a considerable understatement of the true consumer awareness of your advertising.

When most research tracking companies construct the storyboard stimulus for online ad tracking the typical approach is for the research analyst to use "judgment," sometimes in "consultation with the client and agency," to select the four to six still photographs to represent the commercial. Yet in our experience from pre-testing the visual component of television commercials using our Picture Sorts methodology, we know that up to 30 pictures may actually be needed to accurately capture the visual information content of the average commercial execution.

You can get a very different impression of the commercial depending on your choice of visuals. Figure 1 shows two storyboards constructed from the same commercial. While there is some overlap, it looks like the storyboards are describing two different commercials. If this was your advertising being tracked in the marketplace – and next year's ad budget depends on how well it performs – which of these two storyboards would you use to cue recognition of your ad?

One of these two storyboards was constructed using the judgments of an ad hoc panel of 20 experienced researchers (with a minimum of two

Figure 1



years of experience in the ad research business) who voted on which images to use in the storyboard. The other was constructed using consumer feedback from a commercial pre-test.

The consumer feedback was in the form of an Ameritest Flow of Attention graph, a key diagnostic in our online pre-testing system (see Figure 2). In the pre-test interview consumers "sort" all the pictures used to represent the visual information content of the ad, usually from 10 to 30 pictures for a typical 30-second ad (depending on the visual complexity of the ad). The sort is done by having the images brought up randomly on the screen 15 to 20 minutes after a consumer's exposure to the ad and asking them whether or not they remember seeing those images in the ad. The graph shows all the visuals from beginning to the end of the ad, with the height of each picture in the graph showing the percentage of the commercial audience remembering that image.

"Peak" moments

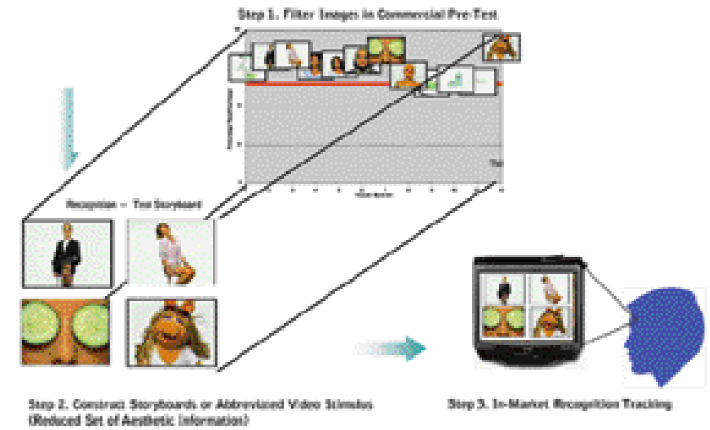
In analyzing these attention flows the "peak" moments are particularly useful. By definition, these are the images the consumers remember best after their experience of the ad has been transferred from short-term to long-term memory - so it should not be surprising that these images are related to the long-term memory effects of the advertising. A number of papers we have published (which can be found on our Web site) show how content analysis of these peaks can be used to predict the attention-getting power and the day-after-recall score of a television commercial.

In the experiment described above we were trying to understand how well researchers could predict in advance which visual moments in the adve rtising the consumer was likely to focus on. We looked at 10 commercials, like the one shown in Figure 1, representing a range of categories from packaged goods to high-tech. We asked the panel of researchers to predict which ones would be the peak images of the commercial from the viewpoint of the consumer. We then compared the results to actual consumer data from pre-testing.

Figure 2

Improving the Accuracy of Online Measurement

Because the Ameritest Picture Sort pre-test identifies the commercial images that stick in long-term memory it provides input that can improve the accuracy and reliability of post-tested tracking.



What we found was that experienced researchers were not very good at predicting what consumers would focus on in the ad. Using judgment, researchers were correct only 44 percent of the time in predicting what the peak visuals in the commercial would be for the target audience consumer.

Of course, it's likely that creatives might be better at this prediction business, but our pre-testing experience suggests that they are frequently surprised by what the consumer focuses on as well. But more to the point, creatives are infrequently asked to provide input as to which visuals to include in tracking studies.

Does it matter?

The central question is this: Does the choice of pictures used in the storyboard stimulus really matter? To answer this question, we performed a separate experiment recently with one of our clients, Unilever. (This experiment was reported in a different form at an ARF conference.) In this experiment we had two cells of matched samples of 100 target consumers each for one of their successful personal care brands. We took visual samples from eight commercials that had aired over the past several years and measured ad awareness using a recognition approach.

(As an aside, it should be noted that, unlike recall, re c ognition memory decays very slowly, also making recognition the better approach for studying the long-term effects of advertising.)

This difference between the two cells was this: in the first cell the recognition stimuli were only peak images that were identified from the pre-test Flow of Attention, while in the second cell the stimuli that we used were entirely non-peak visuals. Ad awareness results from the two cells are shown in Figure 3.

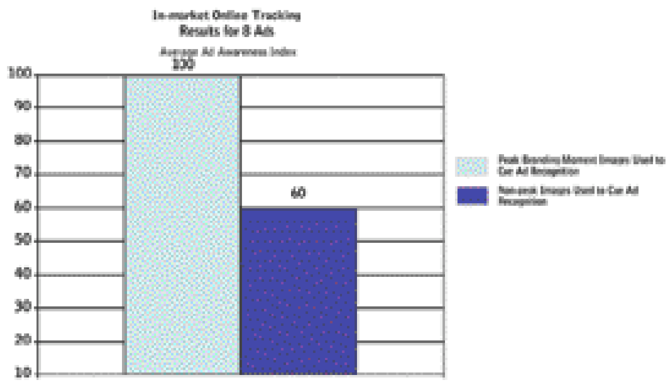
As you can see, for the ve ry same set of commercials, adve rtising awareness is 40 percent higher for the stimulus using peak visuals compared to the one using non-peak visuals!

This magnitude of difference would be sufficient for researchers to reach entirely different conclusions about the success of the advertising campaign.

Peak visual moments can be easily identified in a pre-test within 20 minutes of commercial exposure. These turn out to be "branding moments" - the small number of images lodged most strongly in consumer memories long after the advertising has aired in the marketplace. These branding

Figure 3

Identifying the peak branding moment images from the pre-test is key to obtaining accurate in-market ad awareness. Without identifying peaks, online tracking studies could understate true ad awareness by 40% or more.



moments are one of the keys for identifying the long-term effects of advertising. And they are also key to understanding the metrics that, for now, stand in for advertising's ROI.

Of course, this is the extreme case, because in the real world a storyboard constructed using "judgment" is likely to contain a mix of both peak and non-peak visuals, as demonstrated by our first experiment. Nonetheless, this underscores the importance of identifying the right images to use in recognition-based Internet ad tracking in order to narrow the range and improve the accuracy of awareness measurement.

New risk

So, while moving ad tracking studies from the telephone to the Internet represents a substantial gain for researchers working on the problem of measuring advertising's impact in the marketplace, there is a new risk that Internet trackers who are not careful may still understate true ad awareness. The solution is to build a bridge between two critical pieces of Internet advertising research, pre-testing and post-testing. By feeding consumer input from pre-testing into the post-testing design, you can achieve a critical methodological improvement in the accuracy of your online ad tracking. | Q

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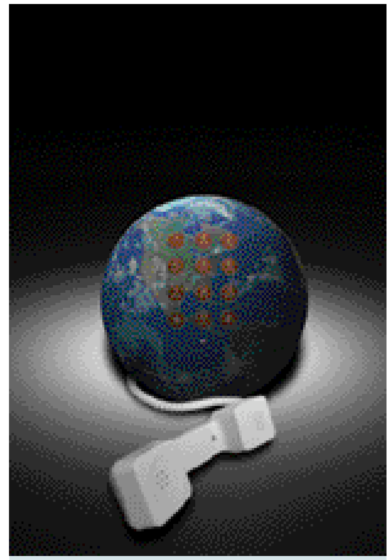
online research

Caution: global forces at work



By Mitch Eggers

Powerful forces are changing the way market research is conducted and driving rapid increases in the demand and need for Internet market research. This push is not just coming from the market research industry but from all sectors of the economy.

A relentless march toward "better, faster, cheaper" high technology has combined with rapid human adoption of new communication modes in an environment where consumer-driven marketplace economies are proliferating. Add a dash of vintage sampling theory to these powerful changes and the rise in demand for online global market research is not only understandable but also not about to abate any time soon.

The proliferation of technology among consumers

Advances in high-tech are well-known and have become not just accepted but also expected by nearly everyone. The proliferation of the Internet represented a paradigm shift as dramatic as the coming of the railroad. Hand-in-hand with these technological advancements have come plummeting costs of digital communications. In the 1970s, a long-distance telephone call to Asia, Europe or Latin America was very expensive, but today that same long-distance communication is extraordinarily cheap. Moreover, the modes now available for nearly real-time international trans-oceanic communication are numerous; instant messaging, e-mail, and voice over IP telephony are all replacing the more expensive switched-network, dedicated private line communication modes.

Gigatrends are shaping the use of online research

Couple the increasing reliance on technology with decreasing costs and it is easy to understand how progress along high-technology frontiers has made it possible for market researchers to: cheaply collect clicks from all over the world, cheaply store those clicks in large integrated data repositories, and cheaply crunch those clicks to distill valuable insights about world-wide consumer tastes, habits, practices and desires. Access to technology and lowering costs coupled with the importance of knowing what your consumers think have made it not only possible but also a good investment to collect data on almost anything.

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Technology and the human touch

The huge boom in demand for online global market research was not created by improvements in high technology alone. The human element was the necessary catalyst. When the world embraced, with remarkable confidence, online banking transactions, credit card payments, consumer purchases and shipment tracking, the Internet jumped from being an advancement in technology to a part of the everyday experience. We have accepted and come to rely on a myriad of remote network service providers for an increasingly wide variety of our daily communications, transactions and information. The age of connection has unfolded and we have embraced it with a vengeance.

For market researchers this adoption of technology at an unprecedented rate has by default made consumers – and more importantly the right consumers – accessible to researchers. As the number of connections grows exponentially with every additional member, we are more connected today than ever before and are increasing our worldwide connections at a faster rate than ever before. Upper-income, better-educated households around the globe – who we know account for the bulk of worldwide discretionary income and purchasing power – are already Internet users, and the penetration of the Internet into middle- and lower-income households is rising rapidly. Bottom line: The technology adoption is delivering the right sample direct to our desktop. We have found our market research nirvana and we now have access to a very sophisticated sample cheaply.

The empowered consumer has arrived

As remarkable as these changes are at both the technological and individual level, equally radical changes have erupted in the realm of the collective. The worldwide era of the empowered consumer, who reveals his or her tastes when asked and votes with his or her pocketbook, has arrived. Their demands will be met through a Darwinian struggle of product and service innovations that force producers to intimately know their consumers as well as their competition. Individual consumers, confident in their preferences and in charge of their checkbooks, have replaced the collective command-and-control economies.

The past few decades have witnessed the rise of the marketplace economies across huge swaths of the globe. Old Europe has unified and formed a single marketplace of over 300 million people. The former Soviet Union is gone and the marketplace is the new social order, a change that has affected more than 290 million people. China invited the marketplace into its formerly controlled society and introduced individual decision-making, self-interest and competition to over 1.3 billion people – a form of social organization that efficiently harnesses individual ingenuity and empowers consumers like no other. A good example of the power of this shift is a recent news article on General Electric – a global company with a market capitalization of $380 billion. The company reported that in the next 10 years, 60 percent of its revenue growth is expected to come from developing countries, as compared to 20 percent in the past decade. That's a pretty remarkable jump and additional evidence of the undeniable influence globalization has and will continue to have on business today.

With the rise of the empowered consumer and marketplace economies comes global design, production, marketing and distribution chains that stitch world commerce together to attain lower production costs, larger target markets and greater profits. Rapid integration and trade between the older marketplace economies of Europe, North America, Asia and Latin America, and the newer marketplace economies of Central and Eastern Europe and China is well underway. Driven by superior market research and design, products not only appeal to a global consumer audience, but are marketed, distributed and sold to a larger percentage of the world's population than ever before. A hit product designed for international use can now truly be sold worldwide.

Examples that represent both ends of the opportunity spectrum, Deere & Company and Apple Computer, Inc., illustrate the point. Today John Deere ships combines made in East Moline, Ill., to the former Soviet Union, Chinese combines to the Middle East, Brazilian combines to Europe and German and Indian tractors to the U.S. In fact, to remain competitive it produces a tractor in Augusta, Ga., that is assembled largely with parts received from 12 other countries. Its business – and many like it – is dependent on the global economy. Similarly Apple's iconic iPod – which appeared to descend on the world's population from nowhere, selling over four million units at launch – is available in Moscow, London, New York, Sao Paulo, Beijing, Sofia and Istanbul – a global triumph that harkens of things to come.

However, naturally offsetting the great opportunities the global marketplace offers businesses are corresponding realities and demanding challenges. The world today is indeed a very small place. With the birth of modern technology and communications, we have experienced the death of distance. A necessary condition for businesses to survive – and thrive – in the global arena is to embrace the world's cultural differences, and this is where knowledge equals power. The Internet affords large multi-country research. Usually the domain of only the biggest and richest, now even small and medium-sized companies can afford to ask questions. The market research industry can effectively reach out to 20 countries and collect and turn around data in as little as 48 hours. Public opinion polling that would typically take three days now takes 12 hours, resulting in an almost constant cycle of monitoring and message adjustment.

Tuning in to the world's most powerful listening device

The last major innovation fueling the avalanche of demand for online market research did not occur so recently. Probability and sampling theory are the classical tools still being applied in the modern world with great effect and add to the efficiency of modern data collection. Now here are these tools more valuable than in a market research setting where measuring the tastes and proclivities of a very small percentage of the total population reveals the essential nub of the entire population's wants. We can now effortlessly gather an online sample of 1,000-1,500 people and report the views of an entire country. The Internet is delivering the right demographic infrastructure, allowing companies to speak to the right people to gain almost instant feedback on their products or messages. In a single weekend a studio will test the ending of a film, choose the most effective trailer and launch the most-embraced TV commercial by sampling a global audience at the speed of the Internet.

Market researchers owe a great debt to de Moivre, Gauss, Fisher, LaPlace and Pearson, for these are the minds that founded and developed the normal curve and inferential statistics and taught us that, correctly gathered, we can measure a few to understand the many. Properly applied, and deployed across the modern communication infrastructure, these techniques have turned the Internet into the world's most powerful listening device. Modern researchers can divine the tastes of the world's consumers more quickly, accurately and cheaply than ever before, making the return on investment in market research positive for an exploding universe of products.

Old and new

It would appear the stars have finally aligned for the Net-centric researcher. Ever increasing global connectivity and the ease of access to information from anywhere means the Internet is now living up to the predictions made a decade ago. Now we can apply the best of the old world – tried and trusted market research disciplines – with the opportunities of the new, the Internet – an all-encompassing worldwide data collection vehicle that has entangled the human race in its sticky web. | Q


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Conserve your resources

By Ron Weidemann II

Reaching IT professionals through online surveys

Manufacturers and providers of advanced technology products and services need to stay up to date with the current desires of a constantly changing marketplace. To do so they conduct thousands of surveys with IT professionals. These individuals comprise a critical research target, with the purchasing authority and servicing responsibility of computer hardware and software, servers, wireless communications, handhelds and other technologies utilized in businesses of all sizes. Because the online surveys they are asked to complete gather data that heavily influences next-generation designs for the technologies under their jurisdiction, IT professionals have a vested interest in participating. However, because they are relatively small and frequently-contacted group, it is important for marketers to consider factors that will encourage survey participation when designing online Web surveys.

Important considerations to ensure respondent participation include a clearly-written and -presented survey, short length (under 20 minutes is preferred), completion flexibility and a generous incentive. Online surveys allow the respondent to read and digest all questions quickly, and perhaps most importantly, give this crucial respondent set the flexibility to complete the survey according to their own schedule, not the interviewer's. Use of this method can in turn offer the project sponsor a decrease in research cost and timing, and an increase in survey response rates.

Online method offers flexibility

A study conducted by my firm uncovered that more than 98 percent of IT managers working in large companies (more than 500 employees) were asked to participate in a market research survey within the previous year. Additionally, the majority of respondents were asked to participate on more than five occasions. On average, respondents were invited to participate in surveys eight times. With stats like these, it's clear that if researchers wish to gain participation from this heavily surveyed group, offering flexibility is key.

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Your groups are here...
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Advanced technology industries are extremely thirsty for information on changing perceptions and needs and it is not surprising that so much research is taking place among this very powerful group. For researchers, it is very important to understand the demands placed on this group of busy professionals. We need to provide them with appropriate rewards, information and incentives to gain their cooperation. Using an online method, IT respondents can complete a survey as their busy schedules permit. Frequent monitoring of our survey completion logbooks shows that respondents to online surveys work on the survey at all hours of the day and night.

Using an online panel

One of the most efficient methods of garnering ongoing survey participation from the IT professional is through online panel creation. A panel can offer benefits to the researcher and panel member since it can offer a survey control and consistency for both groups. Panel membership offers the participant the opportunity to contribute to a set number of studies per set time frame, usually a year. Respondents have the convenience of completing studies on their own time and typically receive an incentive for each completed survey. The main benefit of a panel to researchers is that a large group of cooperative respondents matching your criteria is in one database. This provides a more cost-efficient sample because a higher percent of the people who receive the survey will qualify and they will be more likely to take the survey then people who did not opt-in to a panel.

Incentives

As marketers and research professionals, we must be aware of the ever-increasing number of requests to participate in studies among the IT manager sample set. To show appreciation for participation in market research surveys, and to encourage a willingness to participate in future studies, it is imperative that an incentive be delivered immediately following survey completion. The good news is that a standard incentive for online surveys is smaller than that for other methodologies. This is because the incentive must match the inconvenience placed on a respondent to participate in the research. In cases where a respondent must travel to a central recruit facility or set aside a block of time for a scheduled or impromptu telephone interview, a larger incentive is usually paid. A short online survey that can be completed at the respondent's leisure requires a lower incentive.

Adding a qualitative element

Quantitative surveys can provide a more complete picture of an IT manager's viewpoint when a qualitative element is added. By asking an open-ended question, researchers can supplement quantitative research and learn why IT managers feel a certain way. A hypothetical example would be to add an open-ended question asking why the color black was the most preferred color for a hard drive. The reasons given could be used when messaging a product's image.

There are some caveats. Using open-ended questions in an online survey does not provide the depth that other qualitative research provides. Online surveys do not have a person available to probe and delve deeply into why an IT manager thinks the way they do. Too many open-ended questions can irritate respondents. Open-ended questions require more effort to answer than closed-ended questions. When respondents take a survey they expect the experience to be simple. If too many open-ended questions are included, some respondents will refuse to answer them.

Applications of online surveys

Initially, the online mode was only appropriate for straightforward surveys. Advances in technology have enabled the execution of complex studies such as discrete choice modeling and conjoint to move from a central-location recruit or a telephone/mail combination to online computers. This has dramatically reduced the cost and shortened the time frame for these types of studies. Now that broadband has reached the desktops of IT professionals at companies of all sizes, even more research has migrated online. Higher bandwidth has enabled companies to show detailed, high-resolution photos of products when doing preference studies. In fact, high-resolution video has been incorporated into the surveys, offering the ability to see all sides of a product or how the product operates.

Make it convenient

As manufacturers and marketers strive to design products that match client needs, input from today's advanced technology decision makers is critical. To reach this heavily surveyed population, researchers must make the interviewing process convenient for the IT professional participant. By using Internet surveys among this group, marketers serve both the respondent and the research sponsor. Online Web surveys can provide the researcher with timely data collection, lower overall project cost and increased data viability. With this kind of win-win scenario, marketers are wise to take advantage of an online approach. | Q

online research

Maximizing respondent cooperation

By Keith Price

Today's marketing researcher has a great variety of methodologies to choose from to obtain market intelligence, and clearly online research has many advantages. By 2006, reports *Inside Research*'s Larry Gold, more than 33 percent of overall research spend will be done online.

Why has online research quickly gained such acceptance over other methods for collecting attitudes and opinions? In addition to timing and cost efficiencies, there is the remarkable ability to collect information about a wide variety of topics, from household purchases to health issues and ailments from low-incidence, geographically-diverse respondents. Second, respondents can answer surveys thoughtfully during leisure time, when they are uninterrupted, which can yield robust and well thought-out responses. By coupling the ability to target virtually any respondent group and enabling them to respond at any time of the day, no other methodology rivals the Internet.

Researchers are migrating studies online at a rapid pace for many reasons, in addition to the aforementioned benefits. The vast majority of consumers are online and the industry is no longer skeptical about the validity of Internet-based work. Currently more than 60 percent of the populations in both the U.S. and Canada have access to the Internet.

Ten tips for better survey design

We have found that consumers want to "speak out and be heard" and appreciate the convenient, and non-intrusive nature of online surveying. We know what works and doesn't work in designing surveys for the online environment and encourage our clients to design surveys with the respondent in mind. The following is a list of Top 10 tips that we recommend you adhere to when conducting an online interview.

The efforts we - and you - can put in on the development of any online research project invariably pay off with improved speed and efficiencies, better cooperation rates and better research results overall.

1. Ask yourself: would you enjoy taking this survey?
Remember, the Internet is a self-administered environment. Unlike a

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Seattle Boston Budapest London Los Angeles Madrid Minneapolis New York Sao Paulo Shanghai Singapore Sofia Stockholm Sydney Tokyo Vancouver telephone survey, online respondents are required to read survey instructions and answer questions themselves. To avoid confusion and frustration, make sure that questions are logical and consistent. Can technology applications be included that enhance the overall experience? Have you over-engineered the study design?

Here are some ways of enhancing questionnaire design:

- Place screening and quota management questions up front. No one likes to answer 25 questions only to find out they don't qualify for a study.
- Use drop-down lists and numeric open-ends sparingly – they take longer to answer.
- To minimize respondent fatigue, place at least three or four questions on a page.
- The maximum number of product or service attributes shouldn't exceed 20.
- Always have clear directions on how to answer the question, i.e., "Select one," "Select all that apply."
- Provide an escape – offer a "don't know" or "prefer not to answer" option.

2. Remember: the respondent is working for you!
Respondents have busy lives. Before they even receive an invitation to take your survey, they're responding to e-mails, phone calls and handling a myriad of daily chores. Taking surveys should be enjoyable. Make things easy for them with clear, explicit instructions and useful, comprehensible error messages.

3. Design attribute ratings for visual ease of use.
Attribute ratings scales should appear once per page, usually along the top or left-hand margin of the survey. If the respondent must scroll down to answer all questions, keep the scale visible on screen.

4. Beware of long surveys.
A lengthy survey is a daunting task for anyone – no matter how interested they are in the subject matter. The average respondent begins to tire after 10-15 minutes. The longer the respondent participates, the more likely they are to terminate before completion. Consider which questions are the most critical and look for ways to enhance the survey with gaming exercises or visuals. Provide rest stops in the text and allow for transitions from one question set to another.

5. Pay attention to specific methods and audiences.
Many targeted audiences require extra attention, whether you are working with a difficult sample, or need a long-term commitment from the respondent. For example:

– Teen studies: Be mindful of the need for exciting, appealing graphics. Ask relevant questions – queries about income or life insurance don't belong.

– B2B studies: These are busy people. Stick to the relevant topic and offer creative incentives for study cooperation.

– Product placement studies: Respondents like these types of studies. When mailing, always remember to include all components and provide clear instructions on product usage.

6. Be honest about sensitive information.
Provide respondents with a factual privacy policy, informing them as to how the information they provide will be used. When asking respondents to provide sensitive information, tell them why you need it. This increases the likelihood that they will share this type of information.

Finally, don't ask irrelevant questions. Ask only what you need to know.

7. Incentives: pick the appropriate incentive for the right audience.
Greenfield Online conducts thousands of studies each year, and we have developed metrics that help us to measure the effectiveness of incentives. Realize that lower-incidence groups and lengthy surveys require more generous incentives – especially if quick turnaround is required.

8. Avoid dropout triggers.
Open-ended or sensitive questions asked at the beginning of the survey can be jarring to the participant and increase the likelihood of dropout. These types of questions are better placed towards the end of the sur-

vey. Ultimately, consider providing the respondent with an option not to answer.

To further avoid dropouts, ask only relevant questions of the target group. Respondents can tell within five to 10 questions if the survey applies to them. If the first few questions are vague or irrelevant you may increase the dropout rate.

Finally, be straightforward about survey length and provide a progress meter; they're both appreciated. If you tell a respondent that they will be participating for five minutes and your survey runs eight, you increase respondent frustration and encourage dropout.

9. Mix methodologies to reach respondents.

E-mail is a fast and cost-effective means of inviting survey participants, however, sometimes it makes sense to use other data collection methods, such as telephone or interactive voice response along with e-mailed invitations, increasing the number of touch points and ensuring survey participation.

10. Use Flash technology to enhance certain exercises.

Roughly 10 years ago, when the Internet was in its infancy, Web sites were nothing more than static pages with limited functionality. Interactivity has grown to the point where now most Web surfers possess the processing power and bandwidth to take full advantage of full-motion, high-speed interactivity. Purchasing can be done with a click of a button, and commonly-viewed sites can be customized to meet individual needs and preferences.

Online surveys have charted a similar course, from "electronic paper" to early interactive surveys to the point where online research is now ready to embark on a fully interactive journey. Researchers are taking full advantage of this new era, with engaging new technology tools and enhancements designed with one goal in mind: high-quality, actionable data.

Consumer insights that were once considered cost-prohibitive or nearly impossible to obtain offline, such as testing commercials or simulating an in-store shopping experience, are now being executed via the Internet using cost-effective Flash and HTML technology. What's more, these advanced technologies can be used for standard surveys.

Consider new technologies like card sort. Card sort can improve concept, text and graphic ranking. Respondents are asked to place cards in order of preference, in a more robust fashion than a traditional ranked list. Card sort has been especially effective on ranking attributes lists or images. The technique elicits careful responses to lengthy attribute lists and provides enhanced "think-through" and respondent enjoyment. | Q

online research

You say evolution, I say devolution

By Harvey Lauer

Since its inception during the first half of the 20th century, there has been a marked evolution – some say devolution – in marketing research data collection. It has been argued that in each successive phase of this downward spiral, methodological purity has been sacrificed for lower cost and greater convenience.

In the beginning, there was the personal interview – the proto-tool of modern survey research. During an innocent and pristine era of only a few decades past, legions of interviewers were dispatched on foot to conduct often lengthy, sometimes very sensitive door-to-door interviews. Americans were "taken in" by the privilege of being interviewed, and interviewers were welcomed into living rooms across the nation; the annoyance, cynicism and refusal rates would come later. In 2005, the golden age of in-person research is long gone, and while in isolated redoubts of virtue a few grizzled holdouts defend this ancient ritual, the face-to-face interview is nearly extinct.

Telephone research can be traced to the 1930s, but such early usage, according to Gad Nathan of Hebrew University, was to augment other forms of research. The notorious *Literary Digest* survey of 1936 (which incorrectly predicted a landslide by Landon over Roosevelt) has been wrongly attributed to the telephone survey. Although the sample was selected from a list of telephone owners, the ill-fated study was actually conducted by mail.

With the ubiquity of the telephone came the phone survey – a medium that would dramatically reduce the cost of research. In 1970, U.S. household telephone penetration reached 88 percent – sufficient to appease journeymen, but not purists. But by the 1980s, the heir-apparent to personal interviewing – righteously cloaked in the robe of random-digit dialing – had effectively dealt its progenitor the *coup de grace*. Telephone research had subverted all the defenses of the face-to-face method: it was much cheaper, and remarkably – especially in light of its present troubles and rapid decay – the telephone was achieving higher cooperation rates than its predecessor! The only disadvantage of the telephone interview was survey length; a live interrogator could remain in someone's living room for an hour-and-a-half, but most telephone respondents would not tolerate impositions in excess of 30 minutes.

Timelines are murky and overlapping, but at some point in the

Has data collection improved or gotten worse?

Editor's note: Harvey Lauer is president of American Sports Data, Inc., a Cortlandt Manor, N.Y., research firm. He can be reached at 914-461-3271 or at sportsdata@optonline.net. While examples cited in this article involve using research to measure rates of sports participation the broader discussion certainly applies to the industry as a whole.


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power struggle, the heir was forced to abdicate. Researchers ingeniously shifted the burden of data collection to the respondent, who was persuaded to fill out questionnaires at the kitchen table, dutifully return them to the company, which – having eliminated the expense of a human interviewer – could now perform research at a fraction of even telephone cost. Thus was the consumer mail panel born, circa 1946. Exact birthdays aside, it is safe to say that consumer mail panels (very different from "cold" mail surveys) came of age after the heyday of telephone research. It may also be safe to say that in 2005 – despite the encroachment of the Internet and a small annual erosion of response rates – consumer mail panels are only slightly past their prime…but the cascade has begun.

The fourth generation of this pedigree is online research. Cheaper than even the mail panel (entrepreneurs have repealed interview labor, data entry, printing and postage costs!) this state-of-the-art genre is a bonanza so huge, it threatens traditional research standards and propriety. Like all other data collection methodologies, online research has its place; but because of severe structural flaws and an Internet usage rate below 70 percent, this futuristic technique cannot yet lay claim to nationally projectable samples. Nonetheless, we see more cavalier and more frequent references to "national surveys," where unfastidious researchers – innocently abetted by journalists – omit the caveat of non-projectability, inflicting a gigantic hoax on the American public. Astonishingly, the perpetrators are seldom if ever challenged. Still worse, members of online research panels – lured and continuously motivated by prizes and economic incentives – are highly self-selected: atypical even of the Internet users they purport to represent.

Unduly harsh critics add that this instantaneous, speed-of-light technique encourages sloppiness, methodological looseness and impropriety – backsliding trends in survey research that parallel the rise of Generation Y, and as a more general proposition, the erosion of American cultural and business values.

In an abrupt, manic swing toward the virtues of Internet research, we can also speak about the eventual dominance of the method: it is by far the most agreeable survey-taking experience, and numerous other advantages practically ensure that long before it deserves the honor, online panel research will receive the imprimatur of legitimacy. As telephone penetration achieved 88 percent in 1970 and became acceptable to generalists, so may the online method one day achieve universal respectability – but not before it reaches the 90 percent penetration level, and certainly not before overhauling its infrastructure. But as a leading-edge tool for the conduct of "boutique" research not requiring projectability, (individual health club surveys for example) online research has already proved invaluable.

Personal interviewing

The personal interview belongs to a recent but already mythic era of American history. Only four or five decades old, this near-perfect slice of Americana was by nature, very friendly to an immature marketing research industry. Parents, bosses and teachers were feared, the work ethic abided and civility respected; and by today's standards, honesty remained a cherished value. The innocent culture that required suitably dressed families to regularly dine together also insisted that retail customers be fawned over; and by complex extension, naïve Americans somehow condoned the mass invasion of their living rooms by armies of hired personal interviewers.

These were the salad days of research, when communities were safe, homes accessible, respondents agreeable. People were flattered by the opportunity to serve as research subjects, and it may have even been possible to select and interview a true random population sample – where all people in the U.S. had an equal chance of being heard. But in 2005, "probability" samples are lost to antiquity and research mythology.

In a classical face-to-face interview for example, people may have been a little embarrassed about sedentary behavior; chances are the method resulted in some exaggeration of active sports and fitness participation levels. And when "under-the-gun" of a live interviewer, people undoubtedly exaggerated the frequency of sports participation – how many days per year they engaged in various sports and activities, etc.

But all these questions are moot,

because the personal interview is now an archaic curiosity – fossilized by prohibitive cost, security fears, gated communities, high-rise buildings, inner-city inaccessibility, working women, harried lifestyles, and more recently, a heightened sensitivity to personal intrusion.

Telephone interviewing

Telephone interviews could be conducted at a fraction of the former cost, and while they eventually became respectable, they had to be brief: a survey of more than 30 minutes ran the risk of being aborted. Another disadvantage of the telephone was that for questions demanding careful thought, contemplation (or even simple calculation!) respondents were impossibly rushed, and could not pause for a moment as they might during a personal interview. A mail or online questionnaire by contrast, allows unlimited meditation.

Although people are more willing to discuss sensitive matters on the phone, there is still inhibition and reticence. Even on the phone, the influence and pressure of a live interviewer is still palpable – a limitation of both telephone and personal interviewing to which the private, anonymous mail or Internet survey is immune.

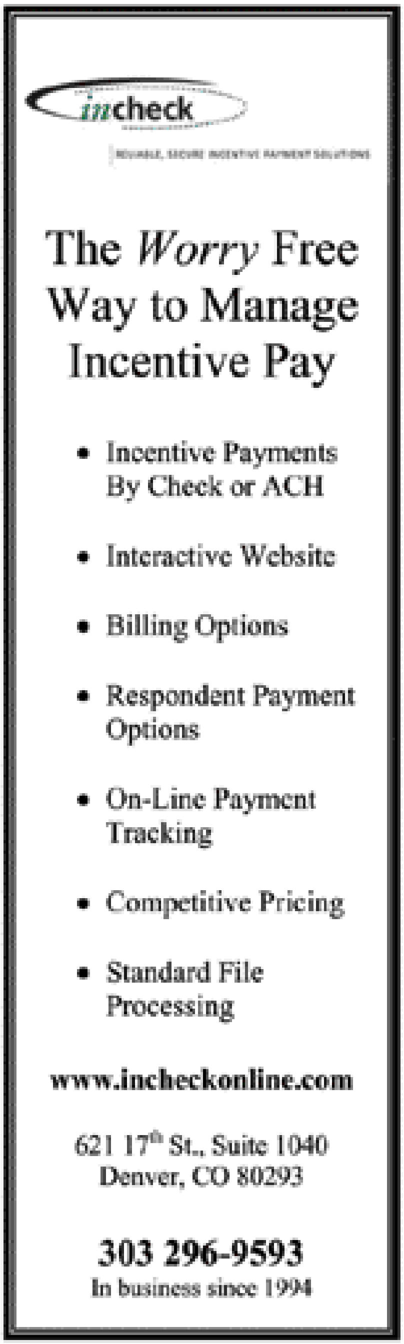
In recent years, cell phones, voicemail, multiple land lines, telemarketing "research" scams, no-call lists, working women and general time constraints have all conspired against the telephone method. With the possible exception of extravagantly-funded government research featuring unlimited callbacks, a net completion rate of 30 percent may be the norm. This helps explain why, after years of slower depredation by consumer mail panels, the telephone sector is being smashed to pieces by the juggernaut of online research.

All things considered, telephone surveying is not the methodology of choice for sports participation. Interviews are too brief to cover a wide range of sports, and when under the extreme pressure of a phone interview, people become unnerved and susceptible to all manner of memory distortion.

Consumer mail panel research

The next watershed was the consumer mail panel. In this paradigm shift, literally millions of cooperative respondents (drawn from the ranks of ordinary households) were recruited to answer self-administered mail questionnaires on a variety of subjects generally (but not exclusively) related to consumer products and marketing. As of 2005, the three major consumer mail operators in the U.S. – TNS-NFO, NPD and Synovate – have aggregate offline panels totaling nearly two million American households. But this number is withering before the onslaught of Internet methodology.

While panelists are usually given incentives for longer, more tedious or unusual questionnaires, financial gain is not a main motive for membership – a monumental distinction between the mail method and its online successor. Mail panelists are generally "product-oriented," enjoying free samples of new, not-yet-released offerings, or otherwise being on the leading edge of consumer marketing research. When compared with non-panel households, they are also more educated, literate and upscale. Roughly 5 percent of American households can be recruited for consumer mail panels, but – quite fortuitously – this apparent lack of representation does not disqualify the methodology from producing valid, national projections of many types of consumer behavior. Indeed, the well-known and highly respected Consumer Confidence Survey is based on mail panel methodology. Pre-recruited consumer mail panels generally yield 50-70 percent response rates, compared with only 5-20 percent for "cold" mail surveys of the general population…even when the latter are seeded with generous incentives.



Detractors of the method insist that a swath of panel members cannot represent a true sample of the U.S. population. On its face, this is a convincing argument; upon greater magnification, it becomes spurious. The ideal of survey research is a miniature replica of the larger reality; but academic purists, untutored research salesmen hawking competitive methodologies and other fuzzy thinkers incorrectly believe that to execute a valid survey, the characteristics of a sample must match those of the larger universe. The mail panel member, they argue, is too "queer a duck" for this purpose.

Ideally, it is desirable for a sample to clone the larger universe, but this is not an absolute precondition – if the measured phenomena (in this case, sports participation behavior) are found to be similar or identical in both groups. Very simply, certain characteristics of a sample may be different from those in the universe it tries to mimic; but despite these differences, both populations exhibit similar behaviors. After the usual sample balancing weights are applied, the rates of sports and fitness participation behavior among panel members are similar to those in non-panel households – a concordance first observed in the 1980's between our firm's mail panel surveys and the celebrated Gallup poll. While panel and non-panel households may differ on a single issue – the willingness to join a mail panel – they can be (and are) highly compatible in other attitudes and behaviors. Sample bias need not translate to results bias; and differences in panel member composition notwithstanding, consumer mail panels are a perfectly viable methodology for sports participation research. In fact, when advantages of all methods are weighed and credited, consumer mail panel research could even emerge as the preferred methodology. But preferences of 2005 have no claim to immortality.

The Achilles' heel of mail research is a lack of control over the respondent. A physical interviewer – either on the phone or in the flesh – ensures that the proper household member responds to (and understands) each and every question. In a mail survey of any kind, respondents – for reasons of disinterest, fatigue, mischief, laziness or any other reason – may, quite whimsically, skip items in a long battery, ignore parts of a question, or simply answer a survey in a sloppy, haphazard manner. Deliberate sabotage is rare, but unless controls are in place, less-than-scrupulous respondent behavior can distort the results of a mail study.

In mail panel parlance, recent recruits ("Eager Beavers") tend to be more conscientious than are seasoned panelists ("Lazy Dogs"). So in a tracking study, one needs from year to year to include identical proportions of fresh, enthusiastic panel members and their more experienced counterparts – especially the bored and disaffected. Through a form of sample balancing targeted to a base year – in this case the use of "panel tenure" (the number of years each respondent has been a panel member) as a weighting variable – the researcher can control for this type of response "decay."

When people respond to mail surveys in a diligent and meticulous manner (and if controls are in place to guard against those who do not), the net quantity and quality of information provided for sports and fitness participation can equal or surpass that of any other data collection method. The key advantages of self-administered questionnaires of any type, and for any subject, are:

• The ability to collect more information. It enables the measurement of many sports – far more than would be possible in telephone, and even face-to-face interviews. The ASD SUPERSTUDY of Sports Participation, monitors 103 sports/activities in a single study.

• A more relaxed, unpressured environment allows the respondent to provide more thoughtful and considered answers; and for numerical recall, this advantage is monumental. When asked by a phone or personal interviewer how many years he or she has participated in a given sport/activity (or the number of times per year), the interviewee is on the spot – he or she must instantly blurt out a number. But in the solitude and serenity of a kitchen, family room or den, people can provide much better (if still imperfect) written answers.

• A private, anonymous setting, shielded from the influence/intimidation of a human interviewer, also evokes far more candid responses – especially when the material is sensitive, potentially embarrassing or threatening. In a live interview, a respondent might not confess true body weight or sedentary behavior; but a self-administered questionnaire could topple these inhibitions.

• The reasonable assurance that panelists are not "in it for the money."

Online research

Online research is the new frontier of data collection methodology, a fourth milestone following in-person, telephone and mail panel interviewing. Modeled after the consumer mail panel, the phenomenon of online research (or some variation thereof) may be the final paradigm, destined to supersede all traditional forms of direct consumer data collection. Like all great technological revolutions, the new methodology offers untold possibilities – for better or worse.

With over 65 percent of all U.S. households having Internet access, and a much higher penetration rate among young people (who still represent the prime sporting goods market segments) online panel research is becoming an increasingly attractive tool for sports marketing studies. When projectability is not a requirement, its potential increases logarithmically. But the self-selected composition of an online panel will always be a lingering question-mark; and to the degree that online panelists are thought to be prize-motivated, the question becomes serious, if not insuperable.

Online panel research has inherited some, not all, of the virtues of the offline method; but the virtual abolition of both questionnaire mailing and printing expense makes this new technique considerably less costly than its pencil-and-paper forerunner. However, online panel operators have not yet passed this theoretical savings onto their clients; in many cases, when completed interviews and data collection volume are equalized, Internet research – ostensibly due to front-end programming costs, but also because of huge incentives – proves more expensive than its older, hardcopy rival.

Like the consumer snail-mail method, online surveys may capture relatively large amounts of information while providing a quiet, anonymous setting. Unlike its glacial predecessor – which relied on the U.S. Postal Service – this emerging research technology can deliver huge study samples almost instantaneously.

Gargantuan online panels (5+ million members!) allow researchers access to low-incidence, hard-to-find populations such as treadmill buyers or big-game hunters of a particular species; but on the other hand, the Internet is still an exclusive club, which continues to bar certain groups. For example, the large offline population of "Bubbas" (the psychographic most fond of hunting) is denied representation in an online study, creating an incomplete and unpromising sports participation research venue for that industry.

Returning to incomparable advantages of the Internet: the availability of graphics, video and audio clips –

features invaluable to concept tests, market studies and product-focused research. Add to this other forms of visual enjoyment, ease-of-operation and further control over the respondent and the dominance of online research is almost inevitable.

Most critically, the online method silences a major objection to hard-copy mail research: it can force an answer to each and every question in a survey – potentially the greatest single advantage of Internet research over the mail method. But as Don Dillman of Washington State University has suggested, this "benefit" has a double edge: it could irritate prize-mongering respondents who are racing to the "submit" button, accentuating slovenly response practices.

When panelists remain true to the mission, good research is possible. But the monetary lure reigns supreme, and to the extent that respondents deviate from the straight-and-narrow, economically-based recruitment and frequently-used incentives become major structural flaws of online panel methodology. Technology and economic incentives may be transforming a pool of once-diligent, civic-minded respondents into a horde of game-playing prize mongers who view survey content as a necessary evil – an annoying obstacle to a grand prize, to be dispatched as quickly as possible. In this new paradigm, says Dillman, "the implied social contract between researcher and respondent" has been fundamentally altered.

For any attitudinal, behavioral or public opinion measurement in which online and offline populations differ significantly, there can be no valid claim to national projectability – regardless of any "algorithms" or "weights" which purport to "adjust" the data. "Balancing" an online sample by using Census demographics of the "entire" U.S. is – quite euphemistically – a fandangle. This is because the offline population (the other 30 percent) is a vastly different breed; the attitudes and behaviors of an unwired population cannot be divined from its "wired" counterparts.

Defenders of online research disagree, however. They point to comparisons with other methods, where similarities have been found on a wide range of topics, such as the incidence of specific medical conditions, or the general consumption of mass-market commodities, e.g., toothpaste or cereal. But some of these claims are specious, because Internet access is not a defining characteristic of such general conditions or mass-market behaviors. It comes as no surprise (and proves nothing!) that razor blade purchases may not differ significantly between online and offline populations.

When Internet usage correlates strongly with lifestyle or some core element of attitude or behavior, the two populations diverge rather sharply. ASD experimental research has confirmed for example, that males 18-34 with online access have much higher sports participation rates than offline members of the same demographics, even after all other factors (especially income) have been equalized. At first glance, it seems counterintuitive that Internet users are more active than their offline counterparts. But the online population is also younger, more affluent and better-educated than those without access to the Internet; so it is not unexpected that the former are prone to be more active in sports/fitness participation.

In any event, the flimsiest pretext of valid "projectable" online data requires ongoing, cost-prohibitive, parallel tracking research; and even then, such a claim would be highly questionable.

As Internet penetration approaches 90-95 percent, the problem will recede, and when recruitment/incentive strategies are reconsidered it may eventually disappear. One day there will be valid, national online surveys; but that day is far off. Right now, if they must write about such things, journalists should use a much more scrupulous description of interactive research: "a nationally representative survey of a highly self-selected element of the U.S. online population." | Q

Survey Monitor

continued from page 10

Highly confident in their family and work choices, America's moms nevertheless appear to be deeply conflicted about balancing family and work life. The majority of working moms find balancing work and family difficult (66 percent). More than one-third of working moms (36 percent) feel guilty for not being able to give either their job or family a 100-percent effort. One out of four (25 percent) say they often have to leave their child or children waiting because they can't get away from work.

Working moms feel more guilty about missed time with family, rather than time away from work. Very few complain of missed job opportunities or promotions because of obligations at home (9 percent). Even fewer (6 percent) are jealous of the careers of their friends who don't have children. In addition, only 15 percent say they think their colleagues resent it that they can't work late due to family duties.

Interestingly, some moms prefer to have a male boss over a female boss (31 percent) because a male boss "doesn't let emotions get in the way of work" (45 percent).

The poll, conducted by Greenberg, Quinlan, Rosner Research, Inc., is based on a national survey of 1,003 mothers. It has a margin of error of +/- 3.1 percent and was fielded between February 17 and 21, 2005 via RDD methodology.

Clothing logos lose their luster

The power of fashion brands continues to decline, especially for major league sports, according to the Brand Keys Fashion Index, a national survey of fashion and apparel brand labels and logos conducted by Brand Keys, Inc., a New York research firm.

For the first time since 2002, "Favorite Sports Team," the perennial brand label/logo leader among men and women in all age segments, showed an overall decrease of 13 percent in importance to consumers. Major League Baseball and the National Hockey League, brands that had always appeared on the Brand Keys Fashion Index Top 10 list, did not make the cut this year.

When asked how important apparel brand logos and labels are to consumers now versus "a few years ago," the majority of respondents (66 percent) reported that they are now less important. Of the 7,500 survey respondents, almost 9.5 times as many said logos and labels were now either "much less" or "less" important to them than said they were now "much more" or "more" important.

"Increasingly apparel brands do not generally resonate with the values of consumers and as marketers do not support their brands in appropriate ways, you can't really expect to find that the brands are more important to consumers," says Robert Passikoff, president, Brand Keys, Inc. "If you disappoint your consumers, you're bound to see disappointing returns. Look at the disappearance of the MLB and NHL brands from this year's list. The MLB steroid scandal did a lot of damage to that brand, and the NHL didn't even show up. You can't disappoint your fans much more than that!"

More than two-thirds of the 7,500 men and women surveyed reported that clothing logos and labels are now less important to them. Specifically, as of spring 2005, women were 8.25 times more likely to say that logos/labels were now less important to them, while men were 11.3 times more likely to say that.

Examining the results by age, the oldest group (ages 45-59) was the most likely to say that the importance of logos and labels had declined (76 percent). Only 6 percent of this group said they had become more important.

Even among the youngest age group (21 to 34), over twice as many respondents said logos and labels are now less important. "It appears that even among traditionally fashion-conscious younger adults, a rejection of the use of one's clothes as a statement about oneself continues to spread," says Passikoff.

Of those brands that have tradition-

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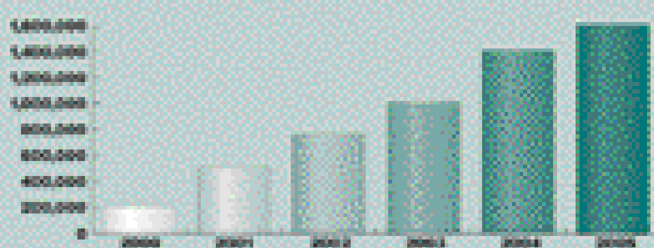

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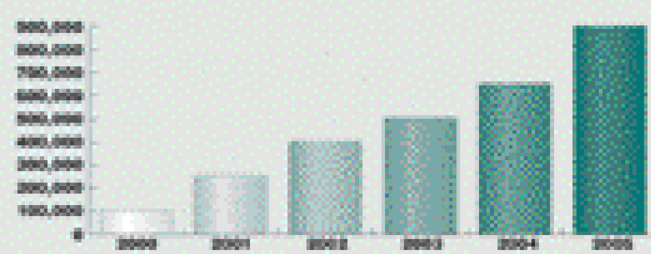

Typical e-Rewards for Business panel survey response rates average 25-35%.

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e-rewards® market research

ence consumer audiences, according to results of a survey by Jack Morton Worldwide, an experiential marketing firm. Based an online survey of 2,574 consumers, ages 13-65, in 25 U.S. markets, the results show that this marketing medium resonates across demographic and product categories, with high influence among groups such as women, young people and Hispanics.

More than two-thirds of all consumers say experiential marketing would be extremely or very influential on their overall opinion of brands and products. Seventy percent say that participating in a live-event marketing experience would increase their purchase consideration, and 57 percent say it would result in quicker purchase. However, 73 percent of all respondents had never before participated in a live-event marketing experience, indicating an opportunity for marketers to differentiate.

The influence of experiential marketing is strongest among often-targeted youth and female consumers: nearly 80 percent of teens say experiential marketing would increase purchase consideration, while 65 percent say it would lead to quicker purchase; 72 percent of 18-to-23-year-old consumers say experiential marketing would make them more receptive to the brand/product advertising - 59 percent say it would lead to quicker purchase; 60 percent of women say experiential marketing would be more likely to lead to actual purchase of a product/brand, vs. TV advertising (26 percent) and Internet advertising (14 percent); 84 percent of women say they'd bring family or friends to a live marketing experience, and 75 percent say they'd tell others about the experience.

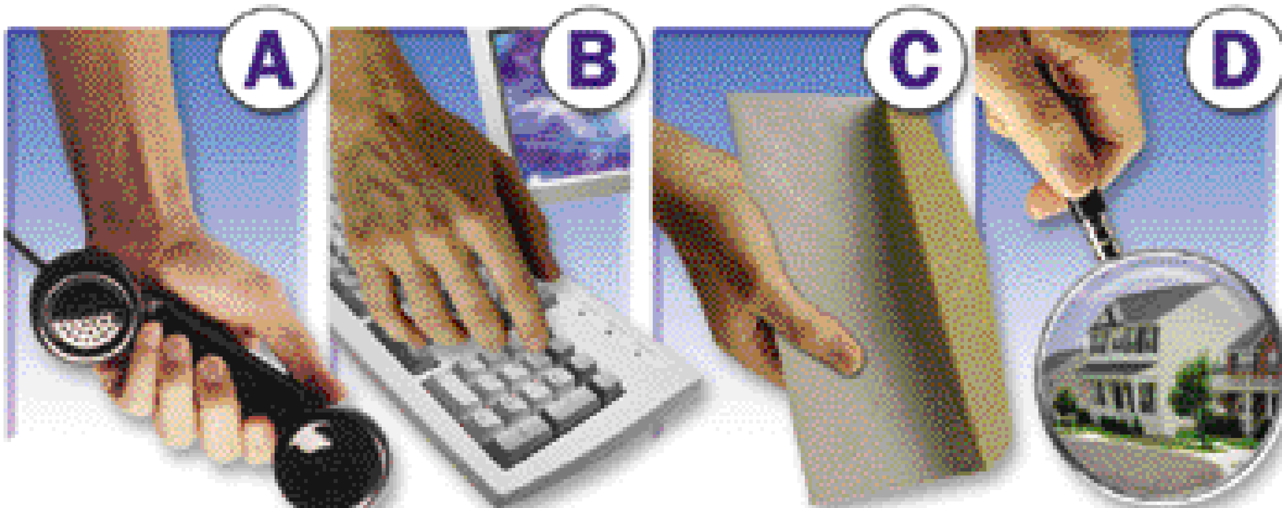
Seventy-four percent of Hispanic women and 66 percent of Hispanic men would be more likely to consider purchasing a product after participating in an experiential marketing event. And 81 percent of Hispanic females indicated participating in a live marketing event would make them more receptive to future advertising. However, Hispanics are also the ethnic group most underexposed to event marketing: 78 percent of all Hispanics surveyed had never before participated in a live marketing event.

The effectiveness of experiential marketing was also tested against 14 product/service categories. In 11 out of 14, consumers said their preferred means of learning about new products/services was by experiencing it for themselves or by hearing about it from someone they know, as opposed to TV, radio, print, mail or the Internet.

Live marketing experiences were also shown to be a way to increase marketing ROI: 75 percent of consumers say that participating in a live marketing experience would make them more receptive to the product/brand's advertising; 75 percent of consumers said they would be extremely or very likely to tell others after participating in a live marketing event; eight out of 10 consumers who had actually participated in experiential marketing in the past said that they had told others about their experience.

Spending on experiential marketing

The answer is:



ALL of the above.

The research data collection world grows more complicated every day thru technology, legislation and changing concerns about privacy. Anti-spam, Do-Not-Call, wireless phone rules, anti-fax laws, abandonment rates, virus concerns and the like now fill the researcher's "worry list" just as much as representation, projectability and bias. All too often, researchers are presented an "answer" which has more to do with a vendor's business model than it does their research challenge.

At GENESYS, our only preferred methodology is the one that meets the needs of your particular project.

It's clear that the very best way to interact with respondents is ***the way they want***. Despite the buzz in recent years over the rise of some methodologies and the "imminent demise" of others, we know that the best design is, and always has been, the one that delivers the best rate of response from as representative a sampling frame as possible, in a cost-effective manner.

The concept of ***Respondent Preference*** has entered the sampling world. On many studies, researchers now realize that they must vary their approach to provide respondents with choices. While ***Mixed-Mode*** designs can be more challenging to implement, they can reward researchers with more representative results and the reduction of biases resulting from non-response.

At GENESYS, we've built a "***toolbox***" of unique capabilities and design options to meet any research need. As the leader in sampling with Government, Social Science, and University researchers, we've developed a number of inventive designs that can maximize rates of response and representation, while providing true respondent choice in data collection. Along with years of methodological leadership and design expertise, the GENESYS household sampling toolbox includes:

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has grown to an estimated $166 billion in 2004, a 9 percent increase over 2003, according to an industry trade publication.

Data was independently collected by a third-party research partner between March 11 and March 21, 2005. A white paper reporting the results, Experiential Marketing: A Consumer Study, is available online at www.jack-morton.com.

Organic, no-/low-sugar products still going strong

As various diets quickly move into and out of vogue, and consumers search for a weight loss magic bullet, two good-for-you consumer packaged goods (CPG) segments - organic and no-/low-sugar - stand out from the rest for their ability to generate especially strong and sustained growth, according to research from Chicago-based ACNielsen.

The carb-conscious segment (products with label claims such as "for your low-carb lifestyle") actually topped the list of 11 good-for-you segments tracked by ACNielsen for generating the highest growth in the first 12 weeks of 2005 - up 20.2 percent vs. the same period last year. However, that increase was off sharply from the segment's peak one-week growth rate of over 200 percent in mid-June of 2004. In fact, sales within the carb-conscious segment have been slowing steadily ever since. For the one-week period ending March 19, 2005, sales of such products actually declined (-2.5 percent) compared with the same period last year. It was the first one-week sales loss for the segment since ACNielsen began tracking carb-conscious products in 2000.

On the other hand, the organic and no-/low-sugar segments have proven much better able to sustain strong sales growth, as indicated in the table.

"Clearly, many consumers want to lose weight and eat more healthily overall," says Alice Fawver, senior vice president, marketing, ACNielsen U.S. "The sales numbers show that people will flock toward diets that promise results. However, keeping people on such diets has proven more challenging. The good-for-you product segments that are enjoying the most sustained success are those that offer health benefits without requiring a whole new way of eating."

Besides the organic and no-/low-sugar segments, those generating con-

Dollar Volume Percent Change Vs. Same Period Year Ago

Product Segment[1]	Four Weeks Ending 10/30/04	Four Weeks Ending 11/27/04	Four Weeks Ending 12/25/04	Four Weeks Ending 1/22/05	Four Weeks Ending 2/19/05	Four Weeks Ending 3/19/05
Organic	10.5%	12.7%	12.1%	16.8%	14.9%	14.4%
Sugar free, less sugar, no sugar added	11.7%	12.3%	10.5%	14.7%	13.1%	11.3%
Flax/hemp seed	12.4%	13.1%	15.6%	6.7%	5.1%	13.6%
Whole grain	4.9%	4.0%	5.0%	5.9%	5.8%	7.0%
No/reduced lactose	7.1%	7.2%	7.1%	6.9%	3.4%	5.6%
Carb-conscious	116.1%	85.2%	73.2%	41.4%	20.0%	3.8%
No/reduced calories	7.3%	7.0%	5.2%	7.0%	4.5%	2.5%
No/reduced fat	2.2%	1.8%	1.1%	3.3%	2.1%	2.3%
Calcium (excellent/good source of)	3.1%	2.2%	1.8%	3.0%	2.2%	1.7%
Salt/Sodium (low/no/none added)	-0.9%	-0.1%	-2.1%	1.4%	-0.4%	-0.9%
Soy	3.1%	2.5%	3.4%	0.2%	-0.3%	-1.0%

Source: ACNielsen LabelTrends, Food/Drug/Mass Merchandise (excluding Wal-Mart) channels combined.
[1]UPC-coded products only.

sistent year-over-year sales gains include the flax/hemp seed, whole grain, no-/reduced-lactose, and no-/reduced-calorie segments.

While the growth rate for the no-/low-fat product segment has been in the low single digits, it is the largest good-for-you segment, with sales topping $32.6 billion in 2004. Therefore, even modest percentage gains translate into significant dollar volume gains. Good-for-you segments meeting with less success include the no-/reduced-sodium and soy segments. The grocery channel dominates sales in all 11 good-for-you segments, with dollar volume shares ranging from 88.7 percent (no-/low-sugar) to 96.9 percent (organic) for the 12 weeks ending March 19, 2005. For more information visit www.acnielsen.com.

Arbitron profiles radio habits of Chinese-Americans

Arbitron Inc., New York, has released the results of its first-ever surveys of radio listening by Chinese-language consumers in the Los Angeles and New York metropolitan radio markets.

Top Five Radio Stations for Chinese-speaking Asians in NYC

Station	Format	Weekly Audience (Chinese-American Persons 12+)	Weekly Time Spent Listening (hh:mm)	Market Share of radio listening (percent)
WZRC-AM	Chinese Language	175,400	18:30	53.5
WINS-AM	All News	67,200	4:45	13.9
WHTZ-FM	Pop CHR	64,500	3:45	13.3
WLTW-FM	Adult Contemporary	63,900	6:15	13.2
WKTU-FM	Rhythmic CHR	29,100	3:00	6.0

Conducted during the winter 2005 radio survey, the two local market surveys found that 56.2 percent of radio listening by Chinese-speaking Asian-Americans is to Chinese-language radio. The leading English-language formats for these listeners are adult contemporary (6.4 percent), news (6.2 percent) and pop contemporary hit radio (5.2 percent).

The surveys also found that, over the course of a week, 82.5 percent of Chinese-speaking Asian-Americans in New York and Los Angeles, age 12 and older, listen to the radio. These consumers spend an average of 16 hours each week with the medium. In addition, 53.6 percent of the Chinese-speaking Asian-American audience attended some college and 23.1 percent live in households with incomes greater than $75,000.

In the New York metro survey area, an estimated 78.5 percent of all Chinese-speaking Asian-Americans, age 12 and older, listen to the radio during a survey week (Monday-Sunday, 6:00 a.m. to midnight). These 380,300 persons spend an average of 16 hours each week with the medium. The top five radio stations for Chinese-speaking Asian Americans in New York are shown in the first chart.

In the Los Angeles metro survey area, an estimated 88.3 percent of all Chinese-speaking Asian-Americans, age 12 and older, listen to the radio during a survey week (Monday-Sunday, 6:00 a.m. to midnight). These 291,500 persons spend an average of 16 hours and 15 minutes per week with the medium. The top five radio stations for Chinese-speaking Asian-Americans in Los Angeles are shown in the second chart.

Based on the survey, Arbitron estimates that there are approximately 484,500 Chinese-speaking Asian-Americans, age 12 and older, living in the New York Metro Survey area, representing 3 percent of total persons 12+ population. In the Los Angeles metro, there are approximately 330,000 Chinese-speaking Asian Americans, age 12 and older, representing 3 percent of Los Angeles' total 12+ population.

There are three full-time Chinese-language radio stations in the Los Angeles area and one in the New York metropolitan area.

Top Five Radio Stations for Chinese-speaking Asians in L.A.

Station	Format	Weekly Audience (Chinese-American Persons 12+)	Weekly Time Spent Listening (hh:mm)	Market Share of radio listening (percent)
KAZN-AM	Chinese Language (Mandarin)	110,200	10:45	25.1
KMRB-AM	Chinese Language (Cantonese)	90,100	14:45	28.0
KOST-FM	Adult Contemporary	57,500	4:45	5.9
KIIS-FM	Pop CHR	54,700	5:45	6.4
KAHZ-FM	Chinese Language (Simulcast of KAZN-AM)	38,200	7:30	6.1

The survey took place during the winter 2005 Arbitron survey period (January 6–March 30, 2005) among Chinese-speaking consumers, age 12 and older, in the Los Angeles and New York radio metros. The New York survey had an in-tab sample of 669 Chinese-speaking individuals and the Los Angeles survey had an in-tab sample of 599.

Arbitron used a Chinese-language version of its standard radio diary to track the listening habits of Chinese-Americans in these two markets. The study was done on behalf of MultiCultural Radio Broadcasting. Arbitron also tracks the consumer, lifestyle and media habits of all Asian-Americans through its Scarborough Research joint venture with VNU, Inc.

For most households, the first contact was a bilingual (English/Chinese) pre-alert postcard. The remaining households were contacted first by phone. Recruitment interviews were conducted in English, Mandarin or Cantonese, based on the preference of the interviewee. All persons 12+ in eligible households were asked to take part in the one-week survey. However, only those persons identified as Chinese speaking were included in the final estimates.

The respondents received the Arbitron survey and instructions by mail. The diary and all ancillary materials were bilingual (English/Chinese). Respondents used an English/Chinese version of the Arbitron radio diary. Arbitron processed all data according to the policies for the syndicated radio measurement service, with the additional ability to handle written Chinese entries.

Radio listening data have been projected to the marketplace based on estimates of the Chinese-speaking Chinese population in the Los Angeles and New York radio metros. For more information visit www.arbitron.com.

Product and Service Update

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from a variety of sources: ACT!, dBASE, Excel, GoldMine, and Microsoft Outlook. The included geographic, demographic and business data has also been updated to include: states, counties, zip codes, Census tracts, and other geographic boundaries; Tele Atlas Dynamap/Transportation street maps for more than 35,000 U.S. towns; and consumer expenditure data at state and county levels from ESRI Business Information Solutions. For more information visit www.esri.com/businessmap.

ESRI is also offering ArcGIS 9.1, a full release of ArcGIS Desktop (ArcReader, ArcView, ArcEditor, and ArcInfo), ArcGIS Engine, ArcGIS Server, ArcIMS and ArcSDE. In addition, it is the main vehicle for the release of Network Analyst on the ArcGIS platform. Features of ArcGIS 9.1 include: improved quality, stability and performance; improved geoprocessing; productivity enhancements; and a "save as" tool to ease migration. For more information visit www.esri.com/whatsnew.

E-book series focuses on research

Knowledge inForm, Inc., Quincy, Mass., is now offering a series of electronic books to help companies conduct effective market research. The four books are a part of the Market Research Know!Books series and feature modular content geared toward the experience and needs of the business professional: fundamental, intermediate, and advanced market research techniques, and project management tools used to conduct market research projects.

The four books in the market research series are: *Know! Market Research for Small Businesses and Start-Ups*; *Know! Market Research – The Fundamentals*; *Know! Market Research – Intermediate*; and *Know! Market Research – Advanced*. The series features The Market Intelligence Circle, a framework that helps professionals understand key market forces. Purchasers also receive a half-hour of consulting by e-mail on their Know!Book topic, which is valid for use within 30 days of purchase. For more information visit www.knowledgeinform.com.

Detect duration and number of visits to stores, banks, etc.

The Dwell Meter, from U.K.-based Biodata Ltd., detects how long customers spend in one place and how often that place was visited. With the Dwell Meter, retail outlets can, for example, test the effectiveness of new displays, compare one display with another, evaluate new store layouts or monitor waiting times at counters and checkouts.

The Dwell Meter is part of Biodata's Video Turnstile people-counting system. Using an overhead camera it detects a person entering and leaving a zone. Windows software supplied with the system reads and reports information from the Dwell Meter, in real time if necessary.

Data can be analyzed with almost any software, including Microsoft Excel. Biodata offers VisualTrends Lite free of charge, or can supply the full-blown version, Visual Trends, which enables clients to view results over the Internet. All these options produce histograms showing how many people stayed for how long.

Managers can choose up to three time intervals over which to record visits. Available in RS232, RS485, Ethernet and Wi-Fi versions, the Dwell Meter can connect directly to a PC or modem. It includes all the cabling, the overhead video camera and the Windows software. For more information visit www.videoturnstile.com/dwell.html.

SPSS updates Dimensions

SPSS Inc., Chicago, has released Dimensions 3.0, an update of its suite for survey design, data collection, data management, analysis and publishing of survey results. The new version includes a new survey scripting language that lets users continue their current work practices while providing new opportunities to create surveys that improve the overall respondent experience. Dimensions 3.0 is based on a single, integrated set of underlying technologies that support a range of survey research, from multilingual, multimodal research to smaller, one-of-a-kind projects. The new Dimensions Scripting enhances the functionality of mrInterview and, through the new mrStudio Interview Option, provides power users with a Unified Scripting Environment that can be used at every stage of the survey process. With the new Dimensions Scripting language, researchers and administrators gain flexibility in survey design and additional control of back-end processes, such as Microsoft Office integration and automation of survey related data and respondent processing. For more information visit www.spss.com. *(Editor's note: Also see Tim Macer's review on p. 26 of this issue.)*

Service tracks brand appearances on TV shows

TNS Media Intelligence, New York,

has introduced a new Branded Entertainment service to monitor and report brand appearances on network and cable TV programming. Available on TNSMI's Stradegy multimedia platform, branded entertainment and traditional TV advertising data can be viewed in one place, allowing side-by-side comparison of brand appearances against 18 other types of media.

The service monitors a range of formats including reality, sitcom, drama and information programming in prime-time network and cable, as well as other dayparts. The service's methodology provides a range of descriptive details on the type and prominence of each brand appearance recorded, including visual and verbal dimensions, character interaction, time duration, brand visibility and exclusivity, and level of plot integration. Audio and video clips are also available. For more information visit www.tns-mi.com.

Arbitron strengthens small-market radio estimates

Arbitron Inc., New York, has developed a program designed to increase the stability of its radio audience estimates in 110 small markets that are part of the "condensed market" radio measurement service. The program will be implemented in two phases. Beginning with the release of the fall 2005 radio survey results, Arbitron will include the in-tab diaries from the fall 2005 and spring 2005 survey when tabulating the audience estimates in 110 of the "condensed" markets. Each report thereafter will be a "two-book average" of the most current and the previous survey, delivering two times the current sample size for audience demographics and dayparts.

Beginning in January 2007, Arbitron will begin surveying these condensed markets continuously, converting them from two quarterly reports (spring/fall) to four quarterly reports (winter/spring/summer/fall). Arbitron will take the sample currently allotted for spring/fall surveys and distribute it equally across the four quarterly surveys.

Beginning with the release of spring 2007 reports, ratings reports will be issued quarterly. By the release of the summer 2007 survey, each market report will be tabulated based on the in-tab diaries from the four most current quarterly surveys. This is the quarterly rolling sample approach used in the RADAR radio network service. For more information visit www.arbitron.com.

Briefly

Seattle-based Global Market Insite has announced that its monthly Omnibus 20 survey of global consumer opinion is now available weekly. Representative samples of 1,000 respondents are collected from 20 countries each Monday. Results are available as soon as 24 hours afterwards. The GMI Omnibus 20 survey utilizes the core technology of GMI's Net-MR 5.0 software solution. For more information visit www.gmi-mr.com.

Chicago Web-based survey application provider SurveyWriter is now offering online sample for its survey clients through a partner agreement with Survey Sampling International. For more information visit www.surveywriter.com.

Sydney, Australia-based Pulse Group, a market research business process outsourcing company, has launched its VOIP CATI Center in partnership with Basis Bay, offering research companies a multilingual CATI service operating out of its Kuala Lumpur operations hub. For more information visit www.basis-bay.com.

Cincinnati research firm AcuPOLL and advertising consultancy BrandMine are now offering Insight Manager, a process that helps companies uncover consumer insights and maintain their impact throughout product development, marketing strategy and advertising, and package development. For more information visit www.acupoll.com.

Decipher, Inc., a Fresno, Calif., research firm, has added a progress indicator system to its proprietary market research technology platform. The new progress indicator gives users an indication of their progress within a survey based on the time spent completing questions measured against the remaining number and complexity of questions, unlike traditional progress indicators that are static or fixed. For more information visit www.decipherinc.com.

Survey Software Services, Braintree, Mass., announced that its Key Survey online survey software Web site (www.keysurvey.com) has been certified to display the TRUSTe European Union Privacy Seal. TRUSTe, a privacy certification and seal program, awards its seal to companies that complete the its certification process and agree to comply with ongoing TRUSTe oversight and consumer dispute resolution procedures.

Research Industry News

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GfK U.S. HealthCare Companies.

Separately, GfK has acquired 51 percent of the shares in **Research Dynamics Inc**., Toronto, and **Adimark S.A.** in Chile. At the same time, GfK increased its shareholding in geomarketing specialists Macon AG in Germany to 100 percent. Research Dynamics and Adimark supply information services in GfK's custom research division.

Paris-based **Ipsos** has acquired **Napoleon Franco S.A**., a Colombia research firm with offices in Bogota, Medellin, Cali and Barranquilla. With 50 full-time employees, the company posted sales of $3.1 million in 2004.

Allied Capital Corporation, Washington, D.C., has invested $27.4 million in portfolio company MVL Group to finance a portion of its acquisition of **Marketing Research Services, Inc.**, Cincinnati. The investment took the form of a senior secured term loan and senior subordinated notes. MVL Group is majority owned by Allied Capital.

Aegis Group plc has acquired the French market research group **ARTeam**, the holding company for QCG and Socioscan. ARTeam will become part of Synovate, Aegis's research network. ARTeam is a full-service market research group based in Paris.

Separately, Aegis Group has also signed an agreement to acquire the Italian market research company **AMT**. The acquisition was expected to be completed before the end of June. On completion AMT will become part of Synovate.

Synovate has acquired **Coral Pacific Inc.**, a Japanese research business. Established in 1993, Coral Pacific is a full-service firm headquartered in Tokyo.

Alliances/strategic partnerships

Jabes Market Research, a full-service market research and consulting company in El Salvador, is the newest member of the Global Network of **Harris Interactive**, Rochester, N.Y.

Ipsos Interactive Services Europe is now the exclusive provider of Archway, a Web reporting tool for market research studies. Now branded as Ipsos Interactive Services (IIS)-Archway and a company within Ipsos Interactive Services Europe, IIS-Archway will be managed by Per Lundgren.

Association/organization news

Jane Cook, vice president, business strategies at Frank N. Magid & Associates, Marion, Iowa, has been named president of the **Marketing Research Association** (MRA).

Separately, the MRA and the University of Georgia Center for Continuing Education announced Natalia Cordoba-Velasquez as the winner of the second annual Betsy Jane Peterson-Marketing Research Association Award. Cordoba-Velasquez, a database assistant for the Small Business Development Center in Aptos, Calif., demonstrated a passion for the research profession and a desire to further her education in the field. She receives an enrollment in the Principles of Marketing Research course, which is administered by the University of Georgia Center for Continuing Education.

Dimitry Pisarsky, managing director of **A/R/M/I-Marketing**, Millward Brown's licensee in Russia, has been elected chairman of the Russian **Association of Market and Public Opinion Researchers** (OIROM).

The Advertising Research Foundation has added **ING, Integration** and **Leo Burnett Company, Inc.** to its member roster.

The Market Research Society has appointed Peter Mouncey as editor-in-chief of the *International Journal of Market Research*, succeeding James Rothman and Stephan Buck, who retired as joint editors toward the end of 2004.

Awards/rankings

Indianapolis-based customer loyalty management firm **Walker Information** was awarded a Mira Award for outstanding technology in the professional services provider category for its development of the Walker SmartLoyalty System. The Mira Awards honor organizations which have fueled the Indiana economy, brought global recognition to the state, and improved the quality of life for all residents through technology and economic impact.

New accounts/projects

Univision Communications Inc. and New York-based **Nielsen Media Research** have agreed to a new contract that will provide comprehensive ratings for Univision's local television stations. Under the terms of the new contract, Nielsen will provide local ratings for the 34 Univision and TeleFutura owned-and-operated local

stations through its Nielsen Station Index and Nielsen Hispanic Station Index services, which includes Local People Meter service in New York, Chicago, Los Angeles San Francisco and Dallas.

New York-based **Arbitron Inc.'s** Portable People Meter (PPM) has been selected to measure radio audiences across Norway. A steering committee of Norwegian National Radio has signed a five-year contract with TNS Gallup, a member of the worldwide TNS group, to install a panel of 400 people equipped with Arbitron's PPM system beginning in the first quarter of 2006. While other countries also use the PPM for TV audience measurement, Norway is the first country to use the system for commercial ratings for radio.

Simmons, Deerfield Beach, Fla., has signed a multi-year deal to provide Major League Baseball with access to several Simmons products offering consumer data from its National Consumer Survey. These products include the National Hispanic Consumer Survey as well as the Simmons Teens Study.

20/20 Research, Inc., Nashville, has added research firms **Harper, Carol Landers Research**, **Campbell Hausfeld**, and **Lieberman Research Worldwide** to its list of online software subscribers.

U.K.-based research firm **ESA** has been retained by Tesco Ireland to conduct its mystery shopping and customer service assessment program for a fifth consecutive year. The research will consist of traditional mystery shopping and be supplemented by ESA's customer and competitor Question Time forums.

Beverage alcohol manufacturer Mike's Hard Lemonade has selected **Information Resources, Inc.**, Chicago, and its InfoBeerUSA service as its preferred provider of marketplace information, business insights and access solutions.

New companies/new divisions/relocations/expansions

MSI International, a King Of Prussia, Pa., marketing research firm, has moved to new offices, doubling its former square footage. The firm is now located at 650 Park Avenue in King of Prussia. The new headquarters accommodates 100 employees, with room for expansion.

Lightspeed Research, Basking Ridge, N.J., has opened an office in Frankfurt, Germany, headed by Gernot Pluem.

Insight Marketing Systems, Melbourne, Australia, has opened a new office in the U.S. to accommodate interest in its Research Reporter application, a market research management system. Heading up the office is Emmons Patzer, recently named vice president sales and marketing - the Americas.

FocusVision Worldwide, Stamford, Conn., has opened an office in London. The new location will provide sales, technical and project coordination services.

Company earnings reports

In results for the three months ended March 31, 2005, **Greenfield Online, Inc.**, Wilton, Conn., reported net revenue of $15.3 million, a 77 percent increase compared to $8.6 million for the first quarter of 2004. Gross profit for the first quarter ended March 31, 2005 was $10.8 million, or 71 percent of revenue, an 86 percent increase compared to $5.8 million, or 67 percent of revenue, in the same period a year ago.

Operating income for the first quarter ended March 31, 2005 increased to $2.5 million from $0.4 million in the same period a year ago. Net income for the first quarter of 2005 increased to $2.5 million compared to $0.3 million for the first quarter of 2004. Fully tax-effected net income, utilizing a 40 percent tax rate, was $1.8 million for the first quarter of 2005.

Adjusted EBITDA, a non-GAAP

financial measure, for the first quarter ended March 31, 2005 increased to $4.0 million compared to $1.3 million in the same period a year ago.

Sales bookings in the first quarter, defined as new signed contracts for online survey work, reached $19.5 million, up approximately 79 percent over the same period a year ago and up 34 percent from the fourth quarter of 2004. Bid volume, defined as the total value of online survey projects submitted for bid by clients, during the three months ended March 31, 2005 was $108 million, up approximately 69 percent over the same period a year ago and up 30 percent from the fourth quarter. As of today, second quarter backlog stands at approximately $20 million. Backlog is defined as signed contracts for online survey projects and online community orders that the company expects to complete and deliver to clients during the three months ending June 30, 2005.

In quarterly sales results, Germany-based **GfK Group** reported sales increased by 7.2 percent from EUR 149.9 million to EUR 160.8 million for the period ending March 31, 2005 EBIT after income from participations shows above-average growth from EUR 15.0 million to EUR 38.6 million.

The growth in EBIT including income from participations is attributable to the disposal of the 50 percent stake in IHA-IMS Health, already reported by GfK at the beginning of the year. The margin, i.e., EBIT after income from participations in relation to sales, of 24 percent was also higher than in the comparable period of the previous year. Consolidated total income after minority interests rose from EUR 6.9 million to EUR 31.1 million.

GfK's strongest business division in terms of sales, custom research, has increased its sales by 8.7 percent, exceeding its target of 5.5 percent for 2005. However, operating profit has not yet kept pace with the positive sales growth. At EUR 2.5 million, the figure was down on the corresponding period in the previous year (EUR 3.2 million). Sales and revenue trends at U.K. and U.S.-based GfK Martin Hamblin, currently undergoing restructure, depressed results in this division.

The retail and technology division was a major contributor with above-average growth rates. Sales increased by 9.6 percent; 8.5 percentage points of the growth were attributable to organic growth. Acquisitions accounted for 2.0 percentage points. Currency effects reduced the sales growth by 0.9 percentage points. Operating profit was up by 12.1 percent to EUR 9.2 million. The margin increased overall to 19.9 percent, which is higher than in the comparable quarter of the previous year (19.4 percent).

The consumer tracking division also increased sales by 9.1 percent, of which a total of 8.6 percentage points were organic. Currency effects improved sales by 0.5 percent. Operating profit was also overproportional at +130.7 percent.

In the media division, GfK raised its sales by 3.2 percent. The sales growth was mainly organic. Currency effects accounted for 0.4 percentage points of growth. The sales growth was higher than that of the same quarter in the previous year. Operating profit of EUR 1.0 million was down on the previous year. This is due to the fact that costs for the forthcoming contract to measure radio reach in Belgium were not yet offset by revenue of a similar level. Since the division expects a major order for poster research, GfK is standing by its forecast of an overall good year for 2005.

Sales in the health care division were in line with the same period in the previous year. Organic growth amounted to 3.3 percent, but was offset by negative currency effects of the same amount. The positive trend at the health care companies in Germany and the USA was overshadowed by the restructuring of GfK Martin Hamblin Healthcare in the U.K. and the U.S.

Norway-based **Firm** announced revenue of $3.9 million in Q1 2005, a 34 percent increase compared to $2.9 million in Q1 2004. Firm also announced EBITDA results of $287,000 in Q1 2005, an increase from the $97,000 in Q4 2004. In 2004, Firm increased its revenue by 37 percent to $13.2 million and delivered EBITDA results of $1.1 million. The company maintains its ambition of a listing on the Oslo Stock Exchange in 2005.

Names of Note

continued from page 12

Packo, who moves from her role as president of Millward Brown USA to become CEO of Millward Brown North America. Packo will also devote time to the global business insight group and has joined the Millward Brown management board. She will continue to be based in Millward Brown's New York City office. Also promoted to the Millward Brown management board was **Fabian Hernandez**. Hernandez has joined the global business insight group and is based in Millward Brown's Mexico City office. In addition, **Charles Foster** has been promoted to managing director, Millward Brown South Africa, and **Elaine Holland** has been named senior vice president, global human resources, and a member of Millward Brown's main board. She will be based in the Naperville office. And **Ari Popper** has been promoted to vice president at the Fairfield, Conn., office.

Arbitron Inc., New York, has announced the retirement of **Bill Walsh**, executive vice president, finance and planning, and chief financial officer. Walsh has agreed to stay on until a new CFO is in place.

Rodney A. Carver has joined *Decision Analyst*, Arlington, Texas, as director of the company's newly created database analytic services group.

MSNBC.com, Redmond, Wash., has added **Catherine Captain** to its leadership team. She will drive all marketing functions within the company including advertising, public relations, consumer research and user experience.

Sarita Smith has been promoted to senior vice president, research and planning for *Discovery Networks U.S.*

Reed Business Information, New York, has named **Paul Koenigsberg** vice president of corporate research.

New York-based *Russell Research* has named **Eric Hunter** director of qualitative services to establish a qualitative market research practice within the firm.

Marketing Research Services Inc., Cincinnati, has added **Adesoye Farinu** as a research analyst.

Fairfield, Conn., research firm *Product Ventures* has named **Michael Carlon** director of consumer and market insights.

Carlon

Gould

Portland, Ore., research firm *Sorensen Associates* has opened an East Coast office and announced eight new hires. **Armeen Gould** will head the new Pennsylvania office. The Minnesota office has added **Ralph Hanson** and **Jackie Churchill** as senior project director. **Rebecca Taibl** has been named office manager and project director. In the Oregon office, **Razvan Mihailescu** has been named data and analysis manager. His team of data analysts includes new hires **Adolfo Mollinedo**, **Brian Remington** and **Dave Albers**. The firm has also announced two promotions in the Minnesota office: **Ernie Melsby** to vice president, client services, and **Kathy Bieker** to senior project director.

Heather Pomeroy has been named director of business development at *Datascension,* a Brea, Calif., research firm.

Margaret Henderson Blair, president of *rsc the quality measurement company (the ARS Group)*, has been named AMS Distinguished Practitioner of the Year by the Academy of Marketing Science. The Academy is an association of 1,500 members that sponsors a world marketing congress and four additional conferences each year. With this award, the AMS honors a marketer who has demonstrated accomplishments through both actions and statements and who has acted with integrity and high ethical standards.

Emmons Patzer has been named vice president, sales and marketing, at *Insight Marketing Systems*, Melbourne, Australia, and will head the firm's new U.S. office.

Beth Rounds has joined *MarketTools, Inc.*, Mill Valley, Calif., as senior vice president of business development.

AllPoints Research, Inc., Winston-Salem, N.C., has hired **Andrew Stern** as market research strategist and named **Everette Dwight** programmer.

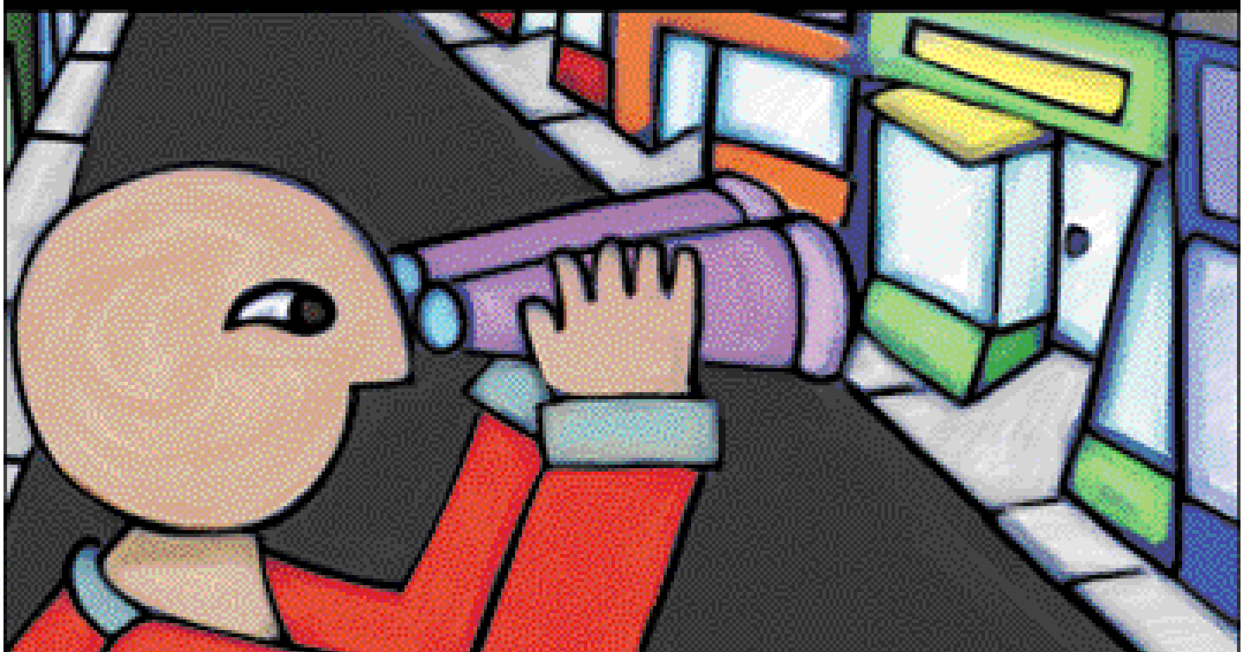
Randy Emond has been appointed president of the North American advertising and brand performance practice area of *TNS*, New York.

Carolina Echeverria has joined *New American Dimensions*, a Los Angeles research firm, as principal and chief strategic officer.

Mindwave Research, Austin, Texas, has added **Debbie Bosch** as director of customer satisfaction research and consulting.

G & S Research, Carmel, Ind., has hired **Jay Bigler** as business consultant. It has also promoted **Julie Ulloa** to business consultant and **Jill Wangler** to director, opportunities management.

M/A/R/C Research, Irving, Texas, has named **Tony Amador** vice president, client development, and **Tia Ristaino-Siegel** director, client development.



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trade talk

By Joseph Rydholm, *Quirk's* editor

Quite the double-header

Two of my favorite topics are baseball and marketing research. A few months back, I had the chance to combine them, thanks to the Minnesota/Upper Midwest chapter of the Marketing Research Association.

Chapter organizers invited Dave St. Peter and Patrick Klinger – team president, and vice president of marketing, respectively – of my beloved Minnesota Twins, to talk to a group of Twin Cities researchers prior to a day game against the Toronto Blue Jays about how the team uses marketing research. As if that wasn't interesting and fun enough (I know, I'm a nerd), we also took in the game afterwards (Joe Mays pitched the Twins to a brisk, efficient 4-0 victory).

On the surface, you might think the Twins wouldn't need to conduct research. Attendance is up 28 percent this year, TV ratings for game broadcasts are skyrocketing, and the team has won its division three years in a row despite having one of the lowest payrolls in baseball.

But the Twins play in the lackluster Metrodome, and with recreational opportunities abounding (that whole "land of 10,000 lakes" thing) and an often limited amount of time to enjoy them, it takes quite a bit of effort to entice the casual fan to spend a beautiful summer evening indoors. So marketing and marketing research are essential.

Though team owner Carl Pohlad's wealth rivals Croesus, he runs the Twins on a tight budget, and it's likely that that parsimony extends to the front office as well. Still, Klinger said the club does as much research as any team in baseball, so kudos to the marketing department for finding ways to wring the most from its modest funds.

Mine that data

Like a lot of organizations, Klinger said the Twins have a wealth of information on their customers and are still finding ways to mine it. The team talks to season ticket holders, single-game ticket buyers, group ticket buyers, the general population and former season ticket holders using a variety of methods from Web surveys to focus groups.

Fan intercepts are done during nearly every Twins homestand using PDAs, which replaced paper surveys about a year ago. Question topics include type of ticket purchased, number of games attended, advertising slogan awareness, other favorite leisure-time options (movies, fishing, shopping), and primary sources of information about the team (Web, radio, TV, newspaper, friends).

Telephone research with the general public is also conducted. Respondents are asked if they are sports fans and if so, how they feel about the Twins, are they going to any games, what do they think of the team's advertising, etc.

Another popular form of research Klinger cited – one that doesn't cost a cent – is venturing into the ballpark to talk to and observe the fans. How do they like the food? What brought them to the game today? What between-inning entertainment draws the best reaction – Kiss Cam or Guess That Twin?

The team also conducts sessions with corporate partners in which the companies offer input on ticket package plans, advertising campaigns and promotion ideas.

Emotional attachment

The Twins benefit from the emotional attachment that the community has to the team, St. Peter said. It's a bond, cemented by World Series championships in 1987 and 1991, that has somehow endured in spite of the Metrodome's sterile confines and Pohlad's repeated threats to move or shutter the team. A survey of season-ticket holders found that while 26 percent said they liked the Metrodome and 24 percent expressed indifference, a total of 45 percent said they disliked or strongly disliked it.

But if the stars align, perhaps the Metrodome albatross will soon be removed from the team's neck. A plan for a new, open-air stadium in downtown Minneapolis is under consideration by lawmakers. If that dream becomes a reality – and legislators stop focusing on minor things like the state budget – the Twins marketing staff likely won't have time to conduct research. They'll be too busy fielding phone calls from distant relatives and long-lost friends desperate to secure tickets to the sold-out games in the new ballpark. | Q

ally made the Brand Keys Fashion Index Top 10 list, Ralph Lauren moved up in importance among all age groups. Tommy Hilfiger, which had fallen from the list in 2003, returned to this year. The Gap disappeared from the Top 10 list among both men and women in all age segments. "The Gap is a brand that has had significant difficulty identifying a meaningful positioning. Over the past few years they have wanted to stand for something more than consumers are willing to believe," says Passikoff. The Gap brand announced it was ending its Sarah Jessica Parker campaign and announced singer Joss Stone will become the new face of the brand. "The age of the spokesperson isn't the issue. It's finding someone who can better communicate the basic Gap values. They may now have it right for once," Passikoff says.

First-time brands to make the list included: Isaac Mizrahi, Kate Spade, and Dockers. "There seems to be a return to some brands that reflect 'basic' consumer values. These include J. Crew and L.L. Bean as well. The economy has a bit to do with some of the brands that are showing up on the list, but not entirely. That's a small part of the reason the J. Crew and Mizrahi brands appear where they do. It's all about values that matter and Lauren has been wonderful at identifying those," Passikoff says.

Since 1998, Brand Keys has conducted national biannual Customer Loyalty Index surveys of the leading brands, currently assessing 28 product and service categories. This is a telephone survey conducted among a sample of 16,000 men and women throughout the United States. All respondents are between 21 and 59 years of age.

Beginning in spring 2002, a series of questions on the value or importance that consumers place on the brand name logos, labels and trademarks of the clothes they wear was added.

First, the respondents were asked to indicate the importance to them personally of the brand name logos, labels and trademarks of the clothes that they wear, compared to how important they were to them "a few years ago." The respondent choices were as follows: much more important, more important, about the same, less important, or much less important.

Second, the respondents were read a list of 50 brands (including the NFL, NBA, MLB and NHL, and their "favorite sports team"), and for each, were asked the importance to them now, compared a few years ago, of wearing clothing that carries that particular brand's label or logo. Almost half of the Customer Loyalty Index respondents (7,500) were asked this series of questions. For more information visit www.brandkeys.com.

Consumers receptive to marketing events

Live-event marketing experiences where consumers interact with products, brands or "brand ambassadors" face-to-face are effective ways to influ-


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