



Professional Panelists

Background

Continuous improvement: *Research on our research*

- Many underlying stereotypes exist about why consumers complete online surveys and how they complete them
- ICM Research wanted to see the 'Professional Panelists' in action, understand them and realise if these stereotypes are justified
- We conducted five ethnographic immersion sessions in home with consumers who are on and currently use more than 10 online panels

May 2008

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Highlights

Flexible working hours and unusual personal circumstances compliments online surveys

Financial incentive is central to original motivation to compete online surveys

- Engagement and the overall experience still remain secondary incentives though

Engagement is the key

- With most completing many surveys a week, keeping respondents engaged remains a key challenge
- Variety in terms of questions type, layout and type of question need to be central to design
- Honest time estimation with a % bar is essential

Familiarity tends to breed dishonesty

- The more savvy and familiar PPs become the more likely they are at 'blindly clicking' or even lying






Importance of the internet

- PC is a fundamental part of their life, with most having multiple email addresses, EBay accounts and social networking sites
- All heavy internet users for a variety of reasons
- Curiosity fuels their knowledge and Wikipedia searching

Online surveys: How did it all begin?

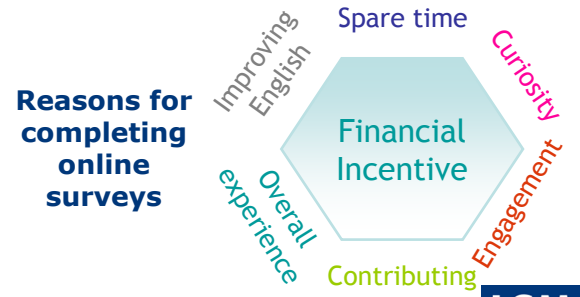
- Originally most became aware of online surveys from word-of-mouth, friends recommendation or, for the more tech savvy, from just 'Google searching'
- Financial incentives are central to the reason for starting and continually completing surveys
- However, it is not the whole picture, PP's need to feel a greater sense of satisfaction and engagement

Who the professionals really are?

	Amanda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal carer for her son Adam • Passion is music
	Kylie	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-employed music teacher • Looks after children
	Jim	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cleaner/caretaker • Works flexible hours
	Sylvia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retired • Has spare time but likes to be occupied
	Mohammed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tech savvy IT Consultant • Self-confessed internet junkie

Similarities between the Panelists

- Spare time and flexible working hours
- Usually juggling unconventional personal circumstances
- To varying degrees tech savvy and heavy internet users
- Interested in 'taking part' in various activities and comfortable with a routine





General experiences

- Online surveys, for the PP's are not a recent endeavor with most having been involved in panels for considerable time
- The snowballing invites from various panels have been forthcoming, they started soon after their first purchase of a PC and escalated since broadband
- The original reason for being interested in online surveys has faltered, increasingly PPs feel locked into a routine of survey completion

Frustrations and irritations

Engagement

- Not surprisingly a variety of engaging questions are preferred, in terms of content, way that they are asked and visual layout
- Staying attentive is difficult especially if this variety is not experienced, often leads to answers not being considered and just 'clicking blindly'

Length of questionnaire

- 15 – 20 mins is the maximum time prepared to spend on a questionnaire
- Appreciation is felt for a timing estimation of the survey in the email invite. PPs have become increasingly aware of particular panels that are accurate and honest in this estimation – these they tend to favour

Screening questions

- One of the biggest bug bears is being rejected by the screening questions. Although this is inevitable, some panels are well known for rejecting respondents at a much later stage, this can lead to respondents lying during the screening questions

"My husband is in one of those industries, but I might just lie so that I don't get kicked out!"

Managing their Panels

- For the more extreme PPs, the task of remembering their specific details becomes increasingly challenging
- Many have adopted systems to manage their panels – including a spreadsheet of their panels that is continually monitored and updated

Company	Date checked	Balance	Amount needed claim
BT Business Panel	07/02/2008		4
Ciao.co.uk (openworld)	10/02/2008	£14.18	
Ciao.co.uk (hotmail)	10/02/2008	£11.88	
HPPoints - Harrispollonline.com (openworld)	18/01/2008	3,920	
HPPoints - Harrispollonline.com (hotmail)	10/02/2008	990	
Home of Research	15/02/2008	2530	
iPSOS Access Panels	01/02/2008		
Its Your View.com	10/02/2008		
LightSpeedpanel.com	13/02/2008	4330	
Media Transfer AG.com	29/01/2008	316	
Mutualpoints.com	01/02/2008	538	

"I need this otherwise I wouldn't know where I was with them all!"

Are PPs who you think they are?

- A variety of factors influence the likelihood to answer questions honestly (e.g. engagement, interest, variety, subject area etc), but they generally prefer to answer honestly
- Disillusionment is experienced if honesty is not a two way process, especially in relation to the time taken to complete the survey
- Familiarity tends to breed dishonesty, if the PP knows what to expect they are able to become more savvy with the procedure
- PPs even admitted to lying on the screening questions to complete the whole survey

"If I get a similar survey I know what is coming so I just go click, click - it's easy peasy!!"

A panelists dream: the ideal panel

- Accurate time indication with email invitation and a time % bar
- Rigorous recruitment phase so that invitations to surveys are likely to be of interest and suitable
- Original and engaging subject area e.g. Film research and ad testing
- Questions that make you think and can be painlessly navigated
- Different and creative ways to be incentivised e.g. prize draws, vouchers, charity donations

The Future: playing them at their own game!

- To counteract the increasingly savvy nature of PPs, online panels need to provide the variety needed and accurate time estimation to ensure maximum engagement
- A time delay between the web page loading and being able to answer the questions forces panelist to think about their answer and read the question more rigorously
- Internal logic checks are essential to validate answers e.g. asking questions in different ways