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ESOMAR questions to help buyers of online samples

Digdata

ESOMAR member

Transparency is reputation

The 28 Questions to Help Buyers of Online Samples guide is designed to provide a standard set of questions a buyer can ask to determine whether a sample provider's practices and samples fit with their research objectives. The questions help research buyers think about the issues relating to online samples.

We post our answers to the 28 questions online to increase transparency and enable buyers to compare services of different suppliers.

Questions

Company profile

1. What experience does your company have in providing online samples for market research?

Sample sources and recruitment

2. Please describe and explain the type(s) of online sample sources from which you get respondents. Are these databases? Actively managed research panels? Direct marketing lists? Social networks? Web intercept (also known as river) samples?

3. If you provide samples from more than one source: How are the different sample sources blended together to ensure validity? How can this be replicated over time to provide reliability?

4. Are your sample source(s) used solely for market research? If not, what other purposes are they used for?

5. How do you source groups that may be hard to reach on the internet?

6. If, on a particular project, you need to supplement your sample(s) with sample(s) from other providers, how do you select those partners? Is it your policy to notify a client in advance when using a third party provider?

Questions

Sampling and project management

7. What steps do you take to achieve a representative sample of the target population?

8. Do you employ a survey router?

9. If you use a router. Please describe the allocation process within your router. How do you decide which surveys might be considered for a respondent? On what priority basis are respondents allocated to surveys?

10. If you use a router. What measures do you take to guard against, or mitigate, any bias arising from employing a router? How do you measure and report any bias?

11. If you use a router. Who in your company sets the parameters of the router? Is it a dedicated team or individual project managers?

12. What profiling data is held on respondents? How is it done? How does this differ across sample sources? How is it kept up-to-date? If no relevant profiling data is held, how are low incidence projects dealt with?

Questions

13. Please describe your survey invitation process. What is the proposition that people are offered to take part in individual surveys? What information about the project itself is given in the process?

14. Please describe the incentives that respondents are offered for taking part in your surveys. How does this differ by sample source, by interview length, by respondent characteristics?

15. What information about a project do you need in order to give an accurate estimate of feasibility using your own resources?

16. Do you measure respondent satisfaction? Is this information made available to clients?

17. What information do you provide to debrief your client after the project has finished?

Questions

Data quality and validation

18. Who is responsible for data quality checks? If it is you, do you have in place procedures to reduce or eliminate undesired within survey behaviours?

19. How often can the same individual be contacted to take part in a survey within a specified period whether they respond to the contact or not? How does this vary across your sample sources?

20. How often can the same individual take part in a survey within a specified period? How does this vary across your sample sources? How do you manage this within categories and/or time periods?

21. Do you maintain individual level data such as recent participation history, date of entry, source, etc., on your survey respondents? Are you able to supply your client with a project analysis of such individual level data?

Questions

Policies and compliance

22. Do you have a confirmation of respondent identity procedure? Do you have procedures to detect fraudulent respondents? Please describe these procedures as they are implemented at sample source registration and/or at the point of entry to a survey or router. If you offer B2B samples what are the procedures there, if any?

23. Please describe the ‘opt-in for market research’ processes for all your online sample sources.

24. Please provide a link to your Privacy Policy. How is your Privacy Policy provided to your respondents?

25. Please describe the measures you take to ensure data protection and data security.

26. What practices do you follow to decide whether online research should be used to present commercially sensitive client data or materials to survey respondents?

27. Are you certified to any specific quality system? If so, which one(s)?

28. Do you conduct online surveys with children and young people? If so, do you adhere to the standards that ESOMAR provides? What other rules or standards, for example COPPA in the United States, do you comply with?

Company profile

1. What experience does your company have in providing online samples for market research?

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DigData Ltd. Company was set up in 2016 but has proved to be a reliable partner to Ukrainian and oversees companies in more than 200 projects (both full service projects for the end clients and sample only runs for partners) so far.

With deep online market research background and experienced market research specialists we guarantee the usage of the most up-to-date approaches in research conduct and data analysis.

Sample sources and recruitment

2. Please describe and explain the type(s) of online sample sources from which you get respondents. Are these databases? Actively managed research panels? Direct marketing lists? Social networks? Web intercept (also known as river) samples?

More than 90% of sample delivered by DigData belong to the actively managed proprietary online panel, but we also run projects with the employments of client's databases according to their needs. We do not use direct mailings and river sampling.

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3. If you provide samples from more than one source: How are the different sample sources blended together to ensure validity? How can this be replicated over time to provide reliability? How do you deal with the possibility of duplication of respondents across sources?

About 98% of our projects are run on the capacities of our proprietary online panel (or the client's database), the rest 2% the authentication control takes place by the following parameters: e-mail address check is performed by default, IP-address control, unique set of the respondents' parameters. The duplicates are removed though the respondents' incentives are kept in place.

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4. Are your sample source(s) used solely for market research? If not, what other purposes are they used for?

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All our sample sources are solely used for market research needs. In those rare cases when we combine capacities of our online panels and our partners' panels we only partner with those companies which claim the same approach.

When dealing which clients' databases, which are not primarily set for the market research needs, the questionnaire and the research approach is set to collectively solve the research tasks.

5. How do you source groups that may be hard to reach on the internet?

DigData performs a good profiling of the panels members that helps to improve the reach of the hard-to-find audience. When the project is in the bidding phase we conduct pre-research to find the ways to improve the TG reach.

In cases when we have no appropriate profiling and cannot guarantee the specific audience reach we can either offer the pre-screening omnibus run or may even discard the project if the reach on the internet is too low.

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6. If, on a particular project, you need to supplement your sample(s) with sample(s) from other providers, how do you select those partners? Is it your policy to notify a client in advance when using a third party provider?

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In case we need to boost our capacities with external sample, we always address the trusted partners who have the same policies regarding data protection and panel management in place.

This is always a rule to inform the client about the use of extra partner for the project, about the sample size and terms of use, as well as ways to avoid and / or clean out duplicates

Sampling and project management

7. What steps do you take to achieve a representative sample of the target population?

We always keep our hand on the pulse of the most up-to-date official statistical information about Ukrainian population. The sample structure is always discussed and agreed with the client in pre-fielding stage, since the representation may be required according to the specific client's needs.

To ensure the sample is representative we use quota sets (both linear and crossed – according to the client's needs). All-in-all we apply a systematic approach based on market research to guarantee sample quality.

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8. Do you employ a survey router?

9. If you use a router. Please describe the allocation process within your router. How do you decide which surveys might be considered for a respondent? On what priority basis are respondents allocated to surveys?

10. If you use a router. What measures do you take to guard against, or mitigate, any bias arising from employing a router? How do you measure and report any bias?

11. If you use a router. Who in your company sets the parameters of the router? Is it a dedicated team or individual project managers?

DigData does not employ a survey router.

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12. What profiling data is held on respondents? How is it done? How does this differ across sample sources? How is it kept up-to-date? If no relevant profiling data is held, how are low incidence projects dealt with?

To register in the panel the respondent needs to fill the form of about 30 questions – their social and demographical characteristics (age, gender, place of residence etc.) and other profiling data (like occupation, hobbies etc.).

All these variables are used to filter the respondents for every particular project to bingo the targeting and avoid inviting “wrong” participants and annoy them. The registration process is similar for all respondents.

The respondents are asked to re-fill their registration data on quarterly basis to make sure we hold the most recent information about them, especially for very sensitive and valid for a short period of time data (like kids’ ages, pregnancy etc.).

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13. Please describe your survey invitation process. What is the proposition that people are offered to take part in individual surveys? What information about the project itself is given in the process? Apart from direct invitations to specific surveys (or to a router), what other means of invitation to surveys are respondents exposed to? You should note that not all invitations to participate take the form of emails.

We use a common approach for all the invitations we send out. Respondents receive an invitation letter to their personal mail address with a unique link (the link is valid for a single use for once only).

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The invitation contains information on the average length of the interview and the list of incentives available for those who participate (for now we are applying the system of winning prizes).

We only give the overall idea of the survey topic without going into detail (we never inform the respondents on the goods category and / or the brand name. Normally the invitation sounds like this: “We are inviting you to participate in an online survey dedicated to different food products and beverages”.

14. Please describe the incentives that respondents are offered for taking part in your surveys. How does this differ by sample source, by interview length, by respondent characteristics?

For the moment we are applying the system of drawing different prizes as incentives for the survey participants. The respondents are motivated by the participation in the draw of different vouchers and other costly prizes.

In future we are thinking of applying a “pay per survey” system where every respondent will be incentivized for the participation by bonuses which may be converted into purchases or cash.

The incentive size will depend on the length of interview.

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15. What information about a project do you need in order to give an accurate estimate of feasibility using your own resources?

To guarantee the most accurate estimation of our feasibility for a particular project we need the detailed description of the target audience (we would also requite to have the IR estimation for the “difficult” targets among the specified demo-profiles), the desired sample size and the length of the interview or the number of questions to be asked.

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16. Do you measure respondent satisfaction? Is this information made available to clients?

We are constantly monitoring respondents’ satisfaction and quickly react to all their suggestions and ideas they share in their mails, phone calls and social media.

We also conduct a yearly satisfaction survey the results of which can be shared with our clients.

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17. What information do you provide to debrief your client after the project has finished?

We offer a debrief report, including gross sample, start rate, participation rate, drop-out rate, the invitation/contact text, a description of the field work process, and so on. We also make a list of available standard reports and metrics.

We always workshop with the client before going into field to get the utmost understanding of the client's needs and also offer custom debriefings and reporting.

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Data Quality and Validation

18. Who is responsible for data quality checks? If it is you, do you have in place procedures to reduce or eliminate undesired within survey behaviours, such as (a) random responding, (b) Illogical or inconsistent responding, (c) overuse of item non-response (e.g. "Don't Know") or (d) speeding (too rapid survey completion)? Please describe these procedures.

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We are performing the data quality checks on our side and deliver clean data sets to our clients. Just before the fielding comes to an end the Project Manager performs the preliminary data check to make sure all the quotas are filled in.

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18. Who is responsible for data quality checks? If it is you, do you have in place procedures to reduce or eliminate undesired within survey behaviours, such as (a) random responding, (b) Illogical or inconsistent responding, (c) overuse of item non-response (e.g. “Don’t Know”) or (d) speeding (too rapid survey completion)? Please describe these procedures.

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Then he, she performs the data quality check by the following parameters:

• The speed of the survey completion, including timings per some special questions in the survey

• The occurrence of the unanswered questions (open and closed ones) – in cases when the programming of the survey was customized as per the client’s needs and it was technically possible to leave the closed question unanswered

• The answers to the “control” questions

If the data quality set detects any quota cells that are not 100% filled in, the fieldwork continues until they are closed.

19. How often can the same individual be contacted to take part in a survey within a specified period whether they respond to the contact or not? How does this vary across your sample sources?

Formally there is no restriction is the frequency of addressing panel members with the requests to participate in an online survey, but de-facto we hold control over engagement frequencies and our panelists are hardly ever invited more frequently than twice a month.

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20. How often can the same individual take part in a survey within a specified period? How does this vary across your sample sources? How do you manage this within categories and/or time periods?

DigData controls the factual frequency of survey participation of our panelists. At the moment the average frequency of panelists is 4,5 times a year (for all the research types, including proprietary DigData researches). Each respondent has a unique ID which helps control the frequency of participation.

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21. Do you maintain individual level data such as recent participation history, date of entry, source, etc., on your survey respondents? Are you able to supply your client with a project analysis of such individual level data?

We hold and process the data of every respondent's entry and participation history. This data may be used for data validation purposes, as well as for deeper analysis of survey results, which may be enforced by the information of data source.

The data history also permits commit correct targeting upon a particular project's needs and perform sample enrichment by extra data available in the panel.

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Policies and compliance

22. Do you have a confirmation of respondent identity procedure? Do you have procedures to detect fraudulent respondents? Please describe these procedures as they are implemented at sample source registration and/or at the point of entry to a survey or router. If you offer B2B samples what are the procedures there, if any?

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DigData's technology includes a range of capabilities to deal with professional or duplicate respondents.

- DigData identifies and excludes multiple panel respondents both through email address and by name.

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22. Do you have a confirmation of respondent identity procedure? Do you have procedures to detect fraudulent respondents? Please describe these procedures as they are implemented at sample source registration and/or at the point of entry to a survey or router. If you offer B2B samples what are the procedures there, if any?

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- The Panel Quality team continuously analyzes panel data to identify ‘fraudulent’ or ‘inattentive’ panelists. Panelist status is constantly updated.
- Upon registration in the panel each respondent shares his / her social demographic data. In case there is any inconsistency between the profile data and the data shared in a survey, this panelist is removed from the panel.
- The respondents are never informed on the topic of the survey so that they could not adjust their answers.

23. Please describe the ‘opt-in for market research’ processes for all your online sample sources

DigData’s procedures about “freewill participation in a market research” comprise the following:

- Aware registration in the online panel
- Freewill and aware confirmation of online panel registration (double opt-in – DigData makes a check to confirm the person joining the panel wishes to be its member and understands what to expect).

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24. Please provide a link to your Privacy Policy. How is your Privacy Policy provided to your respondents?

Here is the link to “Privacy Policy” – http://www.digdata.com.ua/ua/privacypolicy

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It should be noted that DigData online panel is not regulated by the “Personal data protection” Low of Ukraine, since the data base DigData is running does not correspond to all the criteria of a person's identification.

25. Please describe the measures you take to ensure data protection and data security.

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Despite there are no foolproof methods for protecting audio, video, still images or concept descriptions in online surveys, DigData does its best to make sure that the data is safe and secure. Here are the steps we take:

1) Data security in fielding

- Only the Project Manager who manages each particular project has access to data, collected for the purposes of this particular project.
- Panel management and survey programming software users must sign in using a username and password.
- Users are automatically logged off after a period of non-activity o Respondents receive secure links with unique identifiers.

25. Please describe the measures you take to ensure data protection and data security.

2) Data security in panel management

- Only DigData has access to its panel members information, this does not include any personal identifiable data (like passport info, tax ID etc.).
- Panel management and survey programming software users must sign in using a username and password.
- Users are automatically logged off after a period of non-activity.

3) Information security

- DigData is always open to signing non-disclosure agreements with clients.

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26. What practices do you follow to decide whether online research should be used to present commercially sensitive client data or materials to survey respondents?

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Despite there are no foolproof methods for protecting audio, video, still images or concept descriptions in online surveys, DigData does its best to make sure that the data is safe and secure. The steps DigData takes are described in the answer to question 25.

We always inform the client on the risks we take, since the technology solutions and respondent confidentiality agreements are “speed bumps” that mitigate but cannot guarantee that a client’s stimuli will not be shared or described in social media. Nevertheless panelists’ obligations with respect to sensitive material or content are included in panelist Terms and Conditions agreements that every panelist needs to agree to. All violations are promptly addressed.

DigData also performs quality checks on every stage of the project, like correct implementations of re-directs, accurate quota set-up, appropriate interview length and overall quality. If the survey contains any sensitive material or content, the panelists are informed about it in the survey invitation and, where appropriate within the survey, they have the opportunity to opt-out.

27. Are you certified to any specific quality system? If so, which one(s)?

DigData has not yet undergone any external certification.

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28. Do you conduct online surveys with children and young people? If so, do you adhere to the standards that ESOMAR provides? What other rules or standards, for example COPPA in the United States, do you comply with?

DigData strictly follows all ESOMAR standards and recommendations. We do not conduct any research among children and young people directly (under 16).

If there is a need to survey young people we invite their parents and ask them to take control over the process if they permit.

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