

President's Corner

*Dave Koch, ADAPT, Inc.
Chapter President*

The MN/Upper Midwest Chapter of the MRA is very professionally diverse. Our membership includes individuals from every corner of the research industry (end users and suppliers, qualitative and quantitative, independents and employees of some of the largest research organizations in the world). This professional diversity is key to making our chapter one of the most dynamic and active in the country.

The challenge for our chapter leaders is to provide professional development opportunities to each and every one of these diverse membership sub-groups.

To accomplish this we have assembled a local chapter board of directors that reflects the great diversity of our membership. On our current board we have members representing end-users, qualitative services, full-service suppliers, and data collection firms. Our current board members are listed on page 2.3.

One of the 2002-2003 boards primary goals is to develop an annual programming plan that will take into account the broad diversity of our membership. This year's programming plan will include a total of eight events. Four small educational events tailored to different "niche" groups of our membership, and four large events designed appeal to everyone interested in advancing, promoting and improving the market research industry in this region.

By providing meaningful and relevant professional development through our local programming and volunteer opportunities, we intend to continue to increase the value of your membership. I look forward to seeing many of you at upcoming events as we begin an exciting new programming year.

2002 Upcoming Events

November 21st Finding good Information for Your Business: The INFORM Service

(Watch your mailbox for details)

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Give Web Surveys Their Due Respect

*From the October 18, 2002, print edition of Shoestring Marketing
By Alf Nucifora*

A client recently asked me for an opinion about the validity of Web surveys. My immediate inclination was to denigrate the methodology, in the process trotting out the commonly heard negatives such as not random enough, questionable sample composition, hard to verify the data, etc.

But online research is now beyond the “prove it” stage. The marketing research community, if it chooses to be fair, will concede the point that there now is an irreversible decline in traditional data collection such as phone and mail surveys. The techniques are too costly, too laborious, and subject to limited response rates. Who has the time or the inclination to complete a mail survey or respond to the rote questions from the phone surveyor in a far-off boiler room?

In the meantime, Web surveying is estimated to have achieved a penetration rate of 15 to 20 percent of the total quantitative survey space. That makes a lot of sense in an environment where there are now in excess of 190 million Internet users in the United States and Canada alone.

Overcoming Objections

The objections to online research are understandable and, to some degree, rational. But in every case, there are equally valid counter arguments or mitigating factors.

- Random enough? Neither, for that matter, is the telephone, given the degree of phone screening that currently prevails and the ubiquity of voice mail as a barrier to entry into the home or office.
- Response rate? Typical response rates will run 1 to 2 percent for mail, 10 to 15 percent for phone. For online surveys, that number grows to as high as 30 to 35 percent when respondent names are drawn from weighted panels. The response rate is even better for B2B research where reliable lists, such as clients and prospects, are more readily available.
- Truth on the Internet? But respondents also can lie on the telephone. Ever wondered how many administrative assistants fill out the mail surveys for their boss? Internet respondents freely will reveal private demographic information, in part because the Internet delivers a perception of anonymity that is greater than the phone or snail mail.

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Web surveys (continued)

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- **Cost savings:** The average 20-minute phone interview can cost in the range of \$30 to \$50 per completed interview, as compared to \$7 to \$10 for one completed online.
- **Timeliness:** This is where the online survey wins hands down. Reports and summaries are developed real-time and can be funneled directly to management in a simple, easy-to-digest fashion (resplendent in color, graphics and charts).
- **Bad lists:** Unquestionably, e-mail lists are subject to corruption unless the online research is conducted using names drawn from a reliable panel or verified database. But that disease infests every environment that depends on a list of names for its livelihood.

Who's Doing It?

Current online surveying tends to focus around customer-related needs:

- Market analysis
- New product development
- Customer satisfaction studies
- Consumer loyalty/retention modeling
- Quality measurement
- E-commerce service evaluation
- Employee surveys
- Advertising effectiveness
- Survey environments requiring feedback from high-level managerial functions.

Says Joel Friedman, CEO of SurveyWriter.com, "There can be no doubt as to the validity and growing acceptance of the Web survey. Use of the methodology hasn't grown faster because most market research firms are conservative."

Nucifora is an Atlanta-based marketing consultant.

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MRA May Meeting Content Revealed!

“Migrating Toward Internet Research”

By Allan Floyd

The May meeting of the Upper Midwest Chapter of the MRA was held on May 16th at the Metropolitan in Golden Valley.

The program was "Migrating Toward Internet Research", presented by George Terhanian, Ph.D., Senior Vice President, Research and Methodology, from Harris Interactive.

In his presentation, Terhanian discussed the current criticisms as well as the advantages of web-based research. In the discussion of the Harris Interactive approach (using panel-based research) was evidence of the effectiveness of web based research, as well as enhancements the company has employed to improve web based research. And finally, he shared steps showing how they migrate existing studies to web-based studies.

Current Criticisms of Web-based Research

Terhanian noted that the criticisms of Web-based research cited most frequently center on the belief that an Internet panel survey would not be representative of the population at large. This is illustrated by such statements as:

"Not everyone is online..."

"Internet users are much different from non-Internet users."

"Anyone can be anyone on the Internet. You never know who you're interviewing."

Terhanian then showed data and findings that refute these criticisms. For example, studies have found that the demographics of persons on the Internet closely match those of the US general population. Studies have also shown that Harris Interactive's panel respondents closely reflect the demographics of the US general population.

The Advantages of Internet Research and Panel Research

Terhanian described both the advantages of Internet research in general as well as the advantages of customer panel research using the Internet. The general advantages of Internet research include:

- The ability to conduct multi-language research within one study.
- The ability to conduct qualitative research and conjoint analysis online.
- The ability to conduct research quickly—the process of seeking respondents, administering surveys, and collecting and analyzing the data is much faster than traditional survey methods.
- The ability to provide the client access to the online survey data for online analysis.

The advantages of customer research panels include:

- One can readily conduct research with hard to find respondents (e.g., gay or lesbian IT managers in small to mid-sized firms).
- One can conduct product and concept testing, advertising testing and tracking, brand image and positioning research, and customer loyalty research within the very specific market segments.

How Harris Interactive Approaches Internet Research Using Custom Panels

Harris has gone to great efforts to ensure that the company maintains high quality. This includes:

- Developing a loyalty and retention program for panel members. They instituted an incentive program for those sub-segments that need a higher participation percentage.
- Offering ongoing training to personnel working with the panels.
- Conducting systematic evaluation of the survey process, including continual efforts to reduce error and mode effects.

MRA May Meeting Content Revealed! (continued)

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√ These efforts pertaining to reducing error and mode effects include studying how the way questions appear on the screen and the way they are worded affect responses, studying the variability among different browser providers, evaluating incentives, and studying the way panelists handle sensitive questions.

- Garnering feedback from all clients using the panels.
- Devising ways to contend with self-selection bias.
 - √ One of the methods employed to contend with this issue is a "propensity score adjustment" which allows researchers to make fair comparisons between self selecting groups such as:
 - *Smokers vs. non-smokers
 - *High school dropouts vs. those who stay in school
 - *Telephone respondents versus online respondents.

In addition, Harris works continually to ensure that its system works through:

- Conducting monthly parallel studies to understand the differences between panelists and the US general population.
- Routinely conducting validity and/or multi-method studies for clients.
- Doing triangulation studies to compare results (e.g., RDD, Nielsen, and Internet for TV viewing studies.)
- Employing independent third parties to assess the accuracy of panel studies.

These various methods have shown that the Harris Interactive panel studies reflect a high degree of accuracy. For example, one study found that Internet data collection was more accurate than that collected via telephone. In addition, Terhanian pointed out that their panel study predicted the percentages of the population voting for Bush and Gore in 2000 more accurately than any other major study done on the voting population.

Terhanian also noted that they are working continuously to improve the way they conduct Internet panel research. This includes the company's efforts to improve upon the methods employed to conduct product concept research (e.g., using visual aids to have panel members chose which images most closely reflect their concept of "breakfast"). Similarly, they are using visual images to conduct conjoint analysis by using pictures of different restaurant styles (casual, fern bar, etc.) to have panelists choose which items they would choose for a meal within each of the styles.

How Harris Migrates Existing Studies to the Web

Terhanian gave an example of how Harris Interactive took a client's existing study not conducted on the Web and moved it over to the Web.

- This client had concerns about the representativeness of the Web population and about the quality of the data obtained via the Web. Also, this same client wished to retain the historical data obtained via non-Web methods.
- Terhanian then described the following process as being typical when making this transition to the Web:
 - a. Identity and profile the target population.
 - b. Asses whether the target population uses the Web.
 - c. If a substantial portion of the target population uses the Web, propose parallel telephone (or mail or face to face) and Web surveys.
 - d. Determine how to contact the target population via the Web. (e.g. collecting email addresses from customers, web-site intercept studies, through and existing panel, etc.)
 - e. Design a Web survey to minimize measurement error and mode effects.
 - f. Apply techniques to correct for selection bias/non-overlap in the Internet survey.
 - g. Compare the costs, benefits, data quality, etc. of the two surveys.
 - h. Develop a migration schedule.

Nuts and Bolts of Marketing Research

MN/Upper Midwest Chapter Fall 2002 Workshop September 26, 2002 at The Metropolitan

The Minnesota Upper Midwest Chapter held the BEST ATTENDED FALL CONFERENCE EVENT in the 6-year history of the Chapter!

Over 100 participants enjoyed their choice of three out of nine different workshop sessions offered in this Fall 2002 event. 53 people completed the survey regarding event satisfaction.

Of those who completed the survey, 88% of members have attended two or more MRA chapter events. This was the first event ever attended for 12% of the members responding. 39% of Guests who responded have been to two or more Chapter events. 61% of the Guests responding attended this workshop for their very first Chapter event.

In the feedback survey, we asked how attendees felt about the variety of topics included in the Workshop. 94% of Members who responded marked the top-two box of satisfaction with the topics. Four-fifths (80%) of Guests were also “top-two box” satisfied.

In the first hour, attendees could choose from *Tools and Techniques of Qualitative Research*, *Business Writing for Market Research Professionals*, or *Managing Client Expectations*.

- The Tools workshop covered various techniques such as rapport building; sorting task; projectives; and reaching closure. A top score of “very satisfied” showed that participants got a lot out of this well-designed workshop.
- Business Writing covered an overview of what people realistically scan in a message, and how to use a format designed to get across the most important information. Use subheadings to get attention! (We had to add 2 extra rows of chairs for this roomful of attendees!)
- Managing Client Expectations imparted that it all starts with Management by Values. Fundamentals of meeting clients’ expectations were reviewed as well as

communication aids and advice on when you leave a client.

In the second hour, attendees could choose from *Qualitative Research OnLine*, *Basic Microsoft PowerPoint Skills*, or *All About Internet Sampling*.

- During the Qualitative OnLine workshop, methodologies, common myths, when to use online qualitative, and online projective interventions were all topics covered. Very specific examples and techniques were profiled, leading to 100% top two box scores from Members and Guests.
- The PowerPoint workshop divulged secrets of taking PowerPoint to the next level. Presentation creation, using Rich Media, different methods of presentation and linking, distribution steps, and software/file structure procedures for the presentation were all covered.
- Internet Sampling gave background on online research spending, myths regarding sampling, and the latest facts showing accurate Internet coverage and sampling information in the US and world-wide. Three Internet sampling approaches were compared, and e-mail databases were discussed.

In the final hour, attendees could choose from *Presenting Focus Group Results*, *Microsoft Excel Tips and Techniques*, or *All About Incidence*.

- Presenting Focus Group Results used the MRA Board-sponsored focus groups among end users to show different styles of presenting results. They showed side-by-side examples of what was said, what the moderators heard, and; how they reported it. They discussed different styles, how/when to use direct quotes, and how seasoned experience enables you to also report on what you don’t hear, based on knowledge of the industry. Beyond process, insights into end user perceptions, and needs regarding the MRA and our Chapter were also gained.

Nuts and Bolts (continued)

Continued from page 6

- Excel Tips covered the use of Pivot tables and macros. The background, shortcuts, layouts and finished products were detailed, along with hints for extra effects. This workshop received 100% top two box scores from Members and Guests alike.
- All About Incidence gave great reasons why we should care about incidence, critical assumptions for costing, and using it to interpret results. Specific examples gave excellent descriptions of how to use and interpret incidence, and how to react to incidence problems. Nice examples of incidence averaging traps, figuring boosts, and the impact of low incidence were also presented.

Overall, 65% of Members responding were pleased (top two box scores) with the convenience of the location of the Metropolitan in Golden Valley. 75% of Guests gave top two box scores as well. 85% of Members were pleased (top two box scores) with the facility itself, and 68% of Guests were top two box satisfied.

The Chapter would once again like to thank all the presenters for their excellent contribution in making this workshop a success. Thanks to

- Jeff Walkowski and Marilyn Rausch, Riva Training Institute
- Ben Shank, The Writing Center
- Greg Blevins, The Market Solutions Group
- Jim Longo, Harris Interactive
- David Nelem, Active Group
- Gwen Kaplan, Survey Sampling
- Harold Cook and Kathy Dumas of Cook Research and K. Dumas Associates
- Executrain
- Ed Stalling, Maritz Research

And of course, many, many thanks to the myriad of volunteers who organized, arranged, planned and executed this successful MRA Chapter Event.

November 2002 Education Event “Finding Good Information For Your Business: The INFORM Service”

Your clients consider you all-knowing and all-seeing. So what if you specialize in research for the technology industry?

You are a market researcher! A client who specializes in software for application developers calls you with a great idea for an incentive to encourage respondents to complete a survey. “We’ll give them a pound of Norfolk Island Coffee-the symbolism is perfect.”

Those few of you who can’t immediately make the connection have three solutions: ask the client to explain (not with THIS client!), use your own valuable time to research the issue, or call on a professional. You’re in luck, because the Twin Cities has a remarkable service at the Minneapolis Public Library to help you.

It’s called INFORM. This non-profit service provides various types of research and documents on demand:

- Company profiles
- Industry profiles
- Market research
- Mailing lists
- Literature searches and historical research
- Trademark searches

You are invited to hear Edward Hathaway, Manager of INFORM and the InterLibrary Loan Department at the Minneapolis Public Library discuss this fascinating and incredibly useful resource. This is a not-to-be-missed event guaranteed to thrill information junkies!

Thursday, November 21, 2002
7:30 AM to 9:30 AM

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota
1305 Corporate Center Drive,
Eagan, MN 55121

How to Report News About a Legislative Threat to the Opinion and Marketing Research Industry

Contact CMOR (Council for Marketing and Opinion Research) web site (www.cmor.org) or call CMOR at (631) 928-6206 on any state or federal legislation information you may think is related to your business and the research industry.

IF YOU READ ABOUT IT

- Make a copy of it and mark it with:
 - The publication or newspaper source
 - The issue or published date
 - Your name and contact information
- Fax a copy of the article to Donna Gillen at (631) 928-6206

IF YOU HEAR ABOUT IT ON TV OR RADIO

- Write down the
 - Station's identification
 - Name of the program or segment
 - The topics
 - The air time you heard it
- Fax a copy to Donna Gillen at (631) 928-6206

IF YOU FIND IT ON THE INTERNET:

- Forward an e-mail with the printed web address and link to CMOR

Once you notify CMOR of a legislative concern, it will be reviewed and forwarded to the appropriate industry association for assisted action and information.

Also you can refer to the MRA Capital Network – your state may have a MRA member representative that should be alerted to your concerns about threats to the opinion and marketing research industry.

Announcement!

Focus Market Research of Scottsdale, AZ is pleased to announce that they now have three focus suites. Focus' address remains 6991 East Camelback Road, Scottsdale, AZ 85251. Only their Suite Number has changed to reflect their new capabilities. Please use Suite # D 118. Focus is still located on the premier corner of Goldwater and Scottsdale by Nordstrom and Neiman Marcus.

Connecting Member's Comments to Action

In the Membership Survey, we heard from members that they wish the Chapter could keep them better informed by providing news and events of chapter members and what people are working on.

We are pleased to provide a recap in this issue that reviews our May event, which covered in-depth information on what Harris Interactive is doing in the on-line research arena. Our summary provides information on how Harris approaches Internet Research, and how they migrate existing studies to the Web. We also have an announcement of changes at Focus Market Research, and Immediate Release announcement from C.J. Olson Market Research, and a job posting from Guidant Corporation. We will continue to look for changes and announcements to print in the VERBATIM concerning Chapter members. Please feel free to submit any announcements, changes or other information from your company to the VERBATIM editor or any Board Member.

Thanks for the Feedback!



Job Posting

Guidant Market Research Analyst Position. Guidant Corp is a Fortune 1000 Medical Device firm specializing in Cardiac therapies. Our Cardiac Resynchronization Management division, headquartered in St. Paul, is in the process of expanding its market research staff.

We are looking for a market research professional with a Bachelor's degree and 2+ years research experience, preferably with a market research supply firm. Focus of position is conducting primary research to aid strategic decision making for new product concepts, communication messages and materials, product strategy and positioning, and other marketing initiatives. Candidate must have experience managing research projects, selecting/supervising vendors, analyzing data and developing reports and recommendations. Experience with b-to-b audiences a plus. Please contact Bob Thomas at 651-582-5702.

Giving Thanks for Cellphones

One-half of US adults told Opinion Research that of all the electronic gadgets available these days, they are most thankful for cellphones.

Opinion Research conducted a survey of 955 US adults familiar with or responsible for paying cellphone bills between August and September 2002 and found that 50% are most thankful for cellphones than any other electronic item. Opinion Research conducted the survey for TracFone Wireless and found that the number of people thankful for cellphones compares to just 14% who say the same about laptops, 8% who say the same about cable modems, 7% who say the same about DVD players and 4%, respectively, who say the same about CD burners and digital cameras.

More women (58%) than men (42%) are extremely thankful for their cellphones, while more men (15%) are thankful for laptops than women (13%). Still, both genders agree that cellphones are the gadgets for which they are most thankful.

Reported by eMarketer, from BIZ REPORT (free e-mail newsletter, www.bizreport.com)

10 Things Respondents Expect When Participating in Surveys

By Jane Sheppard, CMOR

1. Privacy must be maintained
2. Courtesy is paramount
3. Survey subject must be interesting
4. It must be explicit that "no selling will be involved"
5. The survey must be conducted at a convenient time
6. Professionalism is always expected
7. Surveys cannot be "too long" (20 minutes or less)
8. Don't ask overly or unnecessary personal questions
9. Provide adequate incentives
10. Explain how research will affect their life

From the 1999 Respondent Cooperation & Industry Image Study. Visit www.cmor.org.

Members on the Move

CJ Olson Market Research, Inc. of Minneapolis is delighted to announce the promotion of Michelle James to Director of Data Collection. Michelle has been a member of the CJ Olson team since 1999, beginning as an interviewer and quickly advancing as opportunities presented themselves.

The Verbatim

The Verbatim is published four times a year by the Marketing Research Association Minnesota/Upper Midwest Chapter Newsletter Committee. Comments, suggestions, and editorial contributions are welcome.

Submissions can be sent to Tammie Frost-Norton at tammie.frost-norton@research-int.com



Spotlight

The Verbatim will “**SPOTLIGHT**” a different Board or Committee Chair’s Company in each issue.

Discovery National Qualitative Network

Discovery-National Qualitative Network (Discovery-NQN), through its coast-to-coast network of 8 locations, offers contemporary and convenient focus facilities with a professional and knowledgeable staff to handle all types of focus and field research. Our clients can be confident that their qualitative research project will receive a consistent level of quality, project management and pricing not available in non-networked facilities.

The hallmark of Discovery-NQN is its exhaustive recruiting process ensuring outstanding delivery against client specifications. This process provides a high turnout of qualified, articulate respondents. Through its network, we have created a nationwide database of respondents including consumers, business executives and medical personnel.

The breadth and experience of our staff in all aspects of qualitative research is shown in their commitment to meeting the expectations of moderators and clients in every phase of the project. When a client uses Discovery-NQN, they know what to expect and those expectations are met.

Our facilities are located in major consumer markets and are conveniently located to airports and other amenities. The facilities are contemporary in design and function. Discovery-NQN provides a comfort level for its clients that allow their projects to be completed with ease and confidence.

Focus Group

Services offer clients well-appointed focus studios conveniently located in office buildings and free standing facilities. Focus groups offer clients consistent, reliable data with fast turnaround. Our clients are able to establish a consistent level of quality, project management, and pricing that is not possible when dealing with non-networked focus facilities around the country. We provide clients with access to a database with over 200,000 pre-recruited individuals nationwide, consisting of consumers, business executives and medical personnel.

In-depth, Executive, Professional

In cases where a client has a highly specialized or well-targeted profile of people to interview, the Discovery-NQN will use its database of prospective respondents to quickly and efficiently identify possible candidates. It will then go to the respondent to conduct a face-to-face interview covering consumer, business-to-business, and political issues.

Medical

Discovery-NQN has an experienced staff of medical interviewers in 25 locations across the country. Utilizing a database of 7,000 physicians, the Discovery-NQN conducts a wide variety of projects covering a number of specialties including name tests, diary studies, focus groups and other studies with general practitioners, cardiologists, rheumatologists and a wide variety of other specialties.

Taste Tests

Utilizing Discovery-NQN’s national database or cold calling methods, we can recruit to meet your job specifications. Most Discovery-NQN locations are equipped with a full taste test kitchen and room to accommodate 20-30 respondents at a time. All our locations have access to an off-site location to conduct large scale tests.

Spotlight (continued)

Continued from page 10

Mystery Shopping

Discovery-NQN employs an extensive network of specialists for all of your mystery shopping or auditing needs. Our trained experts will travel within their immediate area, or if required, can make arrangements to travel to any destination you need to fulfill your project requirements.

Project Management

One of the advantages of using Discovery-NQN is the availability of industry experts who can manage your entire project for you. This gives you one point of contact who will take you from the bid through delivery of data. Your project manager will monitor your study on a daily basis and keep you updated as required.

LOCAL SITE:

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12940 Harriet Avenue, South

Burnsville, MN 55337

952-894-5868

952-894-8270 fax

VERLE POLGLASE – SITE SELECTION COMMITTEE of our CHAPTER

Advertise in *The Verbatim*

Interested in advertising in *The Verbatim*? As an additional benefit to the members of the MRA the chapter has decided to make advertising space available. There are four different sizes and rates for you to select from.

Business card size \$25 (members) / \$50 (non-members)

Double business card size \$50 (members) / \$75 (non-members)

Half-page \$75 (members) / \$100 (non-members)

Classified Ads \$25 (members) / \$35 (non-members)

Please call Tammie Frost-Norton at **952-853-9440** for more information.



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-

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The Verbatim

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The Verbatim

Newsletter of the Minnesota/Upper Midwest Chapter of the MRA