ESOMAR 28 - 2018

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS WHICH WILL HELP YOU BUY SAMPLE FROM RESEARCH ILLUMINOUS!

OUR PROPRIETARY GLOBAL PANELS

The primary aim of these questions is to increase transparency and raise awareness of the key issues for researchers to consider when deciding whether an online sampling approach is fit for their purpose. The aim is to help researchers to ensure that what they receive meets their expectations. The questions are also designed to introduce consistent terminology for providers to state how they maintain quality, to enable buyers to compare the services of different sample suppliers.

It should be noted that these 28 Questions focus on the questions that need to be asked by those buying online samples. If the sample provider is also hosting the data collection you will need to ask additional questions to ensure that your project is carried out in a way that satisfies your quality requirements.

ResearchIlluminous is an online data collection and survey programming company. We consistently deliver high quality data and with the help of our sample management tool, it really becomes easy for our researchers to get online survey respondents quickly anywhere around the globe. We provide easy access to field reports, transparency in our processes, and sample management for online surveys around the world. We have proficiency in panel management, sampling and survey programming and provide the best sample plan to our clients – meeting clients' needs.

COMPANY PROFILE

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

Context: This answer might help you to form an opinion about the relevant experience of the sample provider. How long has the sample provider been providing this service and do they have for example a market research, direct marketing or more technological background? Are the samples solely provided for third party research, or does the company also conduct proprietary work using their panels?

We have a collective experience of 25 years in market research, sampling, online data collection and survey programming. Our innovative & creative ideas help our market research clients to get precise data on time. Our experts know the in & out of the clients' needs and our global team is available 24x7 to simplify our customers' problems and provides out of box suggestions, making their research more effective and meaningful. This helps us to serve some of the biggest companies around the world. We are committed to provide the best quality data to our clients in no time. Research Illuminous has its own proprietary online panel which has in-depth profiling and most interactive panel members. We have built our panels very meticulously. At the time of recruitment, we ensure that we have real and highly responsive panel members who are 'opinion givers' and not just 'survey takers'. Our project management tool helps to get the most hard-to-reach panelists for our researchers across the globe in no time through panel respondents, non-traditional sample (NTS), affiliates and global panel partners.

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?

Context: The description of the types of sources a provider uses for delivering an online sample will provide insight into the quality of the sample.

At **ResearchIlluminous**, we strongly emphasize on the quality of the data. We believe that the quality of the data has a direct impact on the research conducted and to get the best blend and data quality, we use three primary sources:

1. **Proprietary Panel (Survey Consensus)**: ResearchIlluminous has a proprietary panel, **Survey Consensus**. We have experts and our diligent panel managers take care of the panels. They keep track of all the activities and survey records of each and every respondent. Our panel team ensures high quality, right blend, respondent activities and behaviours, precise profiling of respondents on a daily basis. At present, we have panels in US, Canada, UK, Germany, Hong-Kong, France, Italy, Spain, India, China & Japan

2. **Real-Time Recruitment:** We also use real-time recruitment techniques as a source to fulfil our research needs. This is done through our networks of social media and publishers. Our Panel managers make sure that this traffic goes through all the necessary validation processes and quality checks.

3. **Panel Partners:** Lastly, we have panel partners across the globe who assist us in getting the right audience for hard-to-reach targets. Our partners also help us in getting high quality data for 25 countries worldwide.

No matter what the source is, we ensure, we are using the right blend and delivering the right respondent to the survey depending on the requirement and scope of research need.

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?

Context: *The variation in data coming from different sources has been well documented. Overlap between different panel providers can be significant in some cases and de-duplication removes this source of error, and frustration for respondents.*

At Research Illuminous, we believe that technology used along with science makes everything possible. Our in-house project management tool, helps us to get the right sample for the required target. Our respondents are real, valid and representative. We have a highly-automated system which not only helps us to get a perfect blend but also gives us various panelists'/respondents' activities at different levels. Apart from some basic security checks like IP check, e-mail confirmation & cookies, we use digital fingerprinting. We also track panelists' history by asking them various questions on personal finance, domestic sphere, basic demos and personal health at regular intervals and analyze their trends and behaviors.

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

Context: *Combining respondents from sources set up primarily for different purposes (like direct marketing for example) may cause undesirable survey effects.*

Yes, we use our panelists and other respondents only for market research purposes. We do not share or sell any member information with any third party for any other purposes.

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

Context: *Ensuring the inclusion of hard-to-reach groups on the internet (like ethnic minority groups, young people, seniors etc.) may increase population coverage and improve the quality of the sample provided.*

Our core job is to build and maintain a high quality and responsive panel. We have robust recruitment procedures and techniques. The depth of profiling of respondents helps us to get hard- to- reach respondents on the internet. In this world of globalization, we also have access to many third-party databases from which we can easily get the hard- to- find respondents. Other than this, we have partners and affiliates across the globe who help us in reaching diverse groups.

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?

Context: *Many providers work with third parties. This means that the quality of the sample is also dependent on the quality of sample providers that the buyer did not select. Transparency is essential in this situation. Overlap between different providers can be significant in some cases and de-duplication removes this source of error, and frustration for respondents. Providers who observe process standards like the ISO standards are required to give you this information.*

We provide maximum transparency to our clients. We try to provide accurate feasibility to the client regarding what we can deliver from our internal panel. However, if there is a need or a client reaches out to us and approves for an external sample or partners, we work with partners, who are our business partners and abide by all industry standards and quality measures. We partner with companies which go through our internal quality tests and form a business agreement with us. Partner's performance is measured on the basis of speed, profiling, cost, past performance and turnaround time. Our system is smart enough to identify and restrict a duplicate respondent in case of overlapping of sample.

SAMPLING AND PROJECT MANAGEMENT

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

Context: *The sampling processes (i.e. how individuals are selected or allocated from the sample sources) used are the main factor in sample provision. A systematic approach based on market research fundamentals may increase sample quality.*

We take pride in our sampling methods and skilled team. Our team ensures to select accurately profiled respondents as specified in the client quotas/requirements. Usually, for studies relating to general population, we consider response rate variable and use internal tools to balance the sample to mirror the latest census figures. In addition, we pre-screen the respondents to validate their demographics and responses. For a higher response rate, our advanced and automated tool enables us to send automated invites or to schedule a batch at any time of the day ensuring better distribution considering geographies, relevant time zones and local holidays. However, many of our clients use quota sampling which gives us a direction to our sampling process.

8. Do you employ a survey router?

Context: *A survey router is a software system that allocates willing respondents to surveys for which they are likely to qualify. Respondents will have been directed to the router for different reasons, perhaps after not qualifying for another survey in which they had been directly invited to participate, or maybe as a result of a general invitation from the router itself. There is no consensus at present about whether and how the use of a router affects the responses that individuals give to survey questions.*

Yes, we use our internal routing system which helps us to fetch sample from various sources as per the requirement of the project. However, if the client wishes to limit sample to a particular source, we can do that as well.

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?

Context: *Biases of varying severity may arise from the prioritization in choices of surveys to present to respondents and the method of allocation.*

We understand how crucial a respondent is for a panel and our team ensures that all respondents are satisfied and not over utilized, we have our internal processes to measure Panel Utilization. Our routing system ensures that a correct respondent is routed to a survey which is suitable for him. If a respondent does not qualify for a survey, the system has the ability to decide to send that particular respondent to the most appropriate survey. This is done based on a series of factors such as, respondent's demographic details, survey topics, incidence rate and other pre-answered profiling questions. The system also gives the project managers the leverage of setting priority levels at survey level for individual surveys. This is helpful for projects which are time sensitive.

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?

Context: *If Person A is allocated to Survey X on the basis of some characteristic then they may not be allowed to also do Survey Y. The sample for Survey Y is potentially biased by the absence of people like Person A.*

With our highly advanced and technical tool, standard sampling techniques are used within routed traffic to balance sample throughout. Our panel team constantly monitors the panel and router activity to make sure no bias has been introduced in the system and the research results are unaffected. If at all, any such cases come up, we will take necessary steps to address them.

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?

Context: *It may be necessary to try to replicate your project in the future with as many of the parameters as possible set to the same values. How difficult or easy will this be?*

We have a robust sampling and project management tool, which helps the routing system to set some parameters for the system. We can also set parameters at project level. We have a sincere and vigilant panel team which constantly monitors and ensures the mitigation of biases. In addition to this, our managers can make necessary alterations to address the issues raised by the clients.

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?

Context: *The usefulness to your project of pre-profiled information will depend on the precise question asked and may also depend on when it was asked. If real time profiling is used, what control do you have over what question is actually asked?*

In-depth profiling is a continuous process for us. We store about 100 panel profile questions and around 700 sub-profiling questions for a panelist. At the time of registration, we ask the panelists to provide basic demographic (name, address, gender, date of birth) information. Since we use double opt-in panelists, each panelist is then provided with his/her personal logins after the registration. We make sure to give demos to the panelists on how to fill the rest of the profile and why is it useful for them to provide maximum information.

The profiles are categorized under various heads, such as, Automobiles, Health, Personal Finance, Media, Internet, Shopping, Entertainment, Sports, Travel, Home & Personal Care and Employment/B2B.

We send survey invitations to our panelists on the basis of their profile and demographic information. We send each panelist a reminder mail at regular intervals to complete their profiles and we encourage them to update their profiles from time to time whenever they log-in to their account. We have various panel engagement schemes which motivate the panelists to complete their profile.

Our panel members earn points upon completing the profiles at various stages.

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.

Context: *The type of proposition (and associated rewards) could influence the type of people who agree to take part in specific projects and can therefore influence sample quality. The level of detail given about the project may also influence response.*

We use email invitations to invite our panel members to a survey. The invitation includes length of the survey, survey closure date, the reward(s) associated with the survey, the survey link and a generic survey topic. We do not provide any sought of 'targeted' or 'leading' topics to avoid any kind of bias to respondents' answers to screening questions. We also provide an opt-out link in the email invitation along with support (help) information.

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?

Context*: The reward or incentive system may impact on the reasons why people participate in a specific project and these effects can cause bias to the sample.*

Our incentive structure is one of the most exciting factors for our panelists to join our panel. We value their time spent on our surveys and we want to make sure that we are just and reward them well and reasonably, better than other panel providers. We offer both a cash-based and a point-based reward system. The reward system is based on many factors such as length of the surveys, type of audiences, incidence and the level of complexity the survey has. Longer surveys, surveys with low response rate, B2B and other surveys which need professional respondents get higher incentives to ensure high survey participation. Once a respondent has achieved his minimum threshold of points, he/she can redeem the points for cash, gift cards, coupons, movie tickets and one can even gift his points to other panel or non-panel member – it is fun.

High Panel Satisfaction Rate is our company's vision and one of the top priorities. Other than survey specific incentives, we reward and award our panelists regularly on several occasions such as respondents' participation in helping us with feedbacks, their involvement on various e-polls and for updating their panel information regularly.

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

Context: *The "size" of any panel or source may not necessarily be an accurate indicator that your specific project can be completed or completed within your desired time frame.*

Usually, to provide an accurate feasibility, we need, the length of the survey, number of completes needed, the incidence rate, target audience, quota details/structure and end date of the survey.

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

Context: *Respondent satisfaction may be an indicator of willingness to take future surveys. Respondent reactions to your survey from self-reported feedback or from an analysis of suspend points might be very valuable to help understand survey results.*

Panel satisfaction is one of the most important parameters of our organization. For us, our panelists/respondents are as important as our clients. We conduct regular panelist satisfaction surveys on selected surveys and ask the panelists to provide feedback on surveys, incentives, email invites and panel support.

Yes, we provide this information to the clients if they require it.

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

Context: *One should expect a full sample provider 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. Sample providers should be able to list the standard reports and metrics that they make available.*

For Research Illuminous, clients' satisfaction is of utmost importance. Hence, we make sure that we debrief our clients after the completion of the project.

We can provide any information we can, upon client request, including response rate, terms rates, abandon rates, number of invites sent and all demographic information.

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 behaviors, 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.

Context: *The use of such procedures may increase the reliability and validity of the survey data.*

We are an online data collection company, which limits us to access the clients' internal survey mechanism. We have various internal and third party quality checks and apart from using industry standards and procedures, we are always highly dependent on clients' feedback regarding the data quality.

Once the project is assigned to us, our experienced sampling and project management team always provides the best sampling plan, procedures and methodology to obtain best quality data. When the project enters the fielding stage, we continuously keep track of it and provide pro-active communication regarding daily status or any issues.

Since, we have all the panelists' activities stored in our database, we can easily track their survey details and those who are marked as 'speeders' are removed from the completes and replaced without any charge. If a respondent is flagged with any quality issues, more than twice, we remove him from our panel.

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?

Context: *Over solicitation may have an impact on respondent engagement or on self-selection and non-response bias.*

We consider our panelists as our customers and we do not want to burden them with too many survey invitations. Since panel management is our core business, we have implemented strict policies to monitor and track history of our panel members. This helps us in restricting a panelist from participating in too many surveys at a given period. A panel member receives invitations based on survey topic and his/her profile information. Usually, we send 2-3 email invitations manually per week. However, if a respondent wish to receive invitations more frequently, he/she can set the survey frequency accordingly on their profile. Depending upon the nature and complexity of the survey, respondents from other sources such as affiliates and partners are also invited from time to time.

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?

Context: *Frequency of survey participation may increase the risk of undesirable conditioning effects or other potential biases.*

As any other panel company, we do not limit our respondents on survey participation. However, we can set limits manually at survey level. We value our respondents' decisions to take surveys at regular intervals, at the same time, we restrict our panelists to be over-utilized or refrain them from panel abuse. If required, we do not invite a respondent to a survey with longer survey length, if the content is offensive or if our panel team thinks that the survey may cause any kind of harm to our participants. Also, we have the ability to exclude a respondent on the basis of invitation, response and completion.

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?

Context: *This type of data per respondent including how the total population is defined and how the sample was selected and drawn, may increase the possibilities for analysis of data quality.*

We have a system that enables us to record and maintain all panelists' individual level data. This is supplied to the client when needed by the latter.

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?

Context: *Confirmation of identity can increase quality by decreasing multiple entries, fraudulent panelists etc.*

Our respondents are validated, cross checked and then authorized to become panel members. This starts right from the time of registration of our members. We use our proprietary technology – which is based on IP address validation, known as GeoIP to confirm their geographical location and digital fingerprinting system through third party quality checks – Imperium and TrueSample.

Our system can detect a fraudulent member at survey level by using panel quality scores at various stages of the survey. This score is based on various factors such as: response patterns, completion rate, surveys participated in and demographic terminates. We additionally use Imperium's RelavantID and Verity for digital fingerprinting at survey level to exclude fraudulent activity and de-duplication of surveys. With the help of TrueSample's 'Sample Validation' feature, we verify the address of each panel member.

Further, we have partnered with Distil Network's BOT detection technique, which eliminates the entry of BOTs in our panel. All the fraud cases or BOTs are detected even before they hit our server and there are no chances that these respondents get into a survey.

POLICIES AND COMPLIANCE

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

Context: *The opt-in process indicates the respondents' relationship with the sample source provider. The market generally makes a distinction between single and double opt-in. Double opt-in refers to the process by which a check is made to confirm that the person joining a panel or database wishes to be a member and understands what to expect (in advance of participating in an actual survey for a paying client).*

Our panel members are double opt-in panelists. They are required to fill a registration form on our website and then validate that entry through a confirmation link sent to their active email (Which is mentioned at the time of registration).

At the time of registration, we ask for basic information such as, Name, Country, D.O.B, Gender, Postal Address and a username. After the initial registration, we send them a confirmation mail where they double opt-in to our website.

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

Context: *Not complying with local and international privacy laws might mean the sample provider is operating illegally. An example privacy policy is given in the ESOMAR Guideline for Online Research.*

Our panelist privacy policy is available *here*

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

Context: *The sample provider usually stores sensitive and confidential information on panelists and clients in databases. These data need to be properly secured and backed-up, as does any confidential information provided by the client. The sample provider should be able to provide you with the latest date at which their security has been evaluated by a credible third-party*

We value our respondents and for us they are our assets. As a company policy, we ensure that our database and all respondent details are highly protected and kept under a secured environment. Our respondents' personal identifiable information (PII) is completely anonymous and is encrypted to make sure no personal data is available during the data collection process. We have secured logins and password keys in place through which our networks and database can be accessed. We have regular maintenance and time to time system upgrades which are usually done during weekends or off-hours.

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?

Context: *There are no foolproof methods for protecting audio, video, still images or concept descriptions in online surveys. In today's social media world, clients should be aware that the combination of 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.*

All our panel members are informed and asked to agree to our Terms & Conditions regarding taking part in surveys. They are well informed at the time of registration that they may be presented with confidential and other surveys with sensitive topics and asked to agree to not to share, copy, discuss or sell any information shown in the surveys. Finally, our clients are the best judges to decide how to protect sensitive information at their surveys.

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

Context: *Being certified may require the supplier to perform tasks in a pre-determined manner and document procedures that should be followed.*

At present, we have our own proprietary security and quality measures. We also, follow the guidelines set by ESOMAR, MRA & CASRO. Operationally, we have robust processes in place and our team ensures to follow these quality measures and checks at various levels of survey programming, sampling & data processing.

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?

Context: *The ICC/ESOMAR International Code requires special permissions for interviewing children. These are described in the ESOMAR Online Research Guideline. In the USA researchers must adhere to the requirements of the Children's Online Privacy Act (COPPA). Further information on legislation and codes of practice can be found in Section 6 of ESOMAR's Guideline for Online Research.*

We strictly adhere to each of ESOMAR, CASRO and COPPA (Children Online Privacy Protection Act) laws and use stringent policy of getting parental consent prior to interviewing any minor in our surveys. At times, we may also ask the parents to fill the survey on behalf of their children. The minimum age requiring adult permission varies from country to country.

Reach out to us:

Thanks for taking time to know about Research Illuminous. If you have any additional questions, please call or write to us. We are always availble to take your call and respond to your emails.

Contact Us:

Call us: 1-323-287-5751
Information: info@researchilluminous.com
Bids: bids@researchilluminous

Enrich your research

OFFICE LOCATIONS

USA

276 5th Avenue, Suite 704
New York, NY 10001
United States

INDIA

A-232, First Floor, Okhla, Phase-3
New Delhi - 110020
Phone: 011-26271301

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