

President's Corner

Lori Laflin, C. J. Olson Market Research,
Chapter President

Excuses. Excuses.

- “The events don’t interest me. The speakers and topics aren’t relevant to my job.”
- “I don’t know anyone else.”
- “I’m very concerned about respondent cooperation. I think our industry should do something about it, but it’s too big an issue for any one person to do anything.”
- “I’m too busy to get involved.”
- “The meeting locations aren’t convenient to me.”

Have you ever heard yourself saying one of these? Have you ever caught yourself thinking one? Well, they may be excuses, but they’re not good ones. Rather, they’re good reasons to get involved with our local chapter of MRA. Let’s look at each one:

- “The events don’t interest me. The speakers and topics aren’t relevant to my job.”

If they events don’t interest you or don’t seem relevant to your job, get involved with the Programming or Education Workshop committees. These committees are responsible for all the content of all the programs.

- “I don’t know anyone else.”

What better way to meet people than to get involved in a committee. All the committees are looking for members. When I joined the Steering Committee (a few years back), I didn’t know anyone either. Now, I know almost all of our members. (I’m still working on meeting everyone.) Through committee work you can make great contacts, find out interesting industry information and meet some really nice people.

2000 Upcoming Events

November 3 Board meeting

November 8-10 MRA National Fall Conference

November 15 Breakfast meeting event

December 7 Board meeting

(Watch your mailbox for details)

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Coming in the next issue:

Insights on market research from Robert Hansen, professor of Marketing, Carlson School of Management, University of MN

Your quirky field experiences!

Reports on recent MRA events (including educational events and fall conference)

Your ideas here! Submit!



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 Lindsay Hansen at lhansen@barlowresearch.com

Open-ends on the Internet – Be prepared!

By Dave Koch

As with any new survey methodology, Internet surveying often offers mixed blessings. Nowhere is this more true than in open-ends captured on the Internet.

The Upside: The upside to open-ends captured on the Internet is that you get lots and lots of data. There are two reasons for this. First, Internet surveys often have larger sample sizes than other methodologies; therefore you simply have more open-ends to process. Secondly, as we gain more experience in Internet surveying, it has become apparent that respondents are simply more verbose in their responses when they are sitting at their own computer typing in an answer. So, not only do we have more open-ends, but they are generally longer. The end result is more data to glean information from for your research project.

The Downside: Beside the fact that you now have an incredible amount of data to sort through, there are several aspects of the Internet open-ends themselves that can be problematic:

- 1) Clarity – the respondents often type out Internet open-ends in E-speak. E-speak is very informal (similar to many e-mail communications we all receive). There is a heavy use of acronyms, abbreviations, and extremely casual language. Punctuation and capitalization will be very poor. Also, with the absence of an interviewer to probe or clarify, you end up with many fragmented ideas and sentences for which the meaning is unclear.
- 2) Tangents – Because the respondent is filling out the Internet survey on their own and there is no actual paper survey in front of them to reference previous questions, respondents will sometimes go off on unrelated tangents, or focus in on one issue and answer all open-ends relating to this one issue (even though it was covered in the first open-end).
- 3) Technical language – Many of the respondents for Internet surveys will be very computer literate, and most of the Internet surveys we participate in are still researching technology-based issues. This leads to the open ends being very technical in nature.

What to do about it: Surveying on the Internet is obviously here to stay, and most of us are learning how to work with this new methodology. Here are a few tips for getting more out of the open-ends on your next Internet study.

- 1) Put in the extra time to very carefully review what it is that you want to get out of your open-ends. Remember, you will get a lot of data for each question, so make sure all open-ends are related to your research goals.

From the Editor!

At Barlow Research, we have recently started taking advantage of online technology to communicate with our clients.

Although we have not abandoned our tried and true phone and mail survey, we have added a new dimension to our research.

We first became acquainted with Evoke in March of this year when considering online research tools.

Evoke Communications, formerly Vstream, offers online Web-casting. We held two online focus groups in May, to great success. Participants could speak through their telephones as well as through an online chatboard, moderated by Barlow analysts. The whole focus group was recorded for a nominal fee, and available for revisiting online. The cost of having each participant online for a Web-cast focus group was comparable to standard teleconferencing fees.

We have also used Evoke Webconferencing for client teleconferences. When we plan studies and surveys we like to have feedback, but not all clients are available at one set time. By holding the call online and on the phone and making it accessible online, anyone can listen to the call and be brought up to speed quickly.

We have opted not to survey online, because in our industry of financial services and trying to determine who is online and what banking channels businesses are using, we would disservice ourselves by limiting respondents to the most Web savvy. However, I participate personally in some online panels, through Harris Polls and Sage Research. The surveys are quick and intuitive to navigate.

I am interested to know what branches of market research online tools are relevant for. Please send your comments and ideas to me at lhansen@barlowresearch.com

And don't forget to submit anecdotes (or full-length articles!) for the next issue, coming out in December. The theme is quirky field experiences. Let's not kid ourselves—market research is an exciting industry! If you have something to share, please do so by late November. Thank you and see you at upcoming events!

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Open-ends on the Internet – (continued)

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- 2) Be very clear and specific in how you phrase the question. Remember that the respondent will be on their own with no one to clarify the questions. Try to make sure the question makes it clear to the respondent exactly what the question relates to. For example, don't just ask "Why did you say that?" Instead ask, "Why did you rate cleanliness as unsatisfactory?"
- 3) Be prepared for a lot of data. Make sure your coding staff is beefed up, or that you have a relationship with a large outsource coding firm. There are also several software packages on the market today that are helpful in managing and coding large numbers of electronic open-ends.
- 4) If the text from the open-end comments is going to be included in your final report to the client, be sure to include an editing step in your bid. Although the editors should be clearly instructed not to change any meanings, correct punctuation and capitalization make the comments much easier to read. You also may want to manage your clients' expectations by warning them there will be many fragmented sentences and ideas in the data.
- 5) If your study will be related to a technical product, service, or issue, get a list of specific industry/technical jargon from your client early on and make sure this information gets into the hands of the people doing the coding.
- 6) Get the coding process started early. With the large amount of data to process, you will want to get the coding process started shortly after the project goes into the field. Once you have 25% of your expected responses you can start the coding building and approval process. Remember with thousands of comments to code, you don't want to wait until close of field to start a process that may take weeks.

(Dave Koch is Vice-President of ADAPT Inc. a coding and data capture outsourcing firm. Dave can be reached at (952) 939-0538 or by email at dkoch@adaptdata.com.)

Web resources for personal research:

www.lawyers.com

Consumer-friendly information from law publisher Hartindale-Hubbell. Free.

www.interstate4U.com

Plan driving routes, find exits with restaurants, attractions etc.

www.energyguide.com

Comprehensive support for reducing energy bills by helping consumers by more efficient products and find the best energy suppliers.

Web resources (continued)

www.ase.org

Offers a home energy checkup.

www.kulturvideo.com

Free catalogue of art videos - opera, classical music, jazz, ballet, art etc.

www.safekids.org

Includes a crib safety checklist.

www.zabars.com

New York Delicacies - Gourmet Market.

www.infoplease.com/homework

A free site that helps kids with homework questions.

www.tutornet.com

\$30/month unlimited tutoring - coaches kids towards answering homework questions.

www.crayon.net

A mega-Internet newspaper: you build your own morning paper from news sources and story topics you want to see. Free.

www.netdrive.com

Provides 100MB of Internet document storage. Free.

www.onlychild.com

Resource for family and friends who struggle with decision to have only one child.

www.pbs.org/kids

Entertains pre-schoolers with games after the TV shows are over.

www.service911.com

For computer questions or problems.

www.exploreminnesota.com

President's Corner (continued)

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- “I’m very concerned about respondent cooperation. I think our industry should do something about it, but it’s too big an issue for any one person to do anything.”

No, one person probably can’t make a big difference in respondent cooperation. However, we each need to share in the responsibility for improvement. Harold Cook and Darlo Martin are heading a committee focused on this issue. Together, we can make a difference.

- “I’m too busy to get involved.”

Ask any committee member or board member and you’ll find that it really doesn’t take much time at all to get involved. Some committees meet for an hour a month. Others only meet before major events. The Education Workshops committee functions primarily electronically—through e-mail and conference calls. Also, all committee members realize that this is a volunteer position. If you agree to do something, but get called out of town at the last minute, or that report just blew up, or something, get on the phone with your committee chair, and ask for help. We will all understand. (It happens to everyone.)

- “The meeting locations aren’t convenient to me.”

Again, by joining a committee you have a chance to make a direct impact on this. The Site Committee is responsible for choosing all the meeting locations.

Volunteer a small amount of your time and energy to help this chapter—and yourself. If you’re interested, but don’t know who to call, call me at 612-378-5040 and we can discuss which committee would be the best fit for you.

— Lori

Classes for Executives:

Watermark Technical Services offers excellent classes in computers, Web development, and project management. Two of the project management classes are offered in conjunction with the U of M’s College of Continuing Education. Some of the classes coming up this fall include Managing Business Requirements, Project Management Fundamentals and Estimating and Controlling Projects. See www.WatermarkTraining.com for schedules and costs.

The Carlson School of Management’s EDC program has courses in finance, marketing and more. See <http://edc.csom.umn.edu> for more details.

Classes of a lighter subject matter may be found with Saint Paul Community Ed: send written inquiries to 1001 Johnson Parkway, St Paul MN, 55106 or call 651-793-5455.

If you’ve taken an interesting class or seminar lately, we want to hear about it! Submit to Lindsay.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY

Will you step forward and take charge of advertising sales for the Verbatim?

Position involves soliciting ad sales, overseeing ad preparation and invoicing advertisers after ad placement. Position offers opportunity to work with interesting people.

If interested, contact Lindsay Hansen at (612) 545-6620.



Next Verbatim will be out in December. Get your submissions to Lindsay Hansen in November!

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Gallup highlights: POLL INSIGHTS

* 65% of Americans say they would support hate crime legislation in their state. [September 11-13, 2000]

* 49% of American teenagers “tend to agree” that boys who grow up with fathers in the home are more likely to be successful as adults. [April-June 2000]

* 56% of Americans say that they thought there was “more opportunity for the average person to really get ahead” than there used to be. [September 11-13, 2000]

* Married men are more likely to favor a cut in federal income taxes than unmarried men (83% vs. 67%). [September 11-13, 2000]

* 16% of Americans said in 1999 that they would view Oprah Winfrey as a serious candidate if she decided to run for president. [October 13, 1999]

* About half — 46% — of Americans have counted the number of items in the basket in the express check out line of the grocery store. [July 14-16, 2000]

Autumn in the Twin Cities:

At the Minneapolis Institute of Arts—
“John Howe in MN: the Legacy of Frank Lloyd Wright;” “Recent Accessions;” “American Impressionism: Treasures from the Smithsonian American Art Museum.”

Walker Art Center—
“The Cities Collect.”

Minnesota Orchestra:
Mark Russell, November 3
Doc Severinsen, November 12
George Shearing Quintet, November 18

Apple orchards:
Appleside Orchard, Farmington, 651-463-2505
Minnetonka Orchards, Mound, 763-479-3191
Minnesota Harvest Apple, Jordan, 952-492-2785
Aamodt’s Apple Farm, Stillwater, 651-439-3127

Upcoming Election:
Register to vote at RocktheVote.org

Candidates:
Ralph Nader votenader.com
Al Gore algore.com
George Bush georgebush.com
Pat Buchanan patbuchanan.com

ELECTION DAY IS NOVEMBER 7, 2000.



Fall conference:

The Fourth Annual MRA MN/Upper Midwest Chapter Fall Conference, titled "Internet Research - So Many Ways to Go Wrong - How to Do It Right," was held on Thursday, September 28, 2000 at International Market Square.

The conference ran from 11:00 AM to 4:30 PM and the schedule of events was as follows:

Schedule: 11:00 - 11:15 Registration
 11:15 - 12:15 Luncheon
 12:00 - 12:15 Chapter Awards
 12:15 - 12:30 Task Force Summary
 12:30 - 1:30 Keynote Speaker
 1:45 - 2:45 Break out session #1
 3:00 - 4:00 Break out session #2
 4:00 - 4:30 Networking

Keynote:

How Has Internet Research Impacted Business by Dan Peterson, General Manager, Insight Tools.

Dan talked about General Mills and Market Tools' joint venture of conducting research on the Internet, where it was at 2 years ago, where it is currently, and what it will be like in a year or so.

Topic 1: How to Implement by Lisbeth Tanz-Harrison - Vice President, Client Development, Greenfield OnLine Greenfield OnLine is a company who has a proprietary internet-user database. The "Nuts and Bolts" of how to leap in without depleting all your resources.

Topic 2: How Surveying On-line Affects your Sample and Sources Available by Gwen Kaplan of Survey Sampling Inc. SSI is an industry recognized source for sampling.

Topic 3: Project Management for Internet Study by Carmen Barker-Lemay, Marketing Consultant, Gantz Wiley Carmen discussed some of the advantages and pitfalls using this new methodology.

Topic 4: Reporting - Design Expectations, Interactive vs. Non-interactive, by Terry Millard and Wally Baldin, Internet Product Design and Development Specialists, Maritz Marketing Research, Inc. Terry and Wally presented the pros and cons of reporting on the web as well as what can be done.

Spotlight on National conference.

To learn about the upcoming National conference in Ft Lauderdale, FL, check out http://www.mra-net.org/news_events/temp/falldetails.cfm

There are a number of excellent speakers scheduled, including Beth Fischer, who has worked with our local chapter. Beth presented this workshop at the first educational event.

On Thursday, November 9, Beth will conduct a workshop entitled, "I Get It!" This workshop is considered to be a 2 in level on a 3 point scale and is intended for the experienced researcher with some knowledge, but not necessarily expert level. The topic areas include Technology, Business Management and Development Data Collection.

From the National Web site:

"Successful researchers must provide nuggets of knowledge that make real-life contributions to a client's intellectual capital. This session will explore techniques and approaches for transforming research data into meaningful, understandable results that will have your client saying "I get it!" about your research project findings."

Beth is with the TCI Group.

Fall conference: (continued)

Task Force Summary: by Harold Cook, President, Cook Research

Harold summarized the efforts of the task for on Respondent Cooperation

Please send your comments and feedback from this day.



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Double business card size	\$50.00 (members)/\$75 (non-members)
Half-page	\$75.00 (members)/\$100 (non-members)
Classified Ads	\$25.00 (members)/\$35 (non-members)

Please call Lindsay Hansen at (612) 545-6620 for more information.



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Newsletter of the Minnesota/Upper Midwest Chapter of the MRA
