



# The Verbatim

Newsletter of the Minnesota/Upper Midwest Chapter of the MRA

Winter 2008

Volume 11 Issue 1

## President's Corner

*Bonnie Sargent, Field Research Services  
Chapter President*

Greetings members and guests! This has been an enjoyable and busy time for our chapter. We concluded our Minnesota/Upper Midwest Fall Conference in September with lots of "Bon Appetites" from attendees. Our Minnesota Chapter conference at Earl Brown Center was again this year excellent. Hoorays and many thanks to all the volunteers who put the conference together, especially Jeanine Hesse and the program committee who did an extraordinary job staying on top of all the logistics month after month for a successful conference. Raffles are fun and everyone likes the anticipation of being a winner, so thanks to Lori Laflin's donation of the "Principals of Marketing" course raffled at the conference. Congratulations to Allan Floyd, who was our raffle winner. We can't thank our Exhibitors enough for supporting the Fall Conference. It is great to visit all the tables, talk with Sponsors, and pick up their unique promos. I am still trying to figure out the puzzle! Read more about the conference inside this issue.

The Board has voted to have our next Chapter conference in the spring of 2009, so there is plenty of time for you to volunteer to help on this great event. Be there - see you there!

The National Conference in Atlanta was not business as usual. There were only five awards presented this year at the conference, and one of our very own honored members, Tammie Frost-Norton, received the Shinning Star Award. The purpose of this award is to recognize individuals who have provided outstanding volunteer efforts at the National level for more than five years. She has done this and more not only on the national level but for our chapter as well. She is an inspiration to all who know her. Congratulations Tammie! We are so proud to have you in Minnesota.

*Continued on page 2*

## 2008 Upcoming Events

**Thursday, March 6, 2008, 7:30 am to 9:00 am: "The Cell Phone Challenge to Survey Research,"**  
Presented by Scott Keeter, Research Director, Pew Research Center of Washington DC. Sheraton Hotel, 7800 Normandale Blvd, Bloomington, MN 55439 (952-835-7800). Please be sure to save this date - you should have received your invite in the mail.

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## President's Corner cont'd

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I am proud to have served and to be serving with people in our chapter who want to make a difference. Nominations and elections are right around the corner and you can't start too early to consider who you would like to serve on your Board of Directors. You might want to nominate someone you know who has good leadership abilities or YOU may be asked to run on the ballot or volunteer. Don't step back... Step up and just say yes! You will never regret the time you volunteer in the MRA. Volunteering is Networking at its best.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I would like to wish all of you a Happy New Year. We have much to be thankful for and giving is a generous and powerful way to say thanks.

Warmest Regards,  
Bonnie Sargent



*Tammie Frost-Norton receiving the Shining Star Award.*

## Chapter Elections Coming Up

Election season is once again upon us for our chapter elections. Nominations for Director at Large are being accepted for the MN/UMW Chapter of the MRA's 2008-2009 Board of Directors. Nominations should be sent to President-Elect Tammie Frost-Norton at [tfrostnorton@questarweb.com](mailto:tfrostnorton@questarweb.com) no later than **FEBRUARY 11, 2008**. Please contact Tammie for more information.

### 2007/2008 MRA MN/Upper Midwest Chapter Board Members

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## MRA Members New Year's Resolutions

### Reason:

- To maintain knowledge and keep skills up-to-date with developments in the industry
- To have access to an informal network of experts
- To support the Association's contributions to the industry for such things as respondent cooperation, technological and methodological development, privacy and ethical issues and maintaining professional standards.

### Approach:

- Determine contact hours necessary for certification maintenance, select appropriate training and secure approval for attendance
- Participate in relevant volunteer alternatives (i.e., Programming Committee and Past Presidents' Committee)

### Measure:

- Certification maintained  
Attend meetings and provide services to committees as time permits

## Editor's Notes

Happy New Year!

Greetings and best wishes for the New Year. May 2008 bring you each much success and happiness.

This should be a very busy year for the MN/Upper Midwest Chapter. The Programming Committee is setting up a schedule of chapter events, including a breakfast meeting on March 6 on "marketing research through cell phones."

Other events include a discussion of just right scales, a presentation by a member of the Census Bureau, and a presentation on report writing. The Chapter is also discussing a co-sponsored event with the American Marketing Association. The chapter's next full day conference is slated for Spring 2009. Be sure to check your Bait Box and upcoming issues of the Verbatim for times and dates.

Looking back, the 2007 Fall Conference at the Earle Brown Heritage Center in Brooklyn Center was very successful, with more than 100 attendees. Feedback from the conference appears in this issue.

In November, Rob Daves of Daves & Associates, spoke to the chapter about usability studies and Eyetracking. A short summary of Rob's talk appears in this issue.

Congratulations to Tammie Frost-Norton, who received the Marketing Research Association's Shining Star Award. Tammie is a very dedicated member of the chapter, and is serving as President-Elect for 2007-08.

Many thanks to all of the board members, committee members and volunteers who made 2007 a success and best wishes for 2008. And as always, thanks to Lisa Denning for all of her efforts in putting this newsletter together.

Doug Skipper



# How Serious Is Polling's Cell-Only Problem? The Landline-less Are Different and Their Numbers Are Growing Fast

by Scott Keeter, Director, Survey Research, Pew Research Center

Twenty years ago the survey research profession -- having grown comfortable with telephone interviewing as an alternative to personal interviewing for conducting surveys -- worried mostly about the roughly 7% of U.S. households that could not be interviewed because they had no telephone. Today our concern is somewhat different, and potentially more serious. According to government statistics released last month, nearly 13% of U.S. households (12.8%) cannot now be reached by the typical telephone survey because they have only a cell phone and no landline telephone.<sup>1</sup>

If people who can only be reached by cell phone were just like those with landlines, their absence from surveys would not create a problem for polling. But cell-only adults are very different. The National Health Interview Survey found them to be much younger, more likely to be African American or Hispanic, less likely to be married, and less likely to be a homeowner than adults with landline telephones. These demographic characteristics are correlated with a wide range of social and political behaviors.

Polling's cell phone problem is a new one. In early 2003, just 3.2% of households were cell-only. By the fall of 2004, pollsters and journalists were openly worrying about the potential bias that cell-only households might create for political surveys. The National Election Pool's exit poll found that 7.1% of those who voted on Election Day had only a cell phone, and these cell-only voters were somewhat more Democratic and liberal than those who said they had a landline telephone. But pre-election telephone polls in that election were generally accurate, and pollsters felt that they had dodged the proverbial bullet. This fortunate outcome was a result of the fact that the statistical weighting employed by most telephone polls helped to correct for the missing respondents. The fact that the cell-only group in 2004 was still a relatively small part of the overall population also helped mitigate the impact of the problem.

But given the speed with which the number of cell-only households has increased, there is growing concern within the polling business about how long the landline telephone survey will remain a viable data collection tool, at least by itself. At last month's annual meeting of the American Association for Public Opinion Research (AAPOR), survey research's top professional organization, an entire series of research panels focused on the cell phone issue. At one of the panels, a government researcher told the audience that the size of the cell-only group could approach 25% by the end of 2008 if the current rate of increase is sustained.

To monitor the impact of the cell-only phenomenon, the Pew Research Center conducted four studies in 2006 that included samples of cell phone numbers as well as a full sample of landline numbers.<sup>2</sup> The four surveys covered a very wide range of topics, including use of technology, media consumption, political and social attitudes, and electoral engagement. Comparing the cell-only respondents with those reached on landlines allowed us to assess the degree to which our traditional surveys are biased by the absence of the cell-only respondents.

## Summary of Comparisons Between Landline Samples and Cell-Only Samples

Number of survey questions compared	46
Average (mean) difference between landline and cell-only samples across all 46 questions	7.8%
Range of differences (absolute value)	0% - 29%
Maximum change in final survey estimate when cell-only sample is blended in	2%
Average (mean) change in final survey estimate when cell-only sample is blended in	0.7%

We compared the cell-only and landline respondents on 46 different survey questions. Across these questions, the average difference between cell-only and landline respondents was approximately 8 percentage points (7.8%), with the range of differences running from 0% (for a question about whether the respondent is "bored" by what goes on in Washington, DC) to 29% (being registered to vote). But the good news is that none of the measures would change by more than 2 percentage points when the cell-only respondents were blended into the landline sample. Thus, although cell-only respondents are different from landline respondents in important ways, they were neither numerous enough nor different enough on the questions we examined to produce a significant change in overall general population survey estimates when included with the landline samples and weighted according to U.S. Census parameters on basic demographic characteristics.

The picture is not entirely positive, however. While the cell-only problem is currently not biasing polls based on the entire population, it may very well be damaging estimates for certain subgroups in which the use of only a cell phone is more common. This concern is particularly relevant for young adults. According to the most recent government estimate, more than 25% of those under age 30 use only a cell phone. An analysis of young people ages 18-25 in one of the Pew polls found that the exclusion of the cell-only respondents resulted in significantly lower estimates of this age group's approval of alcohol consumption and marijuana use. Perhaps not surprisingly, excluding the cell-only respondents also yields lower estimates of technological sophistication. For example, the overall estimate for the proportion of 18-25 year olds using social networking sites is 57% when the cell-only sample is blended with the landline sample, while the estimate based only on the landline sample is 50%.

Including a cell-only sample with a traditional landline-based poll is feasible, as the four studies conducted last year indicate. But even if feasible, cell-only surveys are considerably more difficult and expensive to conduct than landline surveys. Federal law prohibits the use of automated dialing devices when calling cell phones so each number in the cell phone sample must be dialed manually. It also is common practice to provide respondents with a small monetary incentive to offset the cost of the airtime used during the interview. And the screening necessary to reach cell-only respondents among all of those reached on a cell phone greatly increases the effort needed to complete a given number of interviews. Pew estimates that interviewing a cell-only respondent costs approximately four to five times as much as a landline respondent.

Pollsters recognize that some type of accommodation for the cell-only population will have to be made eventually, as was clear from the large amount of research on the topic presented at the AAPOR conference last month. In addition to the use of so-called "dual frame samples" such as those described above (calling both a cell phone sample and a landline sample), practitioners are discussing other alternatives, including the establishment of panels of cell-only respondents that can be surveyed periodically to track their opinions, and employing mail or internet surveys to reach the cell-only population.

*This article draws on research presented at the AAPOR conference, "What's Missing from National RDD Surveys? The Impact of the Growing Cell-Only Population," by Scott Keeter (Pew Research Center), Courtney Kennedy (University of Michigan and Pew Research Center), April Clark (Pew Research Center), Trevor Tompson (The Associated Press), and Mike Mokrzycki (The Associated Press).*

<sup>1</sup> *Adding in the 2.2% of households with no phone service whatsoever, a total of 15.0% cannot be reached by landline surveys. The government report is by Stephen J. Blumberg and Julian V. Luke. "Wireless Substitution: Early Release of Estimates Based on the National Health Interview Survey, July – December 2006." Report by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, May 14, 2007.*

*Details about the four studies can be found at the following links: "The Cell Phone Challenge to Survey Research"; "Online Papers Modestly Boost Newspaper Readership"; "A Portrait of Generation Next"; and "Cell-Only Voters Not Very Different."*

*Editor's note: Scott Keeter of the Pew Center will present "The Cell Phone Challenge to Survey Research," to the Minnesota-Upper Midwest Chapter of the Marketing Research Association, Thursday, March 6 at the Sheraton Hotel, 7800 Normandale Blvd, Bloomington, MN 55439. The session will last from 7:30 to 9 a.m.*

# Thank God It's Any Day

by Bo Bennett, DTM

In America, we have some fairly disempowering sayings that, unfortunately, some have adopted as credos, and even worse, ways of life. Sayings like, "A bad day of fishing is better than a good day of work", "Don't work too hard", and the classic, "Thank God it's Friday". We use these snazzy sayings during "happy" hour, in conversations with friends and co-workers, and even stick them on the bumpers of our cars. It seems as if too many people universally share misery and hatred for one's work. Why not live by the words, "Thank God it's any day!"

Our week consists of seven days, five of which are traditionally reserved for "work" and two for "play". Again I say traditionally because I do not know who came up with this idea, but it wasn't someone with success in mind nor was it someone who valued family life. Nevertheless, for most working adults, this is just "the way it is". If you are not one the fortunate few who can spend all seven days with the ideal balance of work and play, there are still ways you can enjoy your "work week".

Let me ask you this question: how much would the quality of your life improve if every day of the week were as enjoyable as your best day of the week? The average working adult, and student for that matter, enjoys 2 out of 7 days of the week or about 29% of the week. Add in some vacations and personal days and we're looking at about 35% - which leaves 65% of our days spent doing things that we don't enjoy. And that's assuming we spend all of our non-work days on things we enjoy!

To be successful, you must enjoy what you do. The more passionate you are about what you do for a living, the easier success will come. I have said before that I believe perseverance is the most important part of success; well, right after perseverance comes enjoying what you do. There are two basic ways you can start enjoying every day:

- 1) **Change what you do for a living.** If you truly dislike your current job and you do not realistically see any chance of improvement in the near future, find a new job. Changing jobs or careers is one of the more stressful moves you can make in your lifetime because it usually requires taking risks and giving up security. However, it can also fill your life with new excitement and enthusiasm that you have been without for so many years. Changing what you do for a living is a serious step and should be well thought out.
- 2) **Change your attitude.** Life is perception and perception is about attitude. For every one person who "hates" their job, there are at least a dozen people who would love to have it. I would never suggest giving up on your dreams and adopt a "learn to like" attitude toward your current work, but I am suggesting a conscious change in the way you approach your work that will make it enjoyable while you work toward your dreams.

Here are some things you can do to build a more positive attitude toward your current work.

- \* **Do your job better.** Consider this "practice" for your success. Success is about being your best and going the extra mile. Start now by doing your job better.
- \* **Learn more about your job.** One of the reasons people do not enjoy their work is that they do not fully understand it. Learn all you can about what you do and you will discover a new flame that did not exist before.
- \* **Learn why things are done the way they are.** In the workplace, there are rules and policies, many of which are debated amongst the workers who argue that they "are not fair". Speak to someone who knows why these policies are in place. Once you understand, you will no longer have the resentment.
- \* **See the big picture.** If your job is in data-entry, realize that you are doing an important part of a much larger job. An organization is like a chain with many links. Each link is vital to the strength of the chain. You are not just entering data, you are partly responsible for keeping the organization running.
- \* **Build amenable relationships with co-workers.** If you do not get along with your co-workers, it is easy to dread going to work. Make amends in existing relationships if needed and go the extra mile for your co-workers.
- \* **Solve or manage your problems.** What don't you like about work? Make a list. Consider each item on your list a problem and solve or manage the problem.
- \* **See your current job as a necessary rung on your ladder of success.** I strongly believe one can get ultimate enjoyment from any job if they believe they are working toward their success. What skills is your current job helping

you achieve? How is your current job helping you achieve success? Even if it is as basic as giving you the money you need to move on, you are working toward your success.

A major key to success is happiness. Without happiness, success is not possible. Don't settle for two days of happiness or enjoyment a week. Change your job or change your attitude and wake up each day with excitement and passion. Adopt the credo, "Thank God it's any day".

*The above article is from the book "Year To Success", a 366 day course in personal achievement.*



## **In National Release, MRA Explains Difference in NH Primary Projections vs. Results**

(Glastonbury, CT): With the exception of Senator Clinton's results, New Hampshire's pre-primary polls were surprisingly accurate—with estimates of around 36% for Senator Obama, 19% for Senator Edwards, and 6% for Governor Richardson (compared to final estimates of 36%, 17% and 5%, respectively). There is now a focus on the "inaccuracy" of pre-election polls, especially those of the Democratic presidential primary. While the research profession will review the results to better understand why Senator Clinton's poll numbers were wrong the Marketing Research Association ([www.mra-net.org](http://www.mra-net.org)) wants to emphasize that these results should not question the validity nor the value of research.

MRA issues this release to help explain the forces shaping the discrepancies between the pre-election polls and the actual outcomes in New Hampshire—and to apply that understanding to upcoming state primaries. MRA agrees with many points made by AAPOR.

- Polling is a scientific process that attempts to capture information about individual attitudes and behaviors, both of which can vary over time. Events that occur after a survey or poll is taken can cause changes in opinion and behavior.
- Polls and surveys are subject to multiple sources of error—including social desirability bias—that some have suggested may lead to inflated estimates for some candidates.
- The role of undecideds in a close election is difficult to predict. As late as Monday, January 7, polls indicated that up to 10% of Democratic voters were still undecided and the CBS News Polls cited that "28% of Democratic voters say their minds could still change."
- "Margins of error" must be considered when evaluating surveys. "Margins of error" are attributable to polling questions, methodologies, and sample.

While political surveys take a snapshot of the electorate at a specific point in time they are not an election. Campaigns are fluid entities; activities/occurrences can change the way people view candidates after surveys are conducted. Note: American Association of Public Opinion Research (AAPOR) shared some of these points with MRA. For more information, visit [www.aapor.org](http://www.aapor.org).

*Marketing Research Association is the leading and largest association of the opinion and marketing research profession, a multi-billion dollar a year industry dedicated to providing valuable information to guide the decisions of companies that provide products and services to consumers and businesses. For more information, visit [www.mra-net.org](http://www.mra-net.org).*

## On the Lighter Side: “Innovation or Lie?”

By Linda Daniel  
Harris Interactive

Our industry has seen a lot of changes and innovations. Some are good—the use of the Internet for research is a prime example. Some have the potential to destroy our industry—SUGGING and FRUGGING, for example. For that rare researcher who doesn’t know, suggesting stands for “selling under the guise of research” and frugging stands for “fund raising under the guise of research.” You’ve all received these calls, where a voice on the phone says he is just doing research, asks you a few questions, then tries to sell you something or get you to donate money to some cause. By the way, suggesting and frugging are both a big no-no.

Recently, suggesting has gone national. Have you seen the TV ad for a car (I refuse to name it), showing people who were asked to drive the car for a while as part of “a market research project?” At the end, the “subjects” were told that, ta dah!, they were not part of a market research project. Instead, these people were part of a campaign by the car company to prove that all it takes to get someone to buy this fantastic car is for people to drive it for a while. This charade has generated a lot of teeth gnashing among real market researchers.

Given declining response rates, suggesting and frugging can only further complicate our lives. I can hear it now.

**Interviewer:** “Hello, my name is Susan and I’m calling from XYZ Research. We are conducting a market research study about the grocery stores you visit on a regular basis. This is not a sales call.”

**Interviewee:** “What are you selling?”

**Interviewer:** “Ah, I can assure you, sir, we are not selling anything. We simply want to include your opinions in our research study about grocery stores you visit on a regular basis.”

**Interviewee:** “Well, I was watching TV last night and the phone rang and it was some sort of researcher who ended up asking me to donate \$5000 to keep the Texas Longhorns off the endangered species list. I mean, the cow Longhorns, not the student Longhorns. Now, I like steak as much as the next guy, but I’m a Texas Aggie, so I kind of think the student Longhorns should be extinct so we can have a better football season.”

**Interviewer (now a little bit desperate):** “That’s very interesting, sir, but we really aren’t going to ask you to buy anything or donate anything. Would you be willing to answer a few questions about grocery stores?”

**Interviewee:** “I don’t know. I mean, I don’t want to spend ten minutes talking to you and then you tell me about some great customer program that only costs \$500 a year and means I get a free jar of olives and a car wash once a month. Of course, my wife doesn’t let me go to the grocery store any more, not since the prime rib incident, so maybe you don’t want to talk to me anyway.”

**Interviewer (now totally desperate):** “Sir, is your wife home? Could I please talk to her about the grocery stores she visits on a routine basis? The questions on the survey will only take a few minutes and we promise we will not try to sell your wife anything.”

**Interviewee:** “I don’t think that’s a good idea. My wife has absolutely no sales resistance.”

## **Former Chapter President Bev Koser to Retire**

Bev Koser, President of the Minnesota/Upper Midwest Chapter of the Marketing Research Association in 2001-2002, will retire from her position at Harris Interactive, effective February 29.

Bev, a member of the Steering Committee that helped start the chapter in 1995-96, served as on the chapter's Board of Directors from 1999 to 2003, and has been a member of the Past President's Committee since 2002. She was a Director at Large in 1999-2000, President-Elect in 2000-01, President the following year, and Past President in 2002-03.

Koser has served as Senior Research Director, Managing Research Director, Research Director, Operations Manager for Harris Interactive, a full-service, international, publicly held marketing research company, and for its predecessors, Total Research Corporation and Carlson Research Company, since 1989.

Before that, she was the owner of Koser Surveys, a marketing research company providing consulting, project management, and data collection services, from 1970 to 1989, and Director of Survey Research Interviewers for the Minneapolis Star and Tribune Company from 1965 to 1969.

She has served as Minneapolis/St. Paul Alumnae Chapter President, District Alumnae Chairman, and National Network of Opportunity Chairman for Alpha Chi Omega, a national sorority, President of the Twin Cities Alumnae Panhellenic Association, a member of the Council on Ministries, Administrative Board, and Board of Trustees Chairman for Normandale Hylands United Methodist Church.

Bev also is a member of the Board of Directors and Emergency Food Shelf Coordinator for VEAP, a non-profit organization of churches providing emergency social services in the south suburbs, and PTA President for Normandale Hills Elementary School. She is also co-director of CLEAN, Inc., a non-profit organization founded to promote newspaper recycling and provide scholarship funds. CLEAN conducted drop-site recycling for in Bloomington, Minnesota for 18 years, raising \$105,700 for the Bloomington Scholarship Foundation.

## **Survey Reveals Majority of Americans Are Tired of Making New Year's Resolutions and Instead Prefer to Create Lasting Lifestyle Solutions**

AUSTIN, Texas, Dec. 11 /PRNewswire-FirstCall/ -- More than 75 percent of Americans would prefer to never again make a New Year's resolution, wanting instead to adopt long-term healthy lifestyle solutions, according to a new survey conducted by Opinion Research Corporation for Whole Foods Market (Nasdaq: WFMI), the world's leading natural and organic foods supermarket.

The national survey asked participants if they could choose one resolution, what it would be. Survey results revealed:

- Thirty-three percent of respondents chose making the world a better place as their top resolution in 2008
- Thirty-two percent of those surveyed responded spending more time with family would be their choice
- Coming in a surprising third, twenty percent of respondents claimed that losing weight and adopting healthy habits would be the resolution they would choose
- Only twelve percent cited budget management and eating out less as their choice

The survey was conducted as part of Whole Foods Market's "ReSOLUTIONS Start Here" program developed in partnership with Debra Fine, a nationally recognized communication expert and author of *The Fine Art of Small Talk* and the newly released *The Fine Art of Big Talk*. The program is designed to help shoppers adopt healthy, long-term lifestyle solutions and avoid short-term fixes like New Year's resolutions. Whole Foods Market will launch the program in stores and online during the New Year's season.

*prnewswire.com*

## Rob Daves Focuses on Usability Testing and Eye Tracking

**Veteran researcher Rob Daves delivered an overview of Usability Testing and Eyetrack Analysis at the Minnesota-Upper Midwest Chapter of the Marketing Research Association’s November meeting.**

Daves, the principal researcher for Daves & Associates Research, is the former Director of the Star Tribune’s Minnesota poll and the immediate Past President of the American Association for Public Opinion Research (AAPOR). His presentation, “*A Look at Usability Testing: Using EyeTracking Technology to Improve Visual Design,*” was delivered to more than 25 attendees at Major’s Sports Café in Bloomington on November 15.

Daves discussed usability testing, including quantitative and qualitative methods, and reviewed focus group, In-depth Interviews and Card Sorting as they apply to usability testing.

He then turned his attention to Eyetracking, defined as recording on a computer, usually digitally, where the eyes’ gaze falls on some visual stimulus. Daves discussed how Eyetracking is used for evaluating product labels and packaging, how print media are read, how navigable and readable websites are, what users see in movie trailers and what visual stimuli works best for shoppers.

Daves showed older and newer Eyetracking technology, and presented results from a webpage usability study that included individual gaze plots and tracks, collective heat maps and creating areas of interest.

Among the takeaways from his session:

- Usability testing takes many forms, quantitative and qualitative.
- Eyetracking can be used to help improve nearly any visual stimulus, from signage and print ads to point-of-purchase promotions and websites.
- Most usability testing methods are extremely portable, and can be done in many locations.
- A combination of testing methodologies gives more complete information to clients for their decisions.

Those who attended the session, and are enrolled in the MRA’s Professional Researcher Certification program are eligible to receive PRC credit.



*Rob Daves, who addressed the Minnesota Upper Midwest Chapter of the Marketing Research Association in November, conducts EyeTracking research at an Air Force base in Denver.*



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