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ESOMAR 28

28 Questions to Help Buyers of Online Samples

Introduction

Welcome to the Qualtrics ESOMAR 28 Questions! These questions are meant to provide transparency into the online sample process and associated practices. We want to make sure that both corporate and academic researchers understand the opportunities and limitations of samples so expectations are established and needs are met. This document can also be used to satisfy most IRB requirements.

As research methodologies have improved over time, there has been a recent shift away from relying on a single panel. For convenience sampling, the current best practice is to build samples from multiple sources to enable researchers with the most diverse, representative data sets. These new questions, a replacement for ESOMAR's "28 Questions to Help Buyers of Online Samples," were designed in recognition of this trend.

Qualtrics has helped thousands of both corporate and academic researchers complete projects around the world through its sample offering, translation services, and sophisticated research technology. The new questions included in this ESOMAR have been added in recognition of the new techniques and technology that have been developed in the field of online sampling.

For supplemental information, ESOMAR (www.esomar.org) provides a Guideline for Online Research that addresses best practices in handling ethical, methodological, and regulatory issues, and the legalities regarding technology in research.

Company Profile

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

Qualtrics, the world's leading enterprise survey technology solution and XM platform, has been providing online samples for over ten years. Qualtrics partners with over 20 online sample providers to supply a network of diverse, quality respondents to our worldwide client base. Our Qualtrics Research Services Team has completed over 40,000 projects, including 15,000 projects across 2,500 universities worldwide and across every industry vertical including travel, financial services, healthcare, retail, consumer goods, technology, academia, and manufacturing both in the US and globally. Our world-class team supports each project and provides services ranging from online sample collection to full-service market research projects, including everything from research design to survey programming to custom reporting and analysis.

Sample Sources & Recruitment

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

The majority of our samples come from traditional, actively managed, double-opt-in market research panels. While this is our preferred method, social media is occasionally also used to gather respondents. Upon client request, we can also access other types of sources to meet the needs of a specific target group.

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?

Qualtrics maintains the highest quality by strategically selecting sample partners. Sample blend can be replicated across multiple projects when required for reliability. To exclude duplication and ensure validity, Qualtrics checks every IP address and uses unique and sophisticated digital fingerprinting technology that is continuously being improved. In addition, every strategic sample partner uses deduplication technology to provide the most reliable results and retain the integrity of the survey data.

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

The panelists Qualtrics leverages are used for corporate and academic market research only.

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

For hard-to-reach groups, Qualtrics utilizes niche panels brought about through specialized recruitment campaigns. We are able to benefit from our rich partner network to gain access to many hard-to-reach groups. The profiling

attributes included in our panels give detailed knowledge of respondents, assisting in reaching niche targets. We are also regularly adding new specialized panels and working with our partners to increase our reach to difficult targets.

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?

Qualtrics leverages multiple sample sources to best fit our clients' needs. Partners are selected on a project-by-project basis and are chosen based on the project's specific requirements. As a panel aggregator, our clients are aware that we are leveraging third-party panels. We ensure that all sample partners employ continuous monitoring and quality control checks. After working in a broad array of industries over many years, Qualtrics has built and maintains solid relationships with the largest and most well-known sample providers in the world.

Sampling & Project Management

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

Qualtrics' sample partners randomly select respondents for surveys where respondents are likely to qualify. Certain exclusions take place including category exclusions, participation frequency, and so on. We work to guarantee that the population surveyed meets the requirements of the specific survey as defined by our clients' needs but do not guarantee national representation amongst the invites sent or responses received unless specifically requested prior to sampling.

8. Do you employ a survey router?

To provide the best experience for our clients, Qualtrics often leverages partners' routers to meet specific client needs. By leveraging others' routers rather than employing our own, Qualtrics is able to charge less given increased incidence rates and decreased costs. Some of our partners leverage sophisticated API integrations instead of utilizing a traditional survey router.

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

When Qualtrics leverages a router from one of our sample partners, our partners redirect panelists by matching qualifying demographic information from their profiles to a specific survey. Sometimes, additional questions are asked prior to survey entry to ensure qualification. All processes related to the routers are randomized to avoid source bias.

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?

The routers that Qualtrics leverages are randomized, though sometimes with study prioritization or weighting. However, randomization requirements are always prioritized and protected. Our partners are careful to prevent self-selection bias caused by invitation wording, survey topic, or reward offerings.

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?

Our sample partners each have a team dedicated to monitoring and setting the parameters of the router.

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?

Qualtrics' sample partners maintain a wide variety of personal profiles on respondents including automotive, beauty, finance, home and family, internet, media, shopping, sports, travel, B2B, and so on. The panels in our network hold full psycho-demographic profiles, and each panelist can enter or update his or her information during registration and upon sign-in. To ensure profiles are consistently updated, our network of panels request updates for each profiling question at various cadences. In general, the questions asked across sample sources are similar, with variation in regards to more specific profiling questions. If no relevant profiling data is held, we sometimes offer custom pre-screening or refinement questions prior to a respondent's entry to a survey. Projects will be priced according to their incidence rate, with costs rising as incidence rates drop due to lack of relevant profiling data. Additionally, low-incidence projects may also result in decreased feasibility.

13. Please describe your survey invitation process. What is the proposition 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.

Respondents are invited to surveys in various ways. Often, potential respondents are sent an email invitation informing them that the survey is for research purposes only, how long the survey is expected to take, and what incentives are available. Members may unsubscribe at any time. Other times, respondents will see surveys they are likely to qualify for upon signing into a panel portal. Other common invitation methods include in-app notifications and SMS notifications. To avoid self-selection bias, survey invitations do not include specific details about the contents of the survey and are instead kept very general.

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?

Respondents will receive an incentive based on the length of the survey, their specific panelist profile, and target acquisition difficulty, amongst other factors. The specific type of rewards vary and may include cash, airline miles, gift cards, redeemable points, charitable donations, sweepstakes entrance, and vouchers.

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

Qualtrics requests the following from every client: a detailed description of target audience, desired sample size, expected survey length, and all screening criteria. After project expectations and study type are also clarified with the prospective client, Qualtrics will give an estimate on the timeline for desired deliverables.

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

Many of Qualtrics' sample partners measure respondent satisfaction through periodic satisfaction surveys and project feedback surveys. This is done to learn how to best maintain quality panels with high response rates. Aggregate satisfaction scores may be made available to clients upon request, depending on the panel used.

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

Because each project we facilitate is hosted on the Qualtrics platform, clients have full access to all survey data in real time. The Qualtrics team working on the project will provide the client with notice of the project's completion. Upon request, the team can also share final incidence rate, length of interview, and response counts. If the client needs to request a breakdown of response rates, click rates, or so on, notice must be given to Qualtrics prior to the initial launch of the project. If notice is given, Qualtrics will try to incorporate the desired aspects into the project. However, with modern recruitment techniques (e.g., invitations via the portal rather than email invitations), some of these rates are unavailable and/or are only shared as estimates across all studies run by the sample source used. Upon request, Qualtrics can assist in the analysis of the data, otherwise our clients review and analyze the provided information independently.

Data Quality & Validation

18. Who is responsible for data quality checks? If it is you, do you have procedures in place 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.

Qualtrics is committed to providing the highest quality data to our clients. Qualtrics will replace respondents who finish in less than 1/2 the median survey completion length. Within seven days of survey completion, our clients have the opportunity to review the results and come back to our team to request responses that need to be replaced due to other quality issues. If the client prefers to incorporate additional quality checks, the Qualtrics Project Manager and Sales Representative must be informed to review scope changes and update survey functionality as needed.

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?

Qualtrics partners with the largest sample providers to ensure depth and breadth of reach. Each of our strategic sample partners have completion and invitation limits. Our partners ensure that respondents are not over contacted by keeping records of participation history. Specific information is available upon request on a project-by-project basis.

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?

Each of our strategic sample partners closely monitors the sample stream and panelist activity records to maintain consistency. The specific completion and invitation limits vary per sample source, but most sample partners have incorporated limits on a weekly, monthly, or lifetime basis. Specific information is available upon request on a project-by-project basis.

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?

Qualtrics' sample partners maintain participant history while Qualtrics maintains all completed survey responses in our database. On a project-by-project basis, Qualtrics keeps track of information such as respondent source, entry date, incidence rate, and so on. This information is available to the client upon request.

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?

Qualtrics has full confidence in its partners and relies on each sample provider to confirm respondent identity. Each panel has its own confirmation procedures including, but not limited to: TrueSample, Verity, SmartSample, panelist ID number, cookies, Geo-IP address, LinkedIn information comparison, and digital fingerprinting. Most sample partners verify respondent address, demographic information, and email address upon registration.

Policies & Compliance

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

The 'opt-in for market research' process requires respondents to submit an initial registration form requesting to participate in market research studies. Potential respondents build their profile from a standardized list of questions. The panels then use the profiles to select studies that would best fit the case specifications. All of Qualtrics' panels have a double opt-in requirement. Those who do not reconfirm will not be contacted to participate in a survey. The majority of panelists Qualtrics provides via partners are double-opt-in participants.

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

As an aggregator of panels, Qualtrics provides the online platform to securely house data and leverages partners to connect with respondents. Distribution of individual privacy policies vary across partners. Our partners are members of ESOMAR, CASRO and other national organizations. Documentation can be provided upon request.

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

Qualtrics' database does not hold sensitive or confidential panelist information; however, we do hold all survey responses in our data centers. Our data centers utilize many security measures. Qualtrics' database access is restricted and requires authorization. All computer equipment (servers, SANs, switches, routers, etc.) is redundant and is located in secure, environmentally controlled data centers with 24/7 monitoring. Web traffic does not directly access the database and database requests are reversed proxy via an application server to the database. All information is secured via industry standard firewalls and stringent IT security policies and procedures. We utilize industry standard web application firewalls and DDOS protection. Qualtrics also leverages sample partners who are meticulous in their multiple levels of security that include redundant data centers, secure servers, encryption which includes one-way encryption, numeric IDs, secure .NET platforms, security clearance, industry standard firewalls, 24/7 monitoring of data centers, confidentiality agreements, and physical, electronic, and managerial procedures.

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?

We encourage our clients to be comfortable with the sensitivity of the information that will be presented to panelists. Many clients opt to add a screening question at the beginning of the survey that requires qualified respondents to commit to maintain confidentiality with any information they are presented within the survey. Our sample providers leverage strict confidentiality programs, incorporating tools that do things such as disabling screenshots and circumventing the saving of images, video, or audio files. In addition, the forwarding function, copy-pasting, and web-browser storage can be disabled.

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

Our sample partners are certified through a variety of quality systems, but all maintain specific certifications or rigorous in-field monitoring and data quality checks. Quality system certifications and programs include ISO 20252 management system standards, Mktg Inc., Media Ratings Council, and other internal tools and methods.

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?

Qualtrics does help conduct online research of young people. Our sample partners adhere to the ESOMAR standards, COPPA requirements, and UE "Safer Internet Programme" guidelines as well as GDPR guidelines. The specific age of child requiring parental permission varies by country, but for any child under the age of 13, parental consent is required. We may engage legal departments when necessary.