

A collection of historical artifacts is displayed on a light-colored surface. On the left, a portion of a wooden chessboard with a checkered pattern and several chess pieces is visible. Next to it are two ornate medals: one with a red ribbon and another with a blue ribbon. A silver compass is located in the bottom left corner. A pair of gold-rimmed glasses and a quill pen are positioned in the center of the image.

On-Line Research Quality Council

Interim proposals from the Quality
Metrics Committee

Cincinnati

16th September 2008



Introduction

- ◆ A valid and comprehensive system of quality metrics relevant to online methods could be a powerful driver for improving the reliability of online studies.
- ◆ such a system would, if widely embraced, operate to help users make an appropriate choice of vendors and survey methods.
- ◆ the value of such a system rests on ‘transparency’ and general acceptance and must therefore be knowledge based.



Introduction

- ◆ Why the ARF?
 - Reputation (particularly in the USA)
 - No other industry body was committing to such an approach
 - Track record



Introduction

- a. Interdependency with methodological research,
- b. best practice guidelines,
- c. ESOMAR 26 questions (?)



Introduction

- Scope of project: online data collection methods
 - online consumer panels (current emphasis)
 - non-panel methods (e.g. river sampling)
 - B2B panel methods
 - CSM surveys



Introduction

- Survey measures of quality can possibly contribute to panel measures
- Responsibility of users to help minimise survey factors reducing quality




Definition of a Metric

- ◆ Not just a measurement
 - Name
 - Relevance
 - Description
 - How measured
 - Normal Operational range
 - Threshold
 - Optimal value
 - Units of measurement
 - Frequency



metric #1: panel size

- ◆ .It is recommended that panel size is measured as the total number of registered individual adults (that have (1) provided an e-mail address, (2) agreed to participate in surveys from time to time and (3) have provided some information on themselves including their postal address). From this number should be subtracted the number of people on the database who have been on the panel for a period of six months or more and have received at least twelve invitations to partake in a survey but have not responded (e.g. not clicked on the relevant survey link) in the last six months.
- ◆ Where a panel vendor allows more than one individual in a household to register for a panel, it is recommended that in addition to the count of individuals a count of the number of panel households is placed in parenthesis next to it.



metric #2: maximum demographically balanced sample

- ◆ a recommendation is made for a national USA panel; this is believed to correspond with current practice and beliefs. Essentially, the relevant sample size needs to be based on the sample's marginal values for a particular dimension having the same proportions as the National Population. This results from the impracticality of obtaining universe proportions at a cell level once more than three dimensions have been specified. At this time, it is recommended that the representative bench mark / balanced sample is based on six dimensions:
 - ◆ Gender (M, F)
 - ◆ Age Group (18- 29, 30 – 40, 40 -50, 50+)
 - ◆ Ethnicity (Afro-American, Hispanic, All other)
 - ◆ Size of Household (1, 2, 3, 4, 5+)
 - ◆ Household Income Group (-\$20,000, 20,000 – 49,000, 50 – 74,000, 75,000 – 100,000, 100,000 +)
 - ◆ Geography (7 groups (?) to be advised)



metric #3: Potential Internet Usage Bias

- ◆ The extent to which the panel is biased towards heavy internet users
- ◆ NB: It is suspected that the composition of online panels is biased towards a range of segments defined by status and ownership, buying and consumption behaviour, attitudes and intentions. As research results confirm the nature and consistency of such biases then consideration should be given to additional metrics that indicate the prevalence of these biases in the panels. It has been suggested in recent research, for example, that online panels comprise far more smokers than would be expected from the relevant population. This may be the basis of a useful metric but needs confirmation of its generality.



metric #4: duplication rate

- ◆ Cross panel duplicates can be defined as individuals who are registered and are active on several (competitive) commercial panels. It is asserted that their presence and the scale of their multi-panel membership can be estimated through direct questioning of panelists or from co-operative studies of all or a significant number of panels using some ‘finger-printing’ or other duplication detection procedure.



metric #5: Panel Tenure Balance

- ◆ [1] This metric should show the proportion of the active panelists who have been members for a period of three years or more (regardless of demographic composition).
- ◆ [2] This metric should detail the number of panelists registered in the last twelve months as a proportion of the total active panel.



metric #6: rate of survey activity

- ◆ The panel operator should monitor the monthly rate of completed surveys for each active panelist and compute the number of surveys per month for the ninetieth percentile (say). This figure should be multiplied by the average level of claimed multi-panel membership to give a stable upper activity rate.



metric #7: Average Response Rate

- ◆ a well managed and nurtured panel will have a high response rate and this is correlated with sound and engaged respondents. This is not necessarily true and some studies have shown that ‘hyper-active’ panelists are most likely to respond to invitations to complete surveys and thus a panel that comprises many professional respondents would probably have a higher response rates, on average. Nonetheless, it is important to have average response rates reported even though the quality of a panel as implied by this rate cannot be interpreted in an objective fashion.



metric #8: satisficers

- ◆ The original theory of satisficers was predicated on a belief that respondents could be segmented into conscientious and engaged respondents or else people who went through the process of completing a survey without proper engagement.
- ◆ If online panelists can be classified in this manner then the proportion of satisficers in a panel would constitute a powerful metric of (poor) quality.



Additional metrics

- ◆ Representativity metrics (e.g. smokers)
- ◆ Average values of survey based measures (e.g. surrogate rate)