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AMSRS recognises the contribution of Professor Lester Johnson (Editor) and the Melbourne Business School.
This issue of AJMSR contains three papers that are quite varied in scope. Duniec and Ralston examine the impact of telemarketing on Australian households’ attitudes towards, and willingness to participate in, market and social research activities. This is a timely issue, given the industry concern with response rates.

The paper by Milgate, who also contributes a book review in this issue, reflects on the advantages and disadvantages of internet surveys. He also provides some criteria to evaluate and compare some software packages that can be used in internet surveys, and some guidelines for conducting such surveys.

The third paper by Fry examines research issues and innovative techniques that can be used in social marketing research. She provides an overview of the research orientated challenges faced by the social marketing discipline.

Finally, the issue contains a summary of the award-winning papers at this year’s annual conference, The Changing Face of Research, held in Sydney in October. I trust that the issue contains something of interest for all readers. Please feel free to submit a paper to the journal for consideration.

Lester W Johnson, Editor

Australasian Journal of Market & Social Research
CHANGING FACE OF RESEARCH
Conference Review

The theme for the 2007 Australian Market & Social Research Society (AMSRS) conference was THE CHANGING FACE OF RESEARCH – how it has changed, resulting opportunities and ongoing challenges for the industry to remain at the forefront for all major social policy and business growth decision making strategies.

A record number of forty-two papers were presented at the conference with five keynote speakers including two international speakers, Professor David Hughes, Emeritus Professor of Food Marketing at Imperial College, London, and Murray Campbell, Regional Director for the Travel and Leisure sector at TNS New Zealand.

The conference organising committee led by Jenny Crawford, encouraged speakers to reflect on this period of so many changes and to consider how we are constantly reinventing the idea of what it means to be a research professional.

Tim Bock wins Tony Wheeler Award
All submitted papers were eligible for the Tony Wheeler Best Paper Award, which is sponsored by Millward Brown and named in recognition of its former CEO for Australia, New Zealand and Japan. A co-founder of Hoare Wheeler and Associates and then Yann Campbell Hoare Wheeler (YCHW), now Millward Brown, Tony Wheeler was also secretary of the Society's national council from 1985-87.

Tim’s paper titled ‘How to Check a Choice Model’ explored the adequacy of a choice model, or to use the academic term, stated preference models to predict market behaviour(s). Whilst academic and practitioner choice modelling literature provides extensive guidance on choice modelling best practice there is little guidance on how to check if a given choice model is accurate.

Tim introduced four broad groups of test models to assess the choice model in question overall accuracy and their overall degree of validity.

Test models explored were (i) Specification Tests, (ii) Plausibility Tests, (iii) Preference Invention Tests, and (iv) Revealed Preference Tests.

The Specification test model that checks that the statistical model fitted to the data is an appropriate representation of the data has its advantages when applying formal and complex tests such as econometric tests. However, specification tests are not enough if the respondent’s data does not reflect their future behaviour.

Plausibility Tests check that the results of the model’s conclusions are plausible. Examples of these tests include assessing consistency with theory, testing for association with other data such as respondents’ ratings of importance and product usage.
The weakness of plausibility test model is its subjectivity. Valid results may not be consistent with other data and consistency with theory is more evolving and generally weak.

**Preference Invention Tests** check to see if responses provided by respondents are artefacts of the research process, rather than being reflective of what actually occurs in the ‘real world’. Examples of tests available include; (i) Order effects where principles of good research design can assess the extent to which order of information presented in choice modelling questions affects responses; and (ii) Irrationality tests are able to demonstrate that preferences are invented by showing that the preferences in the research are too unlikely to represent the real world.

Key weaknesses of preference invention tests is; (i) it is difficult to gain agreement about what constitutes an “invented” preference and thus the construction and interpretation of such test is difficult; (ii) all involve substantial effort in design and increased fieldwork costs except for the order effects test described above, and (iii) the ‘invention’ effect can be modelled and removed from the data.

The basic idea of **Revealed Preference Tests** is to check that the prediction of the model is consistent with known market behaviour.

In summary, all tests are valid in checking a stated preference model (choice model). The more tests applied and greater passes achieved, provides greater confidence in the preference data collected. The application of Revealed Preference Tests provides more compelling evidence of the validity of a given choice model.

**Highly Commended Papers**

The judging panel also highly commended six other papers:

Founding members of the Collective Intelligence Agency, Suzanne Burdon and Susan Bell, co-presented their paper “The Truth is in There” on the various new and not-so-new techniques for researching the unconscious mind.

Brian Fine and Con Menictas from AMR Interactive and Paul Wang, Senior Lecturer in Marketing Research at University of Technology Sydney co-presented their paper “Panel Differences: understanding research analyses implications of people who belong to multiple on-line panels on multi-panelists” and identified a real and increasing problem and also offered a robust solution for addressing it.

In a very real challenge to ‘get real’ to delegates, Dr Jannie Hofmeyr’s (Synovate South Africa) paper “Getting Real about Prediction in Marketing Research” demonstrated a number of flaws in the predictive performance of customer satisfaction, purchase intention and advertising recall.

Ken Roberts, Managing Principal at Forethought and Darren Stein, Consumer Market Research, SingTel Optus presented their inspiring paper “Marketing Led Organisations” on the market research reform journey at SingTel Optus since 2003.

Scott MacLean, Marketing Science Director at Research International, brought simplicity and high energy to his paper titled “SEM is dead, long live SEM”. Scott explained that for market research, Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) provides an opportunity to hypothesise models of market behaviour and to test or confirm these models statistically.
In a well-considered and lively paper “Public Consultations: real research or just a Jerry Springer show? Angela Southwell, General Manager of TNS Social Research Canberra, provided a contemporary perspective from key research buyers in the government sector on the emergence of public consultations in policy decision making and the challenges for social researchers.

Dr Jannie Hofmeyr wins People’s Choice Award

Dr Jannie Hofmeyr from Synovate in South Africa won the 2007 People’s Choice Award for his paper, titled “Getting real about prediction in marketing research”.

In the paper, Dr Hofmeyr began with a meta-analysis of the predictive performance of customer satisfaction, purchase intention, and advertising recall.

He demonstrated a number of flaws in these three areas and suggested two routes to improvement: first, through the development of better advertising diagnostics using a new measure of emotional engagement coupled to text mining tools; and second, through the development of a new measure of attitudinal equity based on the Zipf distribution.

Dr Hofmeyr concluded with a brief discussion about the conservatism of the market and social research industry and implored research professionals to make the effort to understand difficult metric systems and show a greater desire to be at the forefront of knowledge development.

George Camakaris Award for Best Paper by a Young Researcher

The Young Researcher Best Paper Award was inaugurated to encourage young researchers in the industry to develop and grow and to aspire to reach the heights attained by George Camakaris, founder of Quantum, during his career.

Adam Rowland and James Wunsch from Eureka Strategic Research paper titled “Don’t tell me my Views Count” won the George Camakaris Best Paper for a Young Research for their evaluation of the Society’s ‘Your Views Count’ initiative.

Their paper examined the tangible impact of the AMSRS and AMSRO public relations program to communicate the value of participation in research ‘Your Views Count’ messages on response rates using a quasi-experimental design in an online survey context. The study also explored the residual impact exposure to “Your Views Count messages and branding has when a respondent is reapproached to participate in a separate online survey within a short space of time.

Stage 1 of the on-line study was conducted using a sample of 16,000 randomly drawn from I-View’s “My View” consumer panel. The potential respondents were then split into two samples - a “Your Views Count” pool (group Y) and a ‘Standard Pool’ (Group N). In order to test the impact of Your Views Count message on response rates in an online survey environment, two very different survey invitations, introductory scripts and branding throughout the survey were employed to these two pools, i.e. Group Y and Group N.
At the conclusion of the survey, respondents were invited to opt-in to a separate telephone survey that was to be conducted in a ‘few weeks time’.

The telephone survey was positioned as a follow-up to the online survey completed. The introductory script did not include any Your Views Count messages.

Respondents who participated in the stage 1 online survey who did not opt-in to the follow-up telephone survey were invited to participate in a separate online survey (Stage 2). As with the first online survey, the second survey was either branded with the Your Views Count message or with standard messages and respondents pooled in Group Y or Group N.

The findings of this research on the impact of Your Views Count message on response rates found there were no statistical differences observed in relation to (i) stage 1 response rates achieved between Group Y and Group N, (ii) the proportion of respondents at stage 1 who agreed to be contacted to participate in the telephone survey, and (iii) the response rates achieved at stage 2 telephone survey amongst those that agreed to be contacted.

There was however, a statistically significance difference observed in relation to the response rates achieved in stage 2 online survey in those groups that had or had not been exposed to Your Views Count messages.

In summary the findings of this research provide some support the hypothesis that exposure to a minimal Your Views Count message affects respondent’s likelihood to participate in research. However, the relationship between receipt of the message and propensity to participate is not clear-cut.

In closing
In summary, the topic of The Changing Face of Research allowed delegates to reflect on how our research profession is changing by examining who we are, what we do, how people see us, how we are influenced and overall how to further inspire key stakeholders of business, government and society to the true value and contribution of social and market research.
The Australian Market & Social Research Society Ltd (AMSRS) is a not-for-profit professional membership organisation established to serve those practising or interested in market, economic and social research.

We have a national membership of over 2,000 researchers, marketing executives, market research managers and buyers, field managers, recruiters, interviewers, academics and students.

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Challenges for conducting internet based surveys – A reflection

Michael Milgate
C5C Group Pty. Ltd.

Abstract
Given the ubiquity of internet access in the business world, the question for researchers is no longer over whether or not internet surveys are viable, but rather over the comparative advantages and disadvantages of this modality. To address this question, we provide guidelines for researchers to help minimise the challenges while still reaping the benefits. We begin by first defining internet survey modalities and some of their benefits, and then focus on the associated sampling challenges and common ways that researchers can address them. To assist further researchers in using this survey modality, a comparison of some software packages that might be useful is presented, followed by a discussion of the lessons learned from our own use of internet surveys.

Introduction
The axiom “If you want to know what managers are thinking, you have got to ask them,” still holds true today, so management researchers are always looking for new and better ways to query managers. Until recently, mail questionnaires, field interviews, and telephone surveys were the only convenient techniques to collect survey information. However, the emergence of the internet, and the computer-mediated self-administered communication medium that it offers through email and web-based surveys, is changing all this.

Compared to other survey techniques, internet surveys offer the promise of faster data gathering, error-free data entry, and lower cost. In addition, because the internet obliterates time zones and geographic borders, surveying with it can prove very beneficial when the sample population is mobile or resides in multiple locations or countries. This technique may also be beneficial in surveying individuals who may not be willing to grant the time for personal or phone interviews, but who might respond to an email survey at their own convenience. Despite the upside, this technique poses some challenges for the researcher, including sampling issues related to how representative the sample is, sample frame, and sampling control, and with non-sampling errors, such as non-response and measurement. These challenges, if not adequately addressed, can undermine the validity and reliability of the inferences about the researcher’s focal population. The goal of this paper is to provide guidelines for reaping the benefits of internet surveys by minimising their challenges. We begin by defining internet surveys modalities and some of their benefits, and then we focus on the associated sampling challenges followed by a discussion on how researchers can address them. To assist researchers in using this survey modality, we present a comparison of some software packages that might be useful, followed by a discussion of the lessons I have learned from our own use of internet surveys.

Survey Modalities and Benefits
Fundamentally, the two internet surveying modalities available, that is, email and web-based surveys, differ in the manner in which respondents are identified and contacted. The email survey involves a computerised self-administered questionnaire, in which the researcher sends and the respondents receive, complete, and return it through email systems (Simsek and Veiga, 2000). The researcher might either send an email message with the survey as part of the message text, or send an email message with the survey as an attachment, that the respondent must open in order to respond. Alternatively, the researcher might embed a URL message
in the email’s text so that the recipient is simply directed to click on this hypertext link, which then evokes their web browser, presenting them with a web-based survey.

The web-based survey, which currently receives the most attention from researchers, involves a computerised, self-administered questionnaire in which the researcher posts the survey on a world wide web site where individuals access and complete the questionnaire by using compatible web browsers (Simsek and Veiga, 2001). Respondents can be diverted to the web site through links to other web pages or invited to the web site through various means such as postal notification or email, with URL embedded links.

Both survey modalities offer the researcher cost, data-collection speed, and media richness benefits over the conventional survey techniques. The primary costs of internet surveys include assembling and obtaining sampling frames, creating or buying software and supporting databases, and accessing the internet. No paper is required and a direct transfer from the form to the analysis software simplifies data analysis. Furthermore, while the costs of the other techniques tend to be proportional to the size of the sample, the cost associated with adding additional respondents in internet surveys is low to none. Any incremental cost will be limited to the cost of additional storage space allotted for returns, bandwidth load, and server capacity.

Regarding data-collection speed, internet surveys offer the possibility of very rapid surveying, in that it can be sent as easily to a thousand people as it can to one, and all potential respondents can immediately receive the questionnaire regardless of their location. This can be especially valuable at the pilot-testing stage of survey development, where pilot testing and instrument clarification is needed before the final survey can be launched. Internet surveys also save all the time that the conventional surveys require for photocopying questionnaires, stuffing envelopes, addressing outgoing mail, and sending follow-up questionnaires.

Regarding media richness, both internet survey modalities are media lean, in that they involve lower transmission of non-verbal cues, of varied language, of timely feedback, and of personalisation, compared to other surveying techniques. On the other hand, they allow for the transmission of many different types of cues, such as text, sound, graphics, and live interaction and personal contact (for example, via email), which adds some richness.

Media richness can be added by using a common gateway interface script, which allows for adaptive questioning in which questions that are asked of a respondent depend upon his or her answers to previous questions. Richness can be added by adapting the internet surveys to include timely feedback displays that are specifically tailored to the content of responses supplied by the user. For example, a web-based survey can be designed so that as the survey proceeds, the questions presented are dependent upon the respondent’s previous responses, a technique known as “item branching.” Finally, richness can be added by adapting the internet surveys to ensure that respondents answer all questions that are necessary before completing other aspects of the survey. As we will discuss, the added richness afforded by internet survey modalities can be particularly important in affecting response quality and quantity.

Sampling and non-sampling challenges
Researchers have noted that the method and medium in which a researcher gathers data may affect the quantity and quality of data gathered (for example, Babbie, 1998). A number of studies have examined the advantages and disadvantages of various data-collection methods including personal interviews, telephone interviews, mail surveys, and electronic mail surveys: however, few studies have
examined surveys administered on the world wide web.

Of the various sampling issues faced by researchers to ensure the validity and reliability of the inferences about a target population, the three that are the most challenging to internet surveys have to do with representativeness, frame, and control. Representativeness has to do with the extent to which the sample represents the population from which it was drawn. This may prove difficult to achieve using internet surveys for some population, particularly those where a large percentage of its members do not use the internet, or dislike the experience of participating in electronic surveys for reasons that might be systematically tied to background, education, gender, and the like. On the other hand, representativeness becomes much less of an issue if the focal population is computer-literate and computer-willing, or when a selection bias is appropriate. For example, a researcher might want to survey opinions related to a new software program, and therefore want responses only from that subset of the population who has an informed opinion.

Sampling frame poses another challenge to internet surveys. Few master directories exist that lists individuals, and their email addresses, from a particular population that has access to the internet, and the few that do exist, like commercially available lists, may be seriously flawed. For example, they may include only a small percentage of all internet users because of how they are constructed, and those on the list may have been included for reasons other than their willingness to participate in unsolicited internet surveys, or may be listed with out-of-date email addresses. While these flaws can often be documented using traditional survey techniques like telephone and mail surveys for the purpose of determining response rates, they are virtually impossible to document using internet surveys.

Finally, internet surveys generally suffer from a lack of adequate sampling control. Unlike the more traditional survey techniques, it is difficult to approximate the size of the respondent pool in comparison to the size of the population and the sampling pool using internet surveys, and thus problematic to generalise research findings beyond those responding to the survey. Unlike the more traditional survey techniques, web-based surveys are particularly vulnerable to problems stemming from false identities. Anyone outside the target population can respond to the survey and the same individual can submit multiple responses without being detected. Indeed, stories abound about individuals misrepresenting such demographic characteristics as age, gender, level of education, and so forth. However, email based surveys are less prone to such fraud because the researcher sends the survey to individuals identified a priori, thereby offering greater sampling control.

In addition to the above-mentioned three forms of sampling errors, internet survey techniques are also vulnerable to one form of non-sampling error having to do with non-response, but not the form having to do with measurement. Regarding non-response errors, a high number of non-responses raise the question of whether those who responded to the survey are different from those who did not. If non-responses are not randomly distributed, even in the absence of sampling bias, then the data generated by the survey will be biased and the inferences drawn from the data will be of uncertain validity, because non-responses compromised the assumption of sample randomisation. Even randomly distributed non-responses can engender problems, if they reduce what might have been an adequate sample for hypothesis testing, in terms of size and therefore statistical power, to an inadequate one. What makes the non-response error problem particularly nettlesome with internet surveys is that the researcher lacks an adequate sampling frame and controls to calculate non-response rates and any systematic
patterns that might reside in those rates. And, without those calculations, it is not possible to estimate whether or not the data suffer from a non-response bias.

Measurement error, the other form of non-sampling error, is represented by the deviation between the “true” and the observed responses. Broadly speaking, there are three sources of measurement error due to either the survey instrument, the data-collection technique, or the respondent. Internet-based surveys should not differ from other surveying techniques in terms of error due to the instrument, as the same steps are required to develop a reliable and valid scale. Moreover, studies that compare internet survey techniques with traditional survey methods generally find no differences in terms of data-collection techniques. Some studies, however, find that data from internet-based surveys are less vulnerable to respondent-based errors; that is, the responses generated from internet-based surveys tend to be more reliable. Researchers speculate that this might be because when the internet gives the respondent the illusion of greater privacy, and therefore freedom to express their true thoughts and opinions without fear of being personally judged, or because respondents lose their inhibitions because of the techniques novelty (Simsek and Veiga, 2001).

Addressing sampling challenges

The sampling issue about representativeness (the sample may not represent, or cover the population from which it is drawn) can be managed, in part, by using email and web-based survey modalities in combination with each other. This can allow experimentation with much more diverse population, also with population having nearly universal coverage in terms of having email addresses. It is possible to collect survey information through an email-based survey, while posting the same survey on a bulletin board to collect information from group members who have not completed the survey. The problem of representativeness can also be managed by using an internet survey technique in combination with almost any other data collection technique, including telephone interviews, personal interviews, and postal surveys. For example, because an email survey is inexpensive and fast, a researcher might begin with an email survey to determine the willingness of respondents to complete a more comprehensive internet survey, postal survey, and so forth. Alternatively, the researcher could simply use an email survey for those respondents who list their email addresses and use a postal survey for those without.

After the data are collected through this combination strategy, the researcher can then compare the validity of the data to those collected via traditional surveying methods. If the results are comparable then the argument could be made that the internet sample is also representative of the general population. Moreover, when such comparable data are available, the researcher can apply post-stratification weights to the internet data such that, for example, the number of individuals in each age, gender, and education cohort would be the same as in the population.

With regard to sampling frame challenges (directories that list individuals from a particular population), a few options exist that allow the researcher to construct a reasonable proxy frame. For example, the researcher might cull sampling frames by distributing solicitations through Listserv, discussion groups, and search engine banners. Alternatively, the researcher might cull public directories that include email addresses and are kept online by some organisations such as Who Where and BigFoot. Academic staff and trade association directories are, in particular, beneficial for organisational scholars because a growing number are online in publicly accessible formats. For surveys that involve employees of a single organisation, we suggest first using traditional sampling frames, such as staff records,
and then invite potential respondents to complete the survey. By doing so, the researcher can calculate a reasonable accurate estimate, which is perhaps the most widely refereed indicator of generalisability of survey data.

To address non-sampling errors that have to do with non-response errors and response rates, many of the techniques that have proven to be effective at improving response rates with traditional survey techniques can be adapted with minor modification to internet survey techniques to reduce nonresponse errors. These techniques include monetary offerings, lottery tickets, and the possibility of winning a prize, as well as contributions to charity, offering of survey results, an appealing and/or personalised cover letter, and so forth. What researchers say to potential respondents in the survey’s introductory remarks to establish legitimacy about themselves and their research project may be particularly important in affecting response rates.

Response rates can also be improved by first notifying sample members about the incoming questionnaire through an email, or postal prior notification. Following survey convention, the prior-notification should not only seek permission, but include: a social utility appeal that emphasises the worthiness of the survey; an egoistic appeal that stresses the respondent’s place and importance in completing the survey; and an appeal to help the researcher in completing an important project. It should also include the sponsor of the survey, a person(s) to contact for questions, expected date of the survey, and a statement indicating the strict confidentiality of the respondent’s response. When possible, the researcher should mention some possible steps that will be taken toward ensuring anonymity and confidentiality. For example, the researcher may state that screen headers will be deleted once the responses are received, offer some options for responding anonymously such as placing the questionnaire on a web site, or mention the possibility that the respondent could send the completed questionnaire through regular mail.

Response rates can be improved by follow-up mailings. Borrowing from research about postal surveys, the underlying logic argument is that properly timed follow-up mailings provide additional stimuli for responding. And, because the cost of resending an internet survey is trivial, other than time, follow-up mailings should include a copy of the survey as well. Response rates can be improved by associating the study with a sponsor (an individual or institution) that is widely perceived by the focal population as being trustworthy, credible, and of high status. Response rates can be improved by offering respondents incentives as compensation for donating some of their time. This is made more possible with the advent of virtual gift-certificates that can be redeemed at web-shopping cites. And finally, questionnaire layout and design issues should be taken into account. Internet surveys in general should be accompanied by very clear and simple instructions such as how to reply, which will neither consume much of the respondents’ time nor require extensive cognitive adjustments. In particular, “extra” features that would minimise questionnaire completion time and maximise respondent convenience should be pursued, like scrolling, jump screen, quitting, no automatic next, no keyboard responses, help screens, and a progress thermometer indicating completed percentage of the questionnaire. Finally, cookies should not be used in web surveys. Many users may simply refuse to access the survey because their browsers will warn them that a cookie is being sent to their computer.

The issue of anonymity and security is particularly important in the internet environment, in which actors have potential access to one another’s personal information. The researcher should therefore take measures to alleviate respondents’ concerns, like using the Usenet news
groups alt.security.pgp and alt.privacy.anon-server, and directing respondents to alternative web sites like Anonymizer.com. There the respondent can browse the web or send email behind a firewall that the company says will render the user completely untraceable. Researchers should also set up a re-mailer to receive incoming electronic mail, strip the messages of the sender’s identifying information and forward them anonymously to recipients, whether to a single electronic mail box, or to thousands of addressees, or often through a series of other re-mailers. Because these messages are re-mailed in a random sequence, different from the order in which they arrive, people who may be monitoring the re-mailers cannot match the outgoing messages with the incoming messages to identify, who sent which message. Furthermore, the re-mailer itself does not store messages but serves as a channel for message transmission. That said, there is no full-proof way of guaranteeing complete data security and anonymity with internet surveys, and many respondents know this. Thus, making the promise of complete anonymity might raise serious doubts about the credibility of the researcher.

Complete confidentiality of responses is not possible with internet surveys. For example, a web survey placed on an organisation’s web page can be accessed by anyone and even devices such as passwords and encryption may be of little use in assuring total confidentiality. A further complicating matter is the fact that many internet users are likely to have established beliefs that internet surveys lack confidentiality because of the popular media coverage that often calls attention to the lack of privacy on the internet. This concern is undoubtedly higher with email surveys than they are with web-based surveys. When an email is used to send the survey to the respondent’s personal email account, concerns over confidentiality such as, “if they know my email address, they also know me and how I am responding,” are likely to be high. In contrast, when respondents complete a web-based survey that resides in a web page, or downloads, and returns the survey via postal services, they might be less worried about confidentiality because of greater anonymity. Regardless, any strategy taken to alleviate potential respondents’ perceptions about confidentiality with internet surveys will likely be worthwhile.

Available Software Packages
An important aspect of the decision for using internet surveys involves a review of the options provided by various survey software packages. There are many packages on the market, and they tend to widely differ in terms of the types of features that they offer. To help researcher evaluate these various survey software packages, we identify in Table 1 a set of criteria that a strategy researcher planning an internet survey could use. These criteria include design capabilities, ease of implementation, ability to analyse data and/or transfer it to alternative data bases like SPSS, technical resources and support, and price. For each evaluative criterion, my table indicates a set of issues that the researcher might consider. While my list of evaluation criteria is not exhaustive, it should help researchers evaluate different packages and decide which best fits their needs. As an aside, when selecting software, a multiple-criteria approach may prove useful. Finally, as a starting point, we provide a list of some of the most common software packages, but do not evaluate them because they are frequently updated, and each researcher needs to assess them in the context of their project.

Some lessons learned
Up to this point, we have addressed the benefits and challenges of internet surveys, and have tried to provide some general suggestions for coping with these challenges. In order to provide more concrete guidance, we now share some lessons learned from using such surveys to collect strategy and entrepreneurship
<table>
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| Survey design Capabilities | Design surveys with no prior technical IT knowledge – no coding required  
Use sample questions/sample techniques  
Self-directed survey design  
Self-directed survey launch  
Automatic response validation to keep data clean  
Customisation of surveys for different respondents (skip logic feature)  
Make sure respondents complete the survey  
Multiple choice (dropdown list, checkbox)  
Provide open-ended questions  
Range type questions  
One-scale, two questions  
Force respondents to answer questions  
Multiple language capabilities  
Return to finish survey capabilities  
Design surveys with corporate look and feel logo  
Integrated with client relationship management system  
Respondents management/specification of survey respondents |
| Technological Capabilities | Software compatibility system requirements  
Additional hardware requirements  
Externally hosted  
Internally hosted  
Technical support availability (24 hours 7 days a week)  
Online support  
Toll-free telephone support |
| Survey Implementation | Fast implementation  
Send survey invitation through emails  
Weblink as survey invitation to survey web pages  
Survey pop-up in small frames within websites  
Control duration of survey |
| Survey monitoring/Analysing/reporting | Monitor response in real time  
Export data to statistical software  
Show basic statistical information  
Perform statistical analysis  
Basic graphic analysis (bar graphs, pie charts, histograms etc) |
| Survey price | Per-response price  
Price of the software  
Annual cost/license fee  
Per user |
| Software packages | Quask www.quask.com  
Inquisite www.inquisite.com  
HostedSurvey www.hostedsurvey.com  
EZSurvey www.raosoft.com/products/ezsurvey/index.html  
Halogen www.halogensoftware.com  
SurveyTracker www.supersurvey.com  
Websurveyor www.websurveyor.com  
SurveyConnect www.surveyconnect.com  
FreeOnlineSurvey www.freeonlinesurvey.com |
data from CEOs in small-to-medium size organisations. In Figure 1 I outline the major steps that we undertook in collecting our data, and then briefly explain what I learned with each step. We emphasise that internet surveying, like any other mode of surveying, should first be thought of as a process.

Figure 1 Internet-based surveying as a process

Step 1: The objective or purpose of the survey
Step 2: Identify and understand target population and sample
Step 3: Identify appropriate Internet surveying method
Step 4: Design the questionnaire and determine survey software
Step 5: Soliciting participation in the survey and test survey
Step 6: Execute the survey, follow-ups and reminders
Step 7: Survey phased out and data transfer to software for analysis

First, we discovered that the development of a successful web-based survey required a considerable time investment up front. That is, it took more time than anticipated selecting a software package that best fit our research needs, programming the questionnaire, pilot testing the draft survey, and then modifying the survey based on results from pilot testing.

We began the task by clarifying the focus of the research and understanding the project’s target population and sample to determine the appropriate surveying method. Then using a software package called Survey Select, we converted our standard paper-and-pencil questionnaire into an electronic form compatible with web site capabilities. Several flaws in this first effort were particularly glaring. For example, we discovered that the survey package was not particularly flexible in generating alternative response formats such as a Likert scale or a semantic differential scale.

We discovered that long surveys are particularly not suited for the web, because the longer the survey, the longer it takes to load on a participant’s computer and the greater the likelihood of non-response. Given the feedback, we received during the pilot test, we discovered that this problem could be particularly acute, especially when respondents are using relatively slow modems. Therefore, before we conducted the final survey, we revisited the already carefully selected survey items and eliminated those that we deemed non-essential to my focal constructs. We sought to minimise the time that respondents would have to access the survey, by dividing the survey into multiple pieces, or “web-pages.” By doing this, we reduced half of the down load time.

We struggled with the decision as to whether or not we should use an identifier to link the survey to assure the validity of responses. If a web site is open to all it is not possible to ascertain if survey respondents come from the focal population. To control “hacking” and ensure response validity we first sent emails to communicate the location of the survey to the target population.

Like any surveying situation, achieving a respectable response rate on a web survey is a challenge. Unlike a paper-and-pencil survey, you have to encourage respondents to come to your web site rather than simply responding to what is already in front of them. And even if the population for the study is assumed to have web access, you still need to have them initiate contact with the web page in order to complete the survey. To this end, we employed different approaches to get participants to fill out the web-based evaluation forms, including email communication, using key contact people to communicate with potential respondents, an offer of survey results, and multiple follow-ups. In this particular case, we initially sent the survey, along with an emailed cover letter from the client’s CEO to the CEOs of 5,957 manufacturing and service sector organisations with between 20 and 500
employees in North America. The client is the largest small- to medium-sized (SMEs) business lobbying group in North America and is representative of the population of SMEs in the U.S. (Dunkelberg and Scott, 1985). After three follow-ups, we received 632 responses for a response rate of 11%, “consistent with the 10-12% rate typical for mailed surveys to top executives” (Hambrick, Geletkanycz and Fredrickson, 1993:407). Moreover, we concluded that this response rate was adequate, given that the web-based survey design method, still novel to some CEOs, might have suppressed response rates below those ordinarily obtained from mailed surveys. We excluded six organisations with incomplete responses, 74 organisations who reported less than 20 employees and another 10 organisations that reported more than 500 employees. The final sample consisted of 495 organisations.

We learned some “soft” lessons. The literature suggests that a “digital divide” separates those who are and are not comfortable with internet technology, and demographic variables such as race and age might be related to this problem. While we had anticipated some potential discomfort among some of the CEOs in our sampling frame, we found no evidence of a response bias in our sample, which we believe reflected a high degree of sophistication among CEOs irrespective of their age or company size.

We discovered that the ease of use of distributing electronic surveys allows the researcher to efficiently deploy multiple questionnaires and frequent requests for participation, almost as an afterthought. With paper questionnaires, the barriers of printing and distribution in part hold the number of different surveys dispersed in check. With electronic surveys, third and fourth “mailings” may become the expected norm although the long-term influences of this on internet survey response rate will need to be carefully studied and considered. In Table 2, we present an integrated set of guidelines for a researcher planning an internet survey, which are based on previously outlined steps in Figure 1.

**Table 2: Some guidelines for designing and implementing internet-based surveys**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Steps</th>
<th>Guidelines</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The objective or purpose of the survey</td>
<td>Specify the population of interest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Delineate the type of data to be collected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Determine the desired precision of the results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Consider alternative data-collection methods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify and understand target population and sample</td>
<td>Consider the viability and feasibility of internet survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Specify the method of sample selection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Consider the likely reaction of target population to alternative surveying modalities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify appropriate internet surveying method</td>
<td>Ensure representativeness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Consider potential sample size</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Evaluate a single or combination of internet surveying modalities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design the questionnaire and determine survey software</td>
<td>Consider alternative survey formats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Screen survey questions before using</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pre-test and revise the survey instrument</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soliciting participation in the survey and test survey</td>
<td>Pre-notify that the survey has phased in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Consider the most effective invitation format and method</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Execute the survey, follow-ups and reminders</td>
<td>Evaluate alternative response inducement techniques</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Consider mode and method of follow-up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Use post-delivery reminder and thank-you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survey phased out and data transfer for analysis</td>
<td>Assess the survey software data transferring capability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Assess the quality and quantity of the transferred data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ensure variables are being transferred correctly</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Although my study is encouraging, we are not suggesting that internet surveys are always the best method for collecting strategy data. Clearly, internet surveying makes the most sense when a large portion of the target population possesses adequate computer skills and has access to the internet. The project suggests that it takes time and money to move a survey online. This phase of the process is initially more expensive and time consuming than creating a paper-based survey. The expense may not be worthwhile for single administration questionnaires that are prevalent in management research. Management researchers that frequently survey various types of surveys will probably benefit from investments in internet survey technology whereas those that rarely conduct surveys will see smaller returns on their investments in survey software and related technologies.

Conclusions and future research directions
Before Rumelt’s (1974) landmark book, “Strategy, structure and performance,” management research was primarily case-based. With the dissertations about strategic groups by Hatten (1974) and Patton (1976) and about competitive advantage by Porter (1980) the field took on a more economic bent, based primarily on large bases of secondary data like that were readily available on the Compustat data base. The trend toward the use of secondary data accelerated in the 1980s and 1990s, with others, Hambrick, who helped to introduce the PIMS database to the field in the early 1980s, and Lubatkin (1983) who introduced stock market pricing data and the CRSP data tapes. While the field continues to rely on secondary data, more studies are recognising the value of primary data and survey techniques to gather that data.

Indeed, data collected using surveys has contributed much to our field’s recent developments. With few exceptions, most of this research has been conducted using self-administered, paper-and-pencil questionnaires distributed by mail. In this paper we reasoned why internet self-administered surveys offer researchers not only exciting new possibilities for data collection, but also challenges. Specifically, we highlighted challenges associated with using email and web-based surveying technique. We then suggested guidelines to help researchers improve the validity and reliability of the inferences that they draw from data about a focal population that was drawn from either of these two survey modalities. Finally, we presented several suggestions and guidelines, based on experience from one of my own projects, for researchers who may be interested in collecting data using internet surveys.

Some methodological issues about internet surveys remain unresolved. For example, there is not much theoretical guidance to explain why some people participate as respondents in an internet survey while others do not. Many empirical studies have been conducted on response-inducement techniques and other methodological artifacts that affect response to surveys like preliminary notification, the foot-in-the-door technique, follow-ups, questionnaire format and length, survey source or sponsorship, nature of return envelopes, type of postage, personalisation, cover letters, anonymity, deadline date, and premiums and rewards. However, there are no such studies that we are aware of that do the same for internet surveys. There is no clear guidance for better ensuring accurate and truthful reporting of data. Clearly, the slow development of a generally accepted theory about internet survey design hinders the full potential of internet surveys. However, a number of theories have been suggested as being applicable to the survey response decisions in general (Dillman, 1978; 2000; 2007; Yammarino, Skinner and Childers, 1991). The three most cited theories that are applicable to marketing research are exchange (Dillman, 1978 2000; 2007), cognitive dissonance (Furse and Stewart,
1984), and self-perception (Tybout and Yakch, 1980). In addition, Albaum (1987) has suggested that a theory of commitment or involvement might fill the gap in theory development and use by marketing researchers. Clearly, future research is needed that builds and examines conceptual models based on these theories to generate a more complete understanding of why some people respond, whereas others do not, and among respondents, why the quality of data varies.

With these methodological issues in mind, we nevertheless believe that email and web-based surveys offer a promising new and efficient means for strategy researchers to query managers, and this should only improve with time. As with any evolving data-collection tool, however, the use of various internet survey modalities must be carefully examined and should be seen as an additional supporting methodology rather than as an alternative to traditional data collection approaches. Wherever internet surveys are used, sample representativeness and response rates are critical in evaluating the value of internet surveys for strategy research. While such issues may become less of a problem in the future, the challenge for strategy researchers is to conduct their own research on the coverage, nonresponse, and measurement error properties of the various internet-based survey modalities. Only by fully understanding both the benefits and the drawbacks can the researchers fully exploit the potential of web surveys. Nevertheless, these modalities offer exciting new opportunities for data collection, which should serve strategy research well in the future.
References


The impact of telemarketing on market and social research: New Australian evidence about the nature of the problem

Szymon Duniec and Danica Ralston
ORIMA Research

Introduction
Public concern over the increase in the incidence of unsolicited telephone sales calls, or telemarketing, has been growing in Australia in recent years. This concern has been reflected in widespread negative coverage of the impact of telemarketing in the media and in pressure on the Australian Government to take action to restrict telemarketing.

The Australian Government has responded to this issue via the Do Not Call Register Act 2006 (Cth), which came into effect on 30 June 2006. Pursuant to this Act, the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) is setting up a Do Not Call Register to protect individuals from unsolicited telemarketing phone calls. The Register will allow people to opt out of receiving such calls. Telemarketers will be prohibited from contacting anyone on the Do Not Call Register. If they breach this requirement, a range of penalties will apply. ACMA aims to have the Register operational in 2007.

Our industry has been active in seeking to differentiate market and social research from telemarketing and in seeking to minimise the impact on the industry of government regulation in this area. These efforts have resulted in a significant measure of success, with legitimate market and social research activities being exempted from the prohibition on contacting people on the Do Not Call Register.

In addition to the potential for adverse regulatory impacts on our operating environment, the increasing incidence of telemarketing has been a concern in the Australian research industry due to a widespread belief that it has been a significant factor underlying a decline in survey response rates.

After a review of previous research in this area in Australia and overseas, this paper presents new evidence on the impact of telemarketing on Australian households’ attitudes towards, and willingness to participate in, market and social research activities. It also presents some indicative data on the potential effectiveness of a number of strategies that could be used by market and social researchers to mitigate this impact.

Evidence presented in the paper is based on primary research conducted via two telephone surveys of residential households in the Australian Capital Territory in 2003 and 2006.

Previous Research
Over the past two decades, there has been a trend decline in market and social research survey response rates among households in Australia and other OECD countries (Bednall and Shaw, 2003; Council for Marketing and Opinion Research, 2003; de Leeuw and de Heer, 2002; Groves and Couper, 1998). Many research practitioners and academics have suggested that the increasing incidence of telemarketing activities in these countries may be one of the key factors behind the decrease in telephone survey response rates.

The hypothesised influence of telemarketing on telephone survey participation...
is commonly couched in the following terms (Remington, 1992): potential survey respondents have a limited reservoir of goodwill to expend on any intrusive and unsolicited attempts to engage their attention; telemarketing contacts deplete this reservoir and hence reduce willingness to participate in research. In practice, it is argued that this impact manifests itself in an increase in both survey refusal rates and contact rates (Schofer, 2002). The latter effect is considered to occur as a result of households adopting defensive measures against unsolicited calls, such as screening calls by using caller identification services and answering machines.

Despite a widespread belief among industry practitioners and observers that telemarketing has significantly contributed to declining telephone survey response rates, there is little empirical evidence on the extent of the impact.

A number of studies have focused on the incidence of telephone-based ‘sugging’ (selling under the guise of research). Brennan (1991, 1992), Council for Marketing and Opinion Research (2001, 2003) and Remington (1992) reported significant rates of sugging in New Zealand and the United States and argued that this was having an effect on people’s willingness to participate in telephone surveys. However, these studies did not provide direct evidence that sugging affected response rates.

Brennan, Benson and Kearns (2005) found that including an assurance that a telephone survey was not an attempt to sell something in the telephone interview introduction did not have a significant effect on people’s willingness to participate in the survey. This finding provides weak evidence against the hypothesis that sugging reduces response rates.

MacElroy, Erickson, Monroe, Victoria and Bove (2001) found that people who tended to believe that there was no difference between telemarketing and telephone surveys were less likely to participate in a telephone survey than those who believed there was a difference.

New Australian Evidence on the Nature of the Impact

In November 2003, a set of questions concerning the impact of telemarketing on market and social research was included in the ORIMA Research ACT Omnibus Survey (n=360). The same set of questions was included in the May 2006 ORIMA Research ACT Omnibus Survey (n=350). Both surveys involved a stratified random sample of residential households in Canberra.

Comparing the results from these two surveys enables us to identify the extent to which the impact of telemarketing has changed in the past 2 1/2 years.

Awareness of the difference between telemarketing and market research

In 2003, over one-third (34%) of respondents considered that there was no difference between telemarketing and market research (see Figure 1). In 2006, the percentage of respondents holding this view was only 14%. This decline represents a very positive outcome for the research industry and indicates that the investments that the industry has been making in recent years in informing the general public about the role and value of market research have yielded real gains. The public debate around the introduction of the Do Not Call Register is another factor that may have contributed to this outcome by raising awareness of the nature of telemarketing and unsolicited telephone calls more generally.

How do people define this difference?

In both 2003 and 2006 people who stated there was a difference between telemarketing and market research generally characterised this difference as follows: telemarketing is the activity of cold selling products and services, while market research involves gathering information
without any direct selling objective. This is illustrated by the following comments:

“Telemarketing is flogging products they are interested in. By flogging I mean selling. Market research is a more general enquiry about marketing tactics and what can flow from them.”

“With telemarketing they try to sell you something. Market research gathers information.”

“Telemarketing, isn’t it selling? And market research is just doing research on what products people use and how they use their time or what they spend their money on, all that sort of thing. And telemarketing is trying to sell you something.”

“Market research, they are trying to find out what your perceptions are, and telemarketing, they are trying to sell you something or donate to a charity.”

Interestingly, 10% of respondents to the 2006 survey (up from 1% in the 2003 survey) highlighted the broader social benefits of research activity in their response on the differences between telemarketing and market research. Some typical comments follow:

“I think market research can be useful to the community as a whole. Telemarketing is only of benefit to people selling the product.”

“To sell something is telemarketing - market research is much more beneficial.”

“One I can handle and the other I cannot. I do not like telemarketing. Market research I assume is going to do some good.”

Incidence of market research telephone calls

The reported incidence of market research telephone calls received by households has remained relatively steady between 2003 and 2006 (see Figure 2). In contrast, the reported incidence of telemarketing calls received by households has increased significantly (see Figure 3).
Figure 2: Reported incidence of market research telephone calls: number of calls received over past three months (n=360, 2003; n=350, 2006)

Figure 3: Reported incidence of telemarketing calls: number of calls received over past three months (n=360, 2003; n=350, 2006)
Overall perceptions of experience with telephone research

Figure 4 illustrates a significant improvement in the past 3 years in ACT households’ ratings of their overall experience with telephone calls for surveys or research. In 2006, over two-thirds (68%) of respondents who had been involved in telephone surveys in the past 3 months, reported that their experiences had been positive, overall. This represents an increase of 25 percentage points from the comparable 2003 result (43%).

The main reasons for positive overall ratings nominated by respondents across both surveys included:

- the information gathered would be useful to the community
  - reported by 43% of respondents who rated the calls positively in 2006 – up from 17% in 2003;

- the interviewers were professional/polite
  - reported by 35% of respondents who rated the calls positively in 2006 - down from 59% in 2003;

- the topics were interesting
  - reported by 15% of respondents who rated the calls positively in 2006 – down from 11% in 2003; and

- the interviewers did not try to sell anything
  - reported by 7% of respondents who rated the calls positively in 2006 - down from 13% in 2003.

Across both surveys, the main reasons reported by respondents who had negative experiences with telephone calls for surveys or research (18% in 2006, down from 30% in 2003) were as follows:

- calls were intrusive/made at inconvenient times
  - reported by 54% of respondents who rated the calls negatively in 2006 - up from 49% in 2003;

- interview time was too long
  - reported by 25% of respondents who rated the calls negatively in 2006 - up from 13% in 2003;

- calls were irritating
  - 10% in 2006, up from 7% in 2003;

Figure 4: Overall, what have your experiences with telephone calls for surveys or research been like? 
(Base: Respondents involved in telephone surveys in past 3 months)
Figure 5: Overall, what have your experiences with telemarketing calls been like? 
(Base: Respondents involved in telephone surveys in past 3 months)

Figure 6: Have you ever received any phone calls from a company claiming to be conducting market research who have actually tried to sell you a product or service?
covered survey topics that were irrelevant or uninteresting
- 6% in 2006, down from 8% in 2003; and

were designed only to make profit for companies
- 6% in 2006, up from 3% in 2003.

Other reasons for negative ratings stated by respondents in 2003, but not in 2006 included:

the company/interviewer was untrustworthy or it was unclear what the information was being used for (8% of respondents who provided negative overall ratings in 2003);

the respondent was not interested in participating in market research (8%);

the interviewer was rude and/or pushy (5%).

**Overall perceptions of experience with telemarketing**

Figure 5 illustrates a significant deterioration in the past 3 years in ACT households’ ratings of their overall experience with telemarketing calls. In 2006, a very large majority (93%) of respondents who had received at least one telemarketing call in the past 3 months reported that their experiences with telemarketing had been negative, overall. In 2003, around two-thirds (65%) of such respondents indicated that their experiences with telemarketing had been negative, overall.

The main reasons provided by respondents who reported negative overall experiences with telemarketing across both surveys were as follows:

- telemarketing was intrusive/irritating/called at inappropriate times;
  - reported by 50% of respondents who rated the calls negatively in 2006 - up from 46% in 2003;

- callers were too aggressive/persistent/rude/manipulative
  - reported by 39% of respondents who rated the calls negatively in 2006 - up from 24% in 2003;

- general preference not to buy goods and services over the phone
  - 24% in 2006, down from 34% in 2003;

- did not like the fact that calls were made from outsourced/overseas call centres
  - 17% in 2006, up from 1% in 2003;

- telemarketers were selling products respondent was not interested in
  - 17% in both 2006 and 2003.

Across both surveys, the main reason underlying positive overall ratings of telemarketing experiences was that the callers were polite, friendly and not ‘pushy’ (nominated by 93% of respondents who provided positive overall ratings in 2003; 80% in 2006).

**Incidence of sugging (selling under the guise of research)**

The research identified a significant exposure to sugging among households in the ACT in both 2003 and 2006. Around 3 out of every 10 respondents in both 2006 (29%) and 2003 (28%) stated they had received (at some point in the past) a call from a company claiming to be conducting market research who actually tried to sell them a product or service (Figure 6).

Table 1 shows that a large majority of respondents in both 2003 and 2006 who indicated that they had experienced sugging, had received at least one such call in the 12 months leading up to the survey. There were only minor differences in the frequency distribution of reported contact between 2003 and 2006.
Table 1: Reported incidence of telemarketing calls disguised as research: How many times has that happened to you in the last 12 months? (Base: respondents who had ever received a call from a company claiming to be conducting research that tried to sell product/service)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2003 (n=102)</th>
<th>2006 (n=103)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>zero</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-3</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-10</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-20</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21+</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsure</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Regression Analysis – Key Outputs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Unstandardised Coefficients</th>
<th>Standardised Coefficients</th>
<th>t-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>5.039</td>
<td>.561</td>
<td>8.984</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experiences with telemarketing calls</td>
<td>-.309</td>
<td>-.213</td>
<td>-3.781</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experiences with telephone surveys</td>
<td>-.353</td>
<td>-.280</td>
<td>-5.073</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>.273</td>
<td>.208</td>
<td>3.698</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

R Squared = .151; Adjusted R Squared = .142

Figure 7: To what extent do you agree with the following statement: “Telemarketing has reduced my willingness to participate in telephone surveys”
Impact of telemarketing on willingness to participate in research

Figure 7 shows the majority of respondents in both the 2003 and 2006 surveys reported that telemarketing had reduced their willingness to take part in telephone research. The results indicate that this adverse impact has intensified in the past 3 years, with the percentage of respondents who agreed that telemarketing had reduced their willingness to participate rising 6 percentage points, from 56% in 2003 to 62% in 2006.

Moreover, the increase has been concentrated at the top-end of the agreement intensity scale – with 38% of 2006 respondents strongly agreeing (selecting the highest point on the seven-point scale running from ‘Strongly Agree’ to ‘Strongly Disagree’); compared with 31% of 2003 respondents.

Regression analysis was performed to test the relationship between responses to the question addressed in Figure 7 and the following variables: overall rating of experiences with telemarketing calls; overall rating of experiences with telephone surveys; number of telemarketing calls received in the past 3 months; number of telephone survey calls received in the past 3 months; number of sugging calls received in the past 12 months; age; household income; and gender. The key outputs of the analysis are presented in Table 2.

Three of the tested variables were found to have a significant relationship with the dependent variable: overall ratings of experience with telemarketing, overall experience with telephone surveys and age. The more negative their overall experience with telephone surveys and/or telemarketing had been, the more inclined the respondent was to report a reduced willingness to participate in telephone surveys. Controlling for both of these factors, younger people were more inclined to agree that telemarketing had reduced their willingness to participate in telephone surveys than older people.

Managing the Impact

Potential effectiveness of some practical strategies for mitigating the impact

Our 2006 survey tested the potential impact of a number of project-level strategies via obtaining respondents’ ratings of the likely degree of influence of each strategy on their willingness to participate in market/social research telephone surveys. The following results provide some indicative data on the potential effectiveness of each strategy.

Respondents were asked to rate the extent to which they agreed with various statements outlining specific strategies research companies could adopt that would increase their willingness to participate in telephone surveys for market research.

The following strategies (see Figure 8) received relatively high rates of support from respondents:

- ensure the social value or purpose of the research project is fully explained from the outset (74% agreement); “As long as the purpose of the market research is explained to me then I don’t have a problem in participating.”
- make a donation to charity in exchange for participation (71%); and “Donating money to charity for each one. I think that that is a good idea, hadn’t thought of that before.”
- provide respondents with access to a summary of the research findings/results at the conclusion of the project (68%). “If they did a follow up phone call after the research explaining the results you might get more people willing to participate.”
The following strategies (see Figure 9) received relatively low rates of support from respondents:

- sending an introduction letter outlining the nature, purpose and value of research prior to the telephone call (50% agreement);
- paying the respondent to participate (42%);
- sending a thank you letter after the telephone interview (27%).

Apart from the abovementioned strategies, respondents were asked to suggest other approaches that would positively influence their decision to participate in telephone research. The key themes from all participants’ open ended responses (n=177) were:

- convince the respondent that the research findings and results are valuable and useful to the wider community (raised by 20% of respondents);
  “If I knew it was a worthy cause and my opinions are going to be used, then I’m happy to do it. I’d feel privileged to be included in their research.”

- call respondents at an ‘appropriate’ time - not dinner time (20%);
  “Their timing. Well if they were to call at better times, not right in-between dinner.”

The following strategies received relatively low rates of support:

- Figure 8: Relatively highly supported strategies to improve willingness to participate in telephone surveys for market research:

To what extent do you agree with the following statement: “I would be more willing to participate in telephone surveys for market research if the research company were to...”
Figure 9: Relatively poorly supported strategies to improve willingness to participate in telephone surveys for market research:

To what extent do you agree with the following statement: “I would be more willing to participate in telephone surveys for market research if the research company were to...”

- where possible, make the research personally relevant and interesting (14%);
  “Interestingly phrased questions that actually make me think and intriguing subject matter.”

- ensure that respondents are contacted by a professional and friendly researcher (11%); and
  “The approach of the company; nice, polite, cheerful, and not pushy. Common courtesy and manners.”

- ensure the survey is short and set times are strictly adhered to (6%).
  “Just knowing that the call is not going to be too lengthy.”

Conclusions
In interpreting the findings presented in this paper, it is important to bear in mind the methodological limitations of the underlying primary research.

Firstly, the two surveys were of households in Canberra. There are some important demographic differences between Canberra and other locations in Australia. In particular, Canberra households have relatively high income levels and relatively high levels of educational attainment. In addition, Canberra residents (a large proportion of whom are employed by the Australian Government or entities dependent on the Government) have a relatively high level of engagement in national political discourse, including the debate around
the introduction of the Do Not Call Register. Caution should therefore be exercised in extrapolating the research findings to the broader Australian population.

Secondly, the primary research was designed to provide only indicative data on the extent of the impact of telemarketing on research activity and on the potential effectiveness of some strategies to increase research response rates. To rigorously test the impact of telemarketing on research response rates, a research design is required that involves sampling of people who do not usually participate in telephone surveys and a more comprehensive set of behavioural questions than that employed in the surveys reported on in this paper. To rigorously test the effectiveness of strategies to boost response rates, an experimental research design is required, with different treatments (strategies) adopted for different research samples.

The survey findings highlight some positive outcomes for the market and social research industry. They indicate that there has been a significant increase in the past 3 years in public awareness of the difference between research and telemarketing and in public perceptions of the quality of their experience with telephone surveys. In addition, there appears to have been an increase in awareness of the social value of research. These findings indicate that the efforts made by the industry in the past 3 years to improve telephone survey practices and to inform the public about the role and value of market research (including the Your Views Count campaign and the associated LIST best practice toolkit for telephone interviewing) have yielded gains.

Of course, other factors may have also contributed to these outcomes. In particular, it is likely that the public debate around the introduction of the Do Not Call Register has of itself contributed to raising public awareness of the differences between research and telemarketing. Despite these positive outcomes, the survey results indicate that telemarketing has adversely affected research response rates (as proxied by self-reported willingness to participate in research) and that the negative impact has increased over the past 3 years.

On the face of it, these results would appear to be inconsistent – attitudes towards research are improving and people are more clearly differentiating between research and telemarketing and yet are increasingly unwilling to participate in research as a result of exposure to telemarketing. However, they can be reconciled as a confirmation of the theory posited in previous research that telemarketing activity ‘crowds out’ research activity. The survey results show a significant increase in the incidence of telemarketing activity over the past 3 years and a significant increase in the proportion of people who report negative experiences of telemarketing. Taken together, these findings imply that people’s ‘reservoir of goodwill’ towards unsolicited phone calls has been further depleted over the past 3 years. Regression analysis conducted on the survey data supports this hypothesis: it was found that the more negative a person’s experience had been with telemarketing, the more likely that person was to report that telemarketing had reduced their willingness to participate in survey research.

It is unclear whether the establishment of the Do Not Call Register in 2007 will improve or exacerbate the negative externality imposed by telemarketing on the research industry. On the one hand, people who place their names on the Register should receive fewer telemarketing calls (the Register will not stop all calls due to the internationalisation of the telemarketing industry and the likelihood that the Register requirements will not be fully complied with) and hence should have a greater willingness to deal with unsolicited research calls. On the other hand, some people on the Register may mistakenly believe that research firms are not
exempt from the Register requirements and hence react negatively to unsolicited research calls. In addition, people who do not place their names on the Register are likely to receive a greater volume of telemarketing calls than they received before the introduction of the Register; with a further depletion of the reservoir of goodwill available for research.

Against this backdrop, it is in the interests of the market and social research industry to continue to take action to mitigate the impact of telemarketing on the industry. This will require a continuation of effort directed at communicating key messages to the public and government at the firm and industry level and a focus on achieving better practice standards at the research project level. The findings of the regression analysis reported in the paper provide support for focusing on better practice telephone survey fieldwork: people who had positive experiences with telephone surveys were more inclined to participate in research, notwithstanding the impact of telemarketing, than those who did not have positive experiences.

In addition, the findings reported in this paper indicate that the following project-level strategies warrant serious consideration as options for improving survey response rates: ensuring that the social value of the research project is fully explained to respondents; making a donation to charity in exchange for participation; and providing respondents with access to a summary of the research findings at the conclusion of the project.

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Introduction
The application of marketing theory and practice to health and social issues has not only revolutionised the pursuit of social goals, but has concurrently led to the adoption of social marketing as an innovative approach to social influence (Andreasen 2006, Peattie & Peattie 2003). Although social change programs cover a diverse range of issues they are predominantly associated with the influence of health behaviour. Traditionally, social marketing research has followed the footsteps of its older brother – medicine (Weinreich 1996). Yet, the symptom-cause analyses of disease prevention do not adequately explain the complex mechanisms that influence health and social behaviour.

Social marketing is unique in its application of marketing to inform, guide and develop social change programs. In its simplest form social marketing concerns the application of marketing knowledge, concepts and techniques to the pursuit of social goals (Peattie & Peattie 2003, Lazer & Kelly 1973, Grier & Bryant 2005, Andreasen 1994). At a more in-depth level, social marketing advocates the development of social change programs incorporate concepts traditionally associated within the realm of marketing. Such concepts include customer orientation, mutually beneficial exchange, competitor analysis, segmentation, as well as integration of the 4Ps into the social change program (French & Blair-Stevens 2006, Andreasen 2002, Grier & Bryant 2005). These concepts act as a point of departure distinguishing social marketing from other health education approaches.

Central to a social marketing philosophy is a focus on research. The basic assumption of marketing is that human behaviour, whether purchasing a bottle of water, immunising a child against disease or adopting a healthy diet, is a moving target. Market research recognises that behaviour is not stable and there is a need to continually integrate action with research in a continuous, iterative nature. The iterative nature of the research process aims to identify mutually beneficial exchanges, guide decision making from project inception through to completion, and to illuminate the strategic fit between initiatives (Grier & Bryant 2005).
Social marketers borrow the commercial sector’s ‘consumer-orientation’ approach arguing that social issues are more efficiently addressed by understanding what the consumer thinks. The research process begins by listening to and observing the consumer in an attempt to identify the keys to effect exchange (Andreasen 2006, Berkowitz et al 1997). Hastings et al (2000) reinforce this perspective advocating successful behaviour change is built on a thorough and well grounded understanding of current behaviour, the people engaged in it, and their social context.

In comparison with commercial marketing, the nature of social marketing is far more complex as the discipline deals with addressing human behaviour at a social level, as well as an individual level. Often the benefits of greater social good are not valued at an individual level. There is a lack of a profit motive, a focus on high-involvement decisions (e.g., giving up smoking, commitment to responsible driving, changing your diet), and the need to target high at-risk, hard-to-reach groups (Hastings 2003). The complexity of the social marketing picture is further exacerbated by a high level of knowledge regarding the detrimental aspects of unhealthy behaviour. For instance, most people know that smoking is dangerous or that driving fast may result in death, yet unhealthy behaviour is continued because some benefit is derived such as relaxation or thrill and excitement. The key research premise for social marketers is to identify how to obtain the same benefit more healthily, with the same or higher level of perceived value, and with little effort or cost to the individual (Hastings & McDermott 2006). As Hastings (2003) argues the concept of exchange in a social marketing context should be viewed in terms of relationships, as opposed to transactions as in the commercial sector.

The aim of this paper is to explore the application of research philosophy and methodologies within social marketing. In the process of adapting marketing concepts and technologies across to health and social issues, social marketers have had to address key structural issues as well as ‘how to’ adapt research methodologies to gain deep, meaningful insight into complexities of social behaviour. Grier and Bryant (2005) advocate the application of social marketing would benefit from improved research methodologies. In spite of this call to action, there is little literature that elucidates social marketing research innovation.

**Challenges facing social marketing research**

Despite the articulation of social marketing as the application of marketing philosophies to health and social issues, there are a number of challenges facing the conduct of research within the discipline. The following discussion briefly overviews challenges facing social marketing at the macro level which impact the centrality of research within the social marketing discipline.

Andreasen (2006) argues social marketing has entered into early maturity where its application is widespread across developed and developing countries. This perspective is supported by evidence of increasing professional activity both theoretical and applied by academics, government agencies, non-for-profit organisations, as well as centres of social marketing excellence. Social marketing is discussed and debated across many formats including textbooks, annual conferences, and courses both training and qualification-based.

Despite the prevalence, popularity and influence of social marketing in tackling social issues Grier and Bryant (2005) argue the discipline is largely misunderstood, both conceptually and theoretically, by ‘outsiders’ to social marketing. Hill’s (2001) review examining the application of marketing concepts to health issues concluded social marketing is predominantly viewed as a communication tool,
not as a strategic process for solving health issues. Hill (2001) argues many health practitioners have an incomplete understanding of social marketing. As a consequence, program interventions lack integration of key marketing concepts.

Previte and Dann’s (2005) review of the challenges facing social marketing identify that although social change practitioners are aware of social marketing as a social change strategy, few actually applied social marketing within a social change context. Practitioners perceived the barriers of integrating social marketing as a strategic tool for affecting behaviour change as 1) poor brand positioning, 2) negative attitude toward marketing, 3) orientation towards short term results, and 4) consideration that social marketing is peripheral to core business. Confirming Hill’s (2001) study, Previte and Dann (2005) found practitioners had a poor understanding of social marketing and tended to conflate social marketing as advertising. As a consequence social marketing was considered as a simplistic mechanism to influence behaviour change. In addition, inability to derive long-term behaviour benefits from change programs was cited as a further constraint due to the nature of funding, ministerial tenure and a requirement for short-term results. As Previte and Dann (2005) argue a short-term focus demonstrates a lack of understanding that social marketing’s bottom line is behaviour change.

Confusion surrounding the application of social marketing is further compounded by a lack of a clear definition for social marketing. Andreasen (2003) comments the area is ‘fuzzy’ as there are too many definitions which conflict in major and minor ways (Andreasen 2002). The differing definitions articulate the growing divergence as to whether social marketing is an ‘upstream’ structural change policy-orientated tool or a ‘downstream’ individual behaviour consumer-oriented tool (Donovan and Henley 2003, Andreasen 2002, Hastings et al 2000). While social marketing’s primary niche is influencing behaviour change, it is suggested that strategies targeting structural change may also constitute social marketing (Previte and Dann 2005). Proponents of an ‘upstream’ approach argue that social structures (laws, public policy, technology, institutions, physical environment) influence an individual’s decision-making processes and ability to change behaviour. Importantly, behaviour change does not act in isolation, thus integrating a relational paradigm into change programs creates a synergistic approach to social change where key actors cooperate rather than act individually (Dann et al 2007, Hastings 2003). Relational thinking is not meant to indicate abandonment of a focus on behaviour change. Rather it suggests broadening the focus beyond a singular health behaviour model to a more integrative framework of multiple models and theories (Hastings and Saren 2003).

These definitional debates and the misinterpretation of social marketing by practitioners have implications on how social marketing is conducted in practice. From a research perspective, a short-term focus and social advertising perspective constrains the application of research methodologies to testing message effectiveness, designation of appropriate communication channels, public awareness of social issues, target audience elaboration on the social issue and so forth. The communication effort is akin to a double edged sword. Unless the communication effort is relevant it is likely to be wasted. Relevance requires a clear understanding of the target audience mindset in order to position the message appropriately as compared to a top down health promotion ‘don’t do’ approach. It also requires a clear understanding of the social-cultural context in which the receiver conducts their daily lives. This broader understanding is well recognised within marketing, yet those in health promotion are not fully aware of that the success of program interventions depends on generational awareness, information relevance
and contextual relevance (Hugo 2000). Weinreich (1996) extends this argument explaining that traditional health professionals who transfer over to social marketing have difficulty reconciling their notion of ‘what research is’ with little understanding of the consumer-oriented methods appropriated from the commercial marketing toolkit. Taking a consumer orientated approach entails a ‘new’ way of thinking as compared to large scale clinical trials evidenced by health promotion.

Social marketing research
Despite the controversies occurring at the macro level of social marketing, the practice of social marketing continues. Typically formative research takes the form of secondary data collection, focus groups and in-depth interviews. Yet the nuances of the issue at hand, whether that is addressing upstream policy issues or downstream consumer issues, have necessitated social marketers extend their repertoire of research methodologies. To date, the primary area of research innovation is in the way researchers collect information to provide a more complete picture of the social issue, as well as understanding the target audience’s attitudes, motivations and perceptions of their behaviour. Many of the research methodologies employed are not necessarily ‘new’ methodologies; rather they are adapted from ‘other’ disciplines and/or developed to address particular circumstances. The following discussion is by no means exhaustive of innovative methodologies employed. The objective is to highlight the process of how research problems have been solved, as well as encourage researchers to evidence non-conventional research methodologies - an often neglected aspect. Three research methodologies are discussed: systematic reviews, natural history and ladder/benefit chaining.

Systematic reviews
Systematic reviews are a robust methodology for reviewing secondary research and provide the foundation for evidence-based decision making (Mulrow 1994). Traditionally embedded within the clinical medical environment there is growing evidence of its popularity within the social sciences to guide government policy (Boaz et al 2002, Hastings 2007, Hemsley-Brown & Sharp 2004, Ritter & Cameron 2005). The review process aims to efficiently integrate valid information, establish where effects are consistent, where they may vary significantly, and provide a basis for rational decision making (Mulrow 1994). The systematic review process offers advantages over traditional literature reviews by making the review process comprehensive, rigorous and transparent. Hemsley-Brown & Sharp (2004) suggest systematic reviews are useful not only to synthesise large bodies of literature in a rigorous manner, but provides a useful assembly of data sources in a single place, allows replicability and increases objectivity. The synthesis of data is akin to a stylised mental map of the issue at hand.

A distinctive feature of the systematic review is that agreed protocols are set prior to commencement (Boaz et al 2002). The protocol sets out the explicit processes for how studies are identified and obtained, specifies the research questions on which the review is based, the inclusion and exclusion criteria, methods used to assess relative quality of the included studies, as well as their synthesis into conclusions. Synthesising research findings may be undertaken by meta-analyses or narrative analyses. Quantitative-based meta-analyses, typically engaged in the health environment, have the advantage of quantifying average effect sizes of program effectiveness across variables of interest. Qualitative-based narrative reviews have the ability to make use of tables to provide a consistent record of relevant information from the studies of interest. By clearly outlining the research questions at the commencement of the review elimination of bias is contained, thus increasing
the transparency of the research process engaged. Finally, a key feature of a systematic review is the ability to maintain relevance by updating the database as studies become available.

Within the area of social marketing, the primary aim of systematic reviews has been to provide government with comprehensive evidence on which to guide policy development. In the United Kingdom, recent systematic reviews were commissioned on behalf of government agencies: the UK National Social Marketing Centre (NSMC) and the UK Government Food Standards Agency. For the NSMC, the reviews examining the effectiveness of social marketing in nutrition (McDermott et al. 2006), exercise (Gordon et al. 2006) and substance abuse (Stead et al. 2006a) became critical for the positioning of the NSMC within the government health sector, as well as initiating an agenda for social marketing as an additional behavioural influence strategy for health practitioners in the UK. As systematic reviews are well acknowledged within the medical field, it made sense to map the potential of social marketing within a familiar methodological framework.

The ability to clearly weigh up the evidence is key defining aspect of the systematic review. The UK Food Standards Agency commissioned a review to determine the effects of food promotion on dietary choices of children. The review outcome underpinned the introduction of tighter regulation of marketing/advertising ‘junk - energy dense’ food to children in the UK (Hastings et al. 2003). While an abundance of research existed different stakeholders, including food and advertising industries, consumer/health advocates and public health advisors, advocated their position. What was lacking was a clear concise evidence-based review on the existence, nature and extent of food promotion on children’s food knowledge, preferences and behaviour. The robustness of the methodological process was upheld when the systematic review was contested by an industry review commissioned by the UK Advertising Association Food Advertising Unit. The industry review conflicted strongly with the outcomes of the systematic review suggesting that advertising was not a major influencer to children’s dietary choices (Young 2003). A committee was established by the Food Standards Authority specifically to investigate the merits of the two reviews (Food Standards Authority 2003). Limitations of the opposing industry review were cited as limited coverage of studies, outcomes contradictory to a review conducted by the same author in 1996, and rejection of all social science as artificial or lacking control (Food Standards Authority 2003).

In summary, the level of detail required to conduct a systematic review is far superior to that of a traditional literature reviews (Hastings 2007, Stead et al. 2006b). Drawbacks of the process are timeliness in searching for secondary data, the reiterative nature associated with searching for evidence especially studies not published in the public domain, and cost associated with data collection. Nonetheless, the power of a rigorous systematic review provides valuable insight into identifying, describing and critically evaluating, synthesising and identifying gaps in knowledge relating to social issues (Ritter & Cameron 2005). In this way, systematic reviews provide valuable insight into developing policy interventions, and to integrate policy making process with research policy interaction.

**Natural History**

Natural history methodology involves the practice of research examining structures and elements of living things in their natural environment. It is concerned with levels of organisation, structure, operations and circumstances of individual organisms in the ecosystem, with particular interest in identifying life history, distribution, abundance and interrelationships across organisms (Herman 2002). Natural history has become an umbrella term for scientific disciplines of integra-
ative organismal biology (biology, botany, zoology, palaeontology, ecology, geology and climatology). The roots of natural history stem to Aristotle and other ancient philosophers who analysed diversity in the natural world.

Application of a natural history methodology is not common beyond the natural and medical sciences. Thus, a natural history approach to examine the factors influencing cause and effect of behaviour within social marketing extends the traditional applications of research methodologies. As with most innovations the search for alternate methodology was prompted by a lack of current evidence in answering a research problem. Specifically, Brennan's (2007) application of natural history aims to understand how it is that middle aged gay men aged 35 to 55 years ‘decide’ to no longer practice safe sex, particularly when safe sex has been practised for many years. There is little current data which examines the influences, both internal and external, that over time lead to a ceasing of safe behaviour and the adoption of unsafe behaviour. The study aims to understand the process by which middle aged gay men describe, explain and experience sexual health and also understand the factors that may shape their sexual health experiences. Specific attention is aimed to understand why sexual health practices with regards to safe sex alter from that of safe behaviour to an unsafe behaviour. The study describes self-reported behaviour via a series of intensive interviews using oral history techniques. Respondents are interviewed over a series of time periods, often taking up to nine hours depending on age of participant, memories evoked and validation checks concerning stability of information provided.

While a natural history methodology could be conceived as left of field, there is synergy in using natural history to explain the aetiology of why men alter their safe sex practices. The goal of Brennan’s (2007) study is to discuss the causes, origins, evolution and implications of behaviour. This philosophical approach to the research problem stems from epidemiology and the natural sciences. Consequently the synergy in using a natural history research approach to solving a social marketing behavioural problem is an eloquent fit. A detriment of this process is time and respondent fatigue may influence the ability to continue with the study. Nonetheless, extending research methodologies to provide a relevant and informative base line of the social issue can only assist in developing more effective social change programs.

**Means-End Chain Analysis (Laddering/Benefit Chaining)**

While means-end chain analysis is well known to analyse consumer behaviour (Reynolds & Gutman 1988), its application to social marketing is limited. Donovan and Henley (2003) identify laddering as a useful technology for understanding the hierarchy of motivations, attitudes and perceptions towards a social behaviour. By understanding the importance of values across segments, social marketers are able to better target their programs in terms of behavioural goals. The laddering technique, theoretically drawing from means-end theory, considers the behaviour object as a means to achieving certain valued states, or ends. It advocates consumers view products beyond their tangible characteristics, suggesting a higher rank of intangible consequences and values influence decision-making. The consequences of engaging in a specific behaviour (eg: healthy eating), in turn, can be linked to values important to the individual, such as social acceptance or self-esteem. Using a series of probing questions, the laddering technique aims to identify specific linkages between product attributes, consumer benefits and consumer value orientations. The data are assembled to create a hierarchical value map.

The technique is useful to social marketers for its ability to probe ‘deep motiva-
tions’ in order to understand what the target audience truly deems as important by eliciting reasons for pursuing goals and having opinions. In this way, social marketers are able to re-consider the core product associated with the health or social issues in terms of self-esteem, control or sense of belonging. To date, few social marketing interventions have integrated laddering within their intervention program. Smeesters et al (2003) applied the laddering technique to understand attitudes and motivations towards mandatory recycling in Western Europe where there is decreasing spare capacity of landfills. The study identified civic related values of ‘duty’ and ‘cooperative action to recycling’ had more significant impact on mandatory recycling behaviour than voluntary programs where environmental concerns prevailed. Impact for social marketing campaigns indicates motivations across type of recycling program (mandatory versus voluntary) differ considerably, thereby influencing the nature and development of program interventions sustaining a recycling culture.

Kaciak & Cullen (2006) applied means-end analysis to better understand the behavioural underpinnings of tobacco consumption as a means to more efficiently target public health initiatives. The key premise of the study identified an enhanced summary of the chains linking attributes of cigarettes through smoking consequences, as well as identifying the values that underlie choice of cigarette. For example: attributes of quality were related projecting a good image, smoking fewer cigarettes, less damaging to health and pleasure which were related to higher order values of social recognition, self-direction and hedonism. Filter cigarettes were considered as less damaging to health, which impacted on perceptions of health, self-direction, conformity and hedonism.

Application of means-end laddering process assists in unearthing consumers’ deep motivations and attitudes that may not necessarily be uncovered in traditional focus group situations. The laddering technique assists the social change agent to identify with the consumer in order to develop mutually beneficial exchanges. As with the previous methodologies, conducting individual in-depth interviews may impede the timeliness of the research process.

Conclusion

The objective of this paper was to garner an understanding of social marketing and the nuances of conducting research within the discipline. Social marketing is an active, dynamic discipline. The cross fertilisation of commercial marketing practices to social marketing provides great strength. The continued discussion regarding a clear definition for social marketing and ‘what social marketing is’ adds to the understanding of the role of social marketing as a social change strategy. Implications of the debate impact practitioners understanding, knowledge and implementation of social marketing.

The debate process has moved social marketers towards a new way of thinking about social problems. Inclusion within the concept of ‘what social marketing is’ is the notion of a relational paradigm, which has fundamental implications for the social marketing research agenda. Research implications include: extending the type of methodologies to explore the relationship between customers and improved lifestyle situations; tracking relationship markers such as trust, commitment and satisfaction; and considering the research problem from an inclusive perspective rather than a singular health problem focus.

Social marketers have, as a result of the nuances of the discipline, innovated research methodologies to investigate the integration between socio-cultural context and risky human behaviour. Methodologies of natural history and benefit chaining are two such strategies. At a policy level, systematic reviews demon-
strate rigor in synthesising large amounts of data to establish where effects are consistent and where they vary significantly. Despite calls for improved research methodologies and exploration of relational links between stakeholders, there is little empirical literature that elaborates on innovation and/or adaptation of research methodologies within the social marketing discipline. Articulation of these processes is necessary for the continued growth of the discipline. Social marketing researchers are urged to evidence their application of methodologies, especially those where circumstances dictate adaptation of the investigative process.

References


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Handbook of Qualitative Research, 3rd edition


Reviewed by Michael Milgate

This latest edition of the Handbook of Qualitative Research includes many new topics and authors. For example, there are two chapters on indigenous inquiry, specifically Kaupapa Maori. Indeed, even where author and topic have been retained, the contributions have been revised. Of course, not everything has changed. The same dividing sections from previous editions are used, starting with discussions of general issues and approaches, then focusing on more specific strategies and methods of data collection and analysis, and concluding with some reflections on the future of qualitative research. Furthermore, in line with previous editions, the Introduction and Epilogue frame the handbook with a meta-narrative identifying various “moments” in the development of qualitative research, the count now reaching nine—with the latest labeled “the fractured future.”

For those not familiar with this meta-narrative, qualitative research is portrayed as having developed, albeit in a by no means uniform or linear manner, from a positivist phase in which natural science was still the predominant model to one where most if not all the assumptions associated with that phase, notably those underpinning realism and value-neutrality, have been abandoned, with the humanities and arts now being treated as a more appropriate source of models for social inquiry. Closely associated with this poetic turn is a political and ethical one: an increasing tendency to treat research as directed towards political goals and/or as properly embodying substantive ethical ideals.

In line with this meta-narrative, the editors describe qualitative research as a reform movement that has brought about a revolution; they claim that it is committed to “radical democratic practice” aimed at achieving “social justice in an age of uncertainty” (p x). In slightly more concrete terms, it is seen as promoting emancipation from neo-colonial domination, from sexism and racism within western societies, and more broadly from the culture of positivism that pervades those societies. This meta-narrative gives some coherence to what is a massive book that incorporates the work of a very large number of scholars.

Any meta-narrative about the development of qualitative research must, of course, take into account not just developments within that field but also external changes. Highlighted in this third edition is the threat posed by a recent revival in the fortunes of “scientific” conceptions of social and educational research, in both the United States and Britain. At various points in the book, this is dubbed “methodological conservatism” or “methodological fundamentalism,” and is treated as deriving from the neo-liberal or neo-conservative political ideology that shapes governmental policies in both the USA and Britain. Two specific areas where increasing government interference is identified are funding policies and the ethical regulation of research.

It would be impossible to review all of the chapters in this handbook, and so the discussion here will be very selective indeed, focusing to a large extent on the perspective...
adopted by the editors and the problems associated with it. As Denzin and Lincoln make clear in their preface, they have an agenda. Their aim is not so much to produce a handbook that captures the current state of qualitative research, but to exemplify the directions in which it is, and should be, going. Despite declarations to the effect that their meta-narrative is not a meta-narrative, the editors write as if from the end of history, picking out and emphasising what they take to be progressive. One result of this is that, for anyone who does not share their views, quite a bit of this handbook is of doubtful or marginal value. And a practical consequence may be that it becomes more difficult to defend qualitative research publicly, especially in the challenging external environment that the editors dismiss, much too readily, as a product of methodological conservatism and neo-conservative ideology.

What is especially disappointing about this handbook is the poor quality of argument to be found in the editorial material, and in some other chapters as well, occasionally amounting to inaccuracy and sloganising. At one point in the Preface we have the following: “Pragmatism ... is a theoretical position that privileges practice and method over reflection and deliberative action” (p. xiv). This statement rightly indicates the primacy given to practice by pragmatists, but the idea that they privilege method, or that they see practice as unreflective or non-deliberative, is simply false. And the accounts given of other positions, including postmodernism and critical realism, are no better. There are also some factual inaccuracies about particular studies. For example, there is a reference in Lincoln's chapter on “Institutional review boards and methodological conservatism” to “Stanley Milgram’s psychological deception studies involving deliberately delivered electroshock torture” (p. 166) - at the very least, anyone who does not know Milgram’s work would infer from this that he allowed subjects to be given electric shocks. And it is worth noting that, especially in the context of the ideas championed by the editors, failings of this kind create a practical problem for teachers of research methodology and other subjects: What are we to do when students reproduce such misdescriptions in essays? Do we let these pass on the grounds that they have the authority of Denzin and Lincoln, or do we challenge them, perhaps to be told that they are only inaccurate from a positivist or post-positivist perspective?

Equally problematic is the form of argument used. For example, the editors locate the origin of what they see as the revolution generated by qualitative research in the fact that “Many scholars began to judge the days of value-free inquiry based on a God’s-eye view of reality to be over” (p. x). And, a little later, they declare that “We have left the world of naïve realism, knowing now that a text does not mirror the world, it creates the world” (p. xiv). The constructionism evidenced here is treated as opening up the way for qualitative research as a kind of cultural politics, albeit with all the variation in goal and character which that phrase can encompass. But what are the arguments in favour of political partisanship and textual constructionism that are being relied upon here, and how good are they?

The need to make a case for these positions is largely avoided by setting up dichotomies (value-freedom versus a commitment to “radical democracy,” “God’s-eye view” versus textual creation of the world) and treating one pole as passé, in the fashion-chasing manner that is characteristic of hyper-modernism. Thus, the editors dismiss the idea that qualitative research can be “value-free,” without even telling us what they mean by that phrase. They seem to take it literally, as implying that research can and should be free from the influence of all values. Yet one would be hard-pressed to find any writer who believed this, even at the height of what the editors regard as the positivist era. What Max Weber meant by his unfortunate term Wertfreiheit was that
the value of truth should set the exclusive immediate goal for research, and that other values should only be used to determine which knowledge is worth pursuing and what practical implications might follow from any findings (see Bruun, 1972). Moreover, he recognised that these other values were always a potential source of bias; this was why commitment to the principle of value-freedom or value-neutrality was needed, as a counterweight. There has been, and continues to be, much debate about this principle, but to dismiss it on the grounds that “many scholars believe its days are over” is facile. While expressions of commitment to “value-freedom” or “value-neutrality” are rare today, the principle which Weber proposed still informs the practice of many qualitative researchers: fortunately, they are usually still concerned to resist threats to validity that arise from their own and others’ value commitments.

The editors, and many contributors to this edition of the handbook, reject the principle of value-neutrality because they believe that there is an overriding responsibility on the part of researchers to pursue political goals. However, for the most part, they fail to provide much supporting argument for this, or to examine the problems to which it leads. Indeed, they often neglect a fundamental distinction between acting under the auspices of inquiry in such a way as to achieve other goals than knowledge, on the one hand, and aiming to produce knowledge about some topic because it is believed that this will serve other desirable goals, on the other. Once that distinction is abandoned, it is hard to see what difference there could be between research and, for example, political campaigning, educational instruction, or artistic endeavour, and the public funds currently spent on research might as well be redirected into those other fields.

For the editors, there is a close relationship between rejection of “value-freedom” and the adoption of constructionism. Weber’s principle assumes the possibility of knowledge, in other words that truth is a viable regulative principle in inquiry. Here too, though, there are important complexities that are neglected. Very much in the spirit of the editorial perspective framing the Handbook, Smith and Hodkinson (in a chapter on “Relativism, criteria, and politics”) reject “epistemology,” which they treat as standing for the belief that one can produce knowledge whose validity is not relative to some particular culture, locality, or framework of assumptions. Yet, in effect, this is an attack on what Wittgenstein and others referred to as the “logical grammar” behind the ordinary use of words like “knowledge,” “truth,” “reality,” and indeed “research” and “inquiry.” St. Pierre (writing about writing as a method of inquiry) makes this explicit, suggesting that “we use old concepts but ask them to do different work” (p.968), and Plummer (discussing critical humanism and queer theory) proposes that we abandon what he refers to (following Beck) as “zombie” concepts. But what if Wittgenstein was right, that some of the concepts we use are the hinges without which activities basic to human life are impossible (Wittgenstein, 1969)? Denzin, Lincoln and others in this volume assume that challenging the conventional meanings of these fundamental methodological terms is desirable. In my view, they fail to recognise that their new meanings are parasitic on the old ones; and, as in nature, if parasites kill their host they too will die.

As already noted, a commitment to realism is formulated as assuming a “God’s eye view,” and is contrasted with the idea that texts (including research texts) create the world, and the relativism implied by this. The phrase “God’s eye view” is ascribed to the philosopher Hilary Putnam; yet he labels himself an internal realist, seeing only metaphysical realism as committed to the availability of such an external view (Putnam 1981 and 1990). In their chapter, Smith and Hodkinson quote Putnam in support of their argument, apparently not recognising that this author rejects the sort of relativism for which they are arguing. Putnam does not, for example, deny the significant role that
sense data, albeit never untainted by conceptualisation, play in checking our ideas. Furthermore, he does not reject the concept of truth or even identify it with rational acceptability (see Putnam 1981, pp. 54-55).

Putnam’s argument is convincing, in broad terms, as are those of other philosophers who have proposed more subtle kinds of realism than what he refers to as the copy theory. As a result, I think we must challenge a key move that Smith and Hodkinson make, along with Denzin and Lincoln and some other contributors to this handbook. They assume that, since there is no foundation of epistemic givens in terms of which validity could be judged absolutely, the criteria by which social research must be assessed are political, practical, moral and/or aesthetic. At the very least, the difficult philosophical issues involved here need to be signaled, rather than treated as if they all pointed in one direction.

It is also striking that the political commitments attributed to the qualitative research movement by the editors remain vague in the extreme, and are not supported with arguments designed to persuade anyone unwilling to accept them at face value. Here too, reliance is placed upon dichotomies: notably, radical democracy versus neo-liberalism or neo-conservatism. Not only do these dichotomies commit the fallacy of the excluded middle, they fail to recognise the complexity of the political terrain. Unfortunately, in their chapter on Foucault’s methodologies - puzzlingly, the only single author who is made the focus of a chapter in this handbook - Scheurich and McKenzie give no attention to the political ambiguities of his work, which might have been instructive in this context (see, for example, Lecourt 2001:188-203). In fact, the editors’ recurrent appeals to “democracy” and “social justice” seem almost as meaningless as the current US president’s championing of “democracy” and “freedom,” even if one harbours fewer suspicions about their motives.

In short, in this book political terms are used without sufficient indication of what they mean in concrete terms: yet what exactly counts as “neo-colonialism,” “emancipation,” “racism,” “social justice,” etc. is always a matter for potential dispute. And, once again, there is also an absence of the necessary supporting argument. For instance, vilification of the West is combined with valorisation of indigenous communities without taking sufficient account of the extent to which the latter display hierarchies and exclusions of a kind that could reasonably be judged undemocratic or unjust. Some of the problems that this raises for research ethics are mentioned by Smith in her chapter on “Researching the native,” but they are not given wider attention in the Handbook. It is as if the discussions of gemeinschaft and gesellschaft, within sociology, and of communitarianism versus liberalism, within political philosophy, had never taken place. Neglect of these issues is especially obvious in Christians’ chapter on “Ethics and politics in qualitative research,” where the case for a feminist, communitarian ethics is made by caricaturing the Enlightenment and the liberalism that is seen as deriving from it.

I must emphasise that these criticisms of the general orientation of the handbook by no means imply that there is nothing of value to be found within its pages. Views will differ about the highlights, but for me they include both some revised chapters and some new ones: Saukko on cultural studies, Stake on qualitative case studies, Charmaz on grounded theorising, Kemmis and McTaggart on participatory action research, Harper on the uses of visual materials, Markham on online ethnography, Atkinson and Delamont on analytic perspectives, Peräkylä on analysing talk and text, and House on qualitative evaluation. In these chapters, and elsewhere in this book, there is much that will be of interest and value, even for those who do not find its editorial framework persuasive.
References


