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This month’s cover illustrates a typical “day in the life” at Spych Market Analytics. Alert! contributor, Ben Smithee, CEO (middle), at work in Spych’s new loft office in Downtown Dallas with Landon Ledford, Brand Strategist (left) and Thomas Pemberton, Project Manager (right). Representing Gen Y, the team works with four computer screens (running from two computers), iPad, cell phones, headphones, hard drive, and an Apple Television in a 10’ X 10” space. Technologically efficient offices are a must with traveling CEOs, international client bases, etc.
The Magical World of Technology

Emerging technology; friend or foe? What an opportune question considering, like it or not, technology will begin to emerge at even greater speeds than at any time in the past. Technology can be our biggest ally, but also our greatest downfall when the impact on the basic tenants of what we do are not fully understood or recognized.

An enlightening quote from Arthur C. Clarke claims, “Any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic.” Technology indisputably has the power of influencing the course of events by what the majority of mere mortals, e.g. regular users, consider mysterious or supernatural forces. Unless you are a tech junky who can decipher terms (and their applications) such as: baud, refactoring, CLOB, dithering, degauss, CDMA, integrated circuit, ARP, 802.11n, MIMO, dongle, augmented reality, EDI, memristor, nanometer, Archie, JSON and GUID – just to name a few; you are likely mystified by recent and forthcoming technological advances. The good news is that you’re not alone. The bad news is, while you will likely never be required to become an interpreter or expert of tech language/application, you will assuredly need to adapt and embrace technologies in the near future that you haven’t even heard of today. To illustrate this, in the 2008 May issue of Alert!, the extraordinary President of MRA at the time, Colleen Moore-Mezler, PRC, spoke about technology and what she was most excited about. Four years ago, that “something” was a little thing called an iPhone, a new product that was being designed and marketed by Apple Inc. While the original iPhone was released in June of 2007, it did not become available to Verizon and other providers, let alone internationally, until much later, therefore; only a handful of people had even heard the term iPhone less than five years ago.

A few months ago, I was intrigued with predictions made about the future in Fortune magazine’s January issue. In my February article, I shared some of those predictions, which included areas outside technology and that are not likely to impact the marketing research profession in a meaningful way, e.g. lab-grown meat. This month, I spent a significant amount of time reviewing what some experts believe our near future will look like – technologically speaking. Below are predictions in areas that are certain to impact researchers and the way they conduct business; internally and externally. (As quoted from the following sources: www.futuretimeline.net/21stcentury/2010-2019.htm; www.zdnet.com/blog/emergingtech.com; www.msnbc.msn.com/id/43015182/ns/ zdnet.com/blog/emergingtech.com; www.msnbc.msn.com/id/42621720/ns/ 21stcentury/2010-2019.htm; www.futuretimeline.net/21stcentury/2010-2019.htm; www.zdnet.com/blog/emergingtech.com; www.msnbc.msn.com/id/43015182/ns/ technology_and_science-innovation/1/ reasons-will-be-awesome-year/.)

2013 Speech-to-speech translation is common in mobile phones: Large-vocabulary, continuous, speaker-independent speech recognition is now widespread on cellphones. It has become a popular (and free) iPhone app, as well as being available on Symbian phones and on the Nexus One, using Google’s voice translation server.

3-D technologies are widespread: 3-D technology is now widespread across a range of communication and entertainment platforms. It has become a mainstream element of cinema, TV, Internet, video games and even mobile. This technology provides users with a whole new level of immersion, interaction and realism. James Cameron’s Avatar, released in 2009, was a major breakthrough in terms of developing this format and raising awareness of its potential. In 2010, new 3-D TV channels were introduced and these could even be viewed without 3-D glasses. Compatibility was soon incorporated into a range of consumer products including Blu-ray recorders, game consoles and personal computers. By 2013, the technology has become widespread in homes in developed countries.

Highly flexible touch sensors are appearing in a range of gadgets: Highly flexible, film-based touch sensors are entering the smart phone and tablet markets. They are also extending touch capabilities into a range of new consumer and industrial products. Using roll-to-roll metal mesh technology, they provide a high-performance alternative to existing touch sensors. Larger, lighter, sleeker, curved and edgeless designs can now be developed for handheld devices. Thinner sensor stacks with flawless touch performance, excellent optical clarity, low sheet resistance and low power consumption are enabling designers to turn unique, futuristic concepts into functional designs at lower total system costs compared to previous market alternatives.

The first products to use memristor technology are becoming available: First theorized in 1971, memristors were described as the “missing link” in electric circuitry. As a fourth fundamental circuit element, they would have properties unachievable in the other elements (resistors, inductors, capacitors). After 40 years of research and development, they are now appearing in consumer products. Unlike conventional computer memory – which stores data with electronic on and off switches – memristors work at the atomic level. These nanoscale devices have a variable resistance, able to “remember” their resistance when power is off. This makes them phenomenally faster, denser and more energy efficient than previous electronics. Mobile phones and countless other gadgets can now benefit from a vastly improved battery life, speed and memory capacity. Desktop computers and laptops, meanwhile, can be boot-up almost instantly. Because of their tiny size, memristors can also be used as microscopic sensors, gathering a wide range of data from their surroundings. Another benefit of memristors is their re-configurability. They can be similar in behavior to the synapses in brains. This offers the
potential to create electronics more capable of adapting to different situations and exhibiting a form of learning, which may advance efforts in artificial intelligence. Further into the future, it may be possible to build human brain-like computers.

14 nanometre chips enter mass production: The next generation of microprocessor technology is released by Intel, with transistors now based on a 14nm manufacturing process. For comparison, a carbon atom is 0.34nm wide. The 4GHz barrier in stock CPU is finally being passed, thanks to the performance and energy efficiency of these new chips.

2014

The Internet has a greater reach than television:
Citizens in developed nations now rely on the Internet more than any other medium for news coverage. This trend first became apparent in the early 2000s, when radio was overtaken by Internet usage. The rapid shift towards web-based information then began to affect print media, with newspaper sales being heavily impacted. By 2014, the trend has continued, with even television now having less reach when it comes to news reporting. Television and the Internet are in fact converging together as one. Social media, mobile technologies and exponential bandwidth improvements have driven much of this change.

Terabyte SD cards are available: SD cards and other memory devices continue to grow exponentially this decade, with storage capacities doubling roughly every year. A terabyte is equal to 1000 gigabytes.

Most phone calls are made via the Internet: By now, the majority of homes and workplaces use Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) systems, such as Skype. These connections are made via the Internet, rather than traditional phone lines. Undoubtedly the biggest advantage of VoIP is the cost. PC-to-PC phone calls can be made anywhere in the world, at any time, for free. PC-to-phone connections usually charge a fee, but are generally much cheaper than standard phone services with conventional handsets. Another advantage is the portability. Phone calls can be made and received from any PC – provided there is a broadband connection – simply by signing into a personal VoIP account. Phone-to-phone VoIP is also portable.

When you sign up with a VoIP service provider, the Internet phone or adaptor that is used with that service is assigned a unique number. This “phone number” remains valid even if your VoIP service provider is located in England and you are connected to the Internet in Australia. An Internet phone is small and light enough to take with you anywhere. It can simply be plugged into any broadband connection, anywhere in the world, and used to make and receive calls, just as though you were in your own home or office. There are several other features that make VoIP attractive: higher fidelity (wideband) audio, video, call forwarding, call waiting, voicemail, caller ID and multiple-way calling at no extra charge. Digital data such as pictures, documents and other files can also be transmitted during calls.

2015

Battery technology gets a boost:
A new method of charging lithium-ion batteries has been perfected. This enables them to charge ten times faster and to last ten times as long. A chemical oxidation process creates miniscule holes (10 to 20 nanometres) between layers of graphene. This provides lithium ions with a “shortcut” to the anode. Energy density is increased by inserting clusters of silicon between each graphene slice, which allows more ions to gather at the electrode. By 2015, the process is widely used in consumer electronics. Mobile phones can now be charged from flat in under 15 minutes, with a single charge lasting up to a week. This technology also paves the way for smaller and more efficient batteries for electric cars.

3-D printing is a mainstream consumer product: Until recently, this technology was extremely expensive – upwards of $15,000 per machine – and limited to use in industrial prototyping, product design, medical modeling and architectural models. However, plummeting costs are now making it affordable to consumers. Rather than using ink on paper, these machines can actually “print” 3-D objects. This is achieved by melting nylon powder and then shaping it based on computer instructions.

Countless different items can be produced – from jewelry and decorative giftware, to children’s toys, kitchenware, replacement plugs, hooks, pipes, fittings, flooring and other household essentials. Users can download new items and configurations from the Web. Artists and hobbyists can even create their own, using these printers in combination with 3-D scanners and modeling software. In addition to falling costs, another reason that home 3-D printing has taken off rapidly is that there is very little manufacturing being done in America and various other countries anymore. As a result, there is little or no pressure by manufacturing special interests against it. In the decades ahead, this technology will evolve into nanofabricators, capable of reproducing items with atomic precision within minutes. It will ultimately lead to matter replicators with near-instantaneous production of virtually any object – including foodstuffs.

OLED screens are becoming widespread: Having fallen in cost, organic light-emitting diodes (OLED) are appearing in a wide variety of devices. These use considerably less power than traditional LEDs and LCDs while allowing sharper, thinner, brighter displays. They also eliminate the need for back lights. Sunlight that would normally “wash out” a display has no effect – the screens appear the same even in broad daylight, or when tilted at an angle.

2016

Holographic Versatile Disc (HVD) supersedes Blu-Ray: These ultra-high density discs are capable of holding 1Tb of data – equivalent to over 200 DVDs. They work by analyzing micro-holograms in 3-D, rather than just markings on the surface. This allows data to be far more

Unless you are a tech junky...you are likely mystified by recent and forthcoming technological advances. The good news is that you’re not alone.”
densely packed than conventional optical technology. The price of storage per gigabyte is plummeting – from around $1 per gigabyte in 2006, to less than 10 cents now. This is an example of the trend of exponential progress (rather than linear) seen in forms of information technology. HVD itself is in danger of becoming obsolete, before it has even been properly established.

Solid state flash drives are increasingly being used for digital transfer, some with even higher capacities, along with read and write speeds faster than any optical disc. The new SDXC card format specification has already reached the 2TB mark.

**2017**

**Electronic paper is seeing widespread use:** This technology has been in development for over a decade and is now seeing widespread use. It works by combining organic, thin film transistors (TFT) with organic, electroluminescent displays. This produces flexible, paper-thin devices barely 0.3mm in thickness. Early applications included the first e-readers, but more sophisticated products have now emerged, some capable of running high-quality video. Ultra-thin smart phones, clothing and textiles with electronic displays, video ID cards, video leaflets, road signs that are self-illuminating, video instructions on food and other packaging – these are just some of the items to feature this technology. Further development leads to much greater contrast ratio – resembling printed paper more than a screen (the latter is hard to see in direct sunlight). This technology also marks a step towards the paperless office, which in turn will reduce deforestation.

**2018**

**Ubiquitous Internet nodes connect appliances, vehicles, etc.:** In developed nations, many of the day-to-day routines in the home are becoming automated. Refrigerators, for instance, can be programmed to order new food before they become empty. RFID microchips – smaller than grains of sand – are printed on packaging labels. These connect wirelessly to the refrigerator, which sends an order via the Internet. New food is then delivered to the customer’s door at a pre-arranged time. Boilers and other appliances can notify an engineer when they break down, while heat and lighting systems can be activated in real time as a person is on their way home from work (rather than being programmed for a fixed time). Devices are also being synchronized in various ways. They can even sense where you are in the home. A person can be listening to a football commentary in their bedroom, for example, then walk to the lounge and have the television activate itself, then walk to their car outside and have the signal “follow” them by turning on the appropriate radio channel. In addition to being linked with their user’s home network, the majority of cars now have Internet access and speech recognition as standard.

**Consumer devices with 100 Gbit/s transfer speeds:** A new form of data transfer is now available for the consumer market. This is known as “Thunderbolt” and is replacing the Universal Serial Bus (USB) leads which have been the standard for many years. The USB 3.0 specification allowed transfer speeds of 4.8 Gbit/s. An early version of Thunderbolt (codenamed “Light Peak”) achieved 10 Gbit/s. This latest version, however, can achieve 100 Gbit/s – enough to transfer an entire Blu-ray movie in just three seconds. The optical technology of Thunderbolt also allows smaller connectors with longer, thinner and more flexible cables. Additionally, it can run multiple protocols simultaneously over a single cable, enabling the technology to connect devices such as peripherals, workstations, displays, disk drives, docking stations and more.

**2010-2019**

**Augmented Reality (AR) is entering the mainstream:** A growing number of cell phones, cameras and other digital devices now feature augmented reality. This technology displays 3-D virtual elements on a real-world camera view. GPS units in combination with inertial references can map a user’s precise location, then relay graphics from the Web (or a web-based application such as Google Earth) and superimpose them on-screen. This concept has already been used in military training (to display imaginary aircraft and vehicles for example), but is now spreading to mainstream uses – such as travel, outdoor pursuits, communication, gaming and entertainment. Other applications include architecture and interior design (to show virtual objects in a room, for example, or to view buildings before they are constructed). In the coming years, this technology will be available in sunglasses and even contact lenses. The market for mobile AR services is expected to reach $732 million by 2014, with revenues derived from a combination of paid-for app downloads, subscription based services and advertising.

**2020**

**We’ll finally see some decent AR glasses:** Augmented reality is highly visible on smart phone apps, but we want more — we want rich, customizable, relevant and easy to access AR overlaid directly onto whatever we happen to be looking at. That depends on the glasses and GPS, which should be accurate enough to keep up with the real world by 2020, but also on the spatial Web, with geo-location data.

As you can see, there’s a lot to look forward to. While some of these predictions might not come to pass during the timeline indicated, if ever; they are certainly on the horizon and are only a drop in the bucket of what’s to come. Contributors in this month’s issue of Alert! address many other areas of technology and how they apply – today – to our industry. As researchers, we should not fear the unknown. While many of us are enchanted by the sound of an ocean’s waves or the calming effect of a light breeze on our skin (things we don’t necessarily understand but likely appreciate), so too should we be mesmerized and welcoming to the magical world of emerging technology.

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Great Expectations: Tomorrow’s Technology in Today’s Research
By Patrick Young and Anna Parry

Online participant engagement has grown exponentially over the last five years and it is safe to assume that this trend is set to continue. Surveys, qualitative groups and other research staples have all been transferred online, so now is the time to look to the future by exploring how market research might soon look.
In 2011, Kadence was tasked with contributing to the product development process for a smoothie machine. The client was a food services company with no prior smoothie machine or kitchen appliance experience. Below, we take a look at different stages of the research project and take a leap forward to see how future technology might enhance the process, helping to make our lives a whole lot easier.

**Briefing Meeting**
The research planning process began with a series of face-to-face meetings with the Italian clients. While it is important to build personal relationships, and international travel is one of the perks of research, this process required considerable expense and time investment from both client and agency. Moreover, as the project’s stakeholders were from a number of different businesses, managing the meeting times, places and travel arrangements was an additional logistical challenge.

Holograms and 3-D projection technology could solve a number of these issues in future years. Championed by the Japanese in their 2022 World Cup bid, the technology is currently in its early stages, but could potentially remove the need for the majority of business travel. By setting up 3-D cameras, clients could project into the agency’s meeting room from the comfort of their own workplace, engaging with the team as if they were there in person.

**Pre-tasking**
As part of the research process, respondents had to undertake “pre-tasks” relating to their current smoothie machine and others on the market. These pre-tasks were designed to make the participants think about their machine. What would they look for in their “perfect” smoothie maker?

Augmented reality is an area with huge potential benefits for this stage of research that would allow researchers to capture more insightful data from the pre-tasking process. With this functionality, participants could see a live image of the machine on their phone’s display with interactive feedback forms layered over the live image, thus enabling respondents to take their pre-tasking on the road – to shops that sell smoothie machines, or to a friend’s house who owns a competing brand. Capturing real-time responses to specific features, aesthetics or designs while on the move would vastly increase the number of instances where valuable feedback can be provided, increasing the overall engagement of the respondent in the project.

**Market Scoping**
In order to gain knowledge about the size and nature of the market for smoothie machines, one thousand respondents were recruited to complete an online questionnaire. Although transferring the questionnaire online already made it easier to engage respondents, tomorrow’s technologies could help to make the process even more convenient.

Completing the questionnaire on a smart phone is a small step that is achievable today. Looking further ahead, the use of LCD contact lenses or a future variation on Google’s recently launched augmented reality glasses would allow respondents to engage with a questionnaire on the move.

These technologies project images and icons into the wearer’s field of vision, monitoring eye movements as a means of interacting with the displayed content. Participants could complete questionnaires with minimal effort while on a train, in bed or out shopping.

Going one step further, there might be no need for research respondents to get involved at all in the future. It is not beyond the realm of possibility that a future variant of Apple’s Siri digital assistant, tuned perfectly to the respondent’s attitudes, preferences and idiosyncrasies could complete the survey perfectly accurately on the respondent’s behalf.

**Collaborative Workshop**
The next stage in the project was for representatives from Kadence International, the client and a design agency to meet in a central location to summarize research findings and develop smoothie machine concepts. An illustrator was present to sketch ideas as the presentations and discussions progressed. Bringing together all of the materials and developing them into concepts was a lengthy and intricate process, requiring continual input from all parties.

Today’s virtual prototype testing could be used to a greater extent within market research. This process would allow the product designs to be “built” from computer generated shapes so that the movements, sizing, functions and other aesthetics could be evaluated. As part of the workshop, this would allow those involved to develop, generate and refine ideas further than brainstorming and reactionary drawings allow. Designs could then be sent directly to consumers’ computers, or even their mobile phones and tablets.

The design process can be further developed in line with the technological advancements in interactive transparent 3-D displays. This bleeding edge technology allows users to look through a screen at 3-D objects while reaching around the screen to manipulate them with their hands. This would allow illustrators to produce 3-D representations of the product design concepts, which

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**“Going one step further, there might be no need for research respondents to get involved at all in the future. It is not beyond the realm of possibility that a future variant of Apple’s Siri digital assistant, tuned perfectly to the respondent’s attitudes, preferences and idiosyncrasies could complete the survey perfectly accurately on the respondent’s behalf.”**
could then be touched, edited and changed in real time by the workshop’s participants. Additionally, verbal concepts could be quickly translated into visual form, allowing ideas to be better expressed and developed.

**Concept Testing**

To test the smoothie machine concepts developed in the collaborative workshop, focus groups were conducted across all target markets. Participants were presented with the designs on card concept boards and a moderator was present in order to generate discussion and feedback. As the focus groups were conducted across all markets, external agencies were used to moderate the sessions conducted in a foreign language.

Looking to the future, all participants of the focus group could be projected into the room in the form of a 3-D hologram. With everyone – respondents, moderators and clients – attending the groups digitally, it would be possible to ensure that recruitment isn’t stalled by the proximity of respondents to the hosting location for the focus group. The right respondent could be selected and brought into the room virtually, speeding up the process and allowing a more rigorous candidate selection practice.

Three dimensional printers will allow virtual focus group respondents to have a true concept of the smoothie machine recreated in their homes in a manner that enables far greater interaction with the product than can be achieved with a conventional 2-D image. This physical interaction with the product at the design stage will allow consumers to provide more in depth, incisive and actionable feedback on the aesthetics and ergonomics of the design.

In forthcoming time, as-you-speak translations will allow researchers to moderate groups across all markets, rather than having to employ and coordinate simultaneous translators. There are two notable benefits here: most importantly, agencies will get to hear the responses directly, rather than via a third party contractor; and, the agency will directly experience energy levels, facial expression and other body language, all of which are vital in research.

As for respondent incentives, most are currently paid in cash, check or vouchers, but with the rise of near field communication (NFC) capable mobile phones, paying participants will soon become much quicker, easier and more secure. NFC technology essentially means that the chip from your credit or debit card is stored inside your mobile phone and is allowed to securely communicate with card payment terminals over a short range radio frequency. This will streamline remuneration processes for the agency and that respondents will be able to make use of the incentive immediately.

**Concept Appeal**

One thousand online interviews were conducted in order to understand the likely appeal of the finished smoothie machine concept, clarify the pricing strategy and the potential impact the brand would have on the marketplace. Taking the online aspect of this survey process a few steps further, the use of Second Life – and other future variations on virtual world environments – would allow the client to place different versions and price concepts in virtual stores. This would enable both agency and client to gauge actual consumer buying intentions, rather than just relying on mere survey responses.

**Presentation**

For the final stage of the research process, the team flew to Italy to present findings to the client. This incurred significant travel costs, resulted in time out of the office and needed extensive logistical preparation for both agency and client.

With travel costs increasing and environmental concerns ever-present, any technology which allows the same level of interaction as a face-to-face meeting while removing the need to travel will be invaluable to clients and researchers. Again, holographic representations of the research team and other stakeholders could be projected into the client’s headquarters for the presentation and debrief. Findings could be brought to life through virtual and tangible prototypes using the 3-D printing and interactive transparent 3-D displays. Respondents interacting with 3-D projections of the product would also serve to bring the research process to life in the minds of the client and demonstrate the various aspects of the new design.

In reality, who knows where technology will take researchers in the future. Some of the examples discussed here may come to pass, undoubtedly others will prove unworkable...As research methodologies change and evolve, so will their supporting technologies.”
Welcome New Members

Zeina Alwan
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Greenville, SC

Leah Blix
Maple Plain, MN

John Carroll, PRC
Sage
Irvine, CA

Craig Cheatle
QEK
Warren, MI

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Procter & Gamble
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Minneapolis, MN

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Washington University
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Steve Seiferheld
Turnkey Intelligence
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Getting to Know the Charitable Paul Valdez, PRC
By Amy Shields, PRC

Somewhat frequently, I receive recommendations regarding candidates who should be considered for our regular Member Spotlight article. While it is true that I had the great honor of working beside this month’s spotlight subject for more than 13 years, what’s more important is the number of requests received to share his special story in the pages of Alert!. It’s clear that Paul Valdez, PRC, is an MRA member who has commanded the respect and admiration of many in the profession. This comes as no surprise to those who have labored next to Paul in the trenches – as a peer, industry advocate or humanitarian. However; for those who are meeting him for the first time (by means of the candid interview to follow), be fair warned; you are not only in for a treat, but are guaranteed to smile throughout and feel like you were just introduced to someone who helps make our industry one to be proud of.

**Tell us a little about your company and its history.**
Nichols Research was started by Mimi Nichols in 1978. Mimi started the company from her home, conducting focus groups from her living room while clients listened to the groups from her kitchen. She is truly a pioneer in the world of focus group facilities and marketing research. We are based in the San Francisco Bay Area and Central California and are the largest data collection company in Northern California. We offer expert recruiting, thoughtful project management and on-site client and respondent services. Additionally, we specialize in recruiting a variety of qualitative and quantitative marketing research studies, as well as the recruitment of projects to remote areas throughout California.

I believe people will be surprised to hear how long you’ve been working in the marketing research profession. Can you please tell us how/when you started and how your role at Nichols Research has grown over the years?
When I started 27 years ago, we were video recording focus groups on back-up reel-to-reel tapes and audio taping onto the most innovative invention of the time; the cassette tape! I began my marketing research career while I was still in high school. I was looking for a job to fund the purchase of my first car. I started out as a telephone recruiter and interviewer. Over time, I began to supervise the phone room and some of our quantitative mall projects. In my early 20s, I moved to San Francisco while also at the early stages of managing my first Nichols Research mall facility in Antioch, California. In 1994, we proudly opened our flagship focus group facility in downtown San Francisco. Over the years, I have been responsible for directing and managing the operations of this and the suburban Concord location. Drawing from years of on-site client and respondent service, I currently serve as the Vice President of Client Services. It is a newly created position and continues to evolve in a wonderful direction. I am in the process of developing new client service initiatives as we speak.

I have often heard the word “ambassador” used to describe you; both as a representative of your company and as an industry volunteer/leader. Can you tell us what being an ambassador means to you, for each of these scenarios?
I am enormously fortunate, proud and humbled to represent a company like Nichols Research. Being a part of this company really is like being part of a family in the truest sense. More importantly, I have the most wonderful mentors and friends that anyone could
ever have in this industry – Mimi Nichols and Jane Rosen. In the past, Mimi and Jane freely loaned their industry expertise and guidance and continue this kind of nurturing to present day. They encouraged my professional growth through involvement with local and national industry associations, and supported my business skills and knowledge through the pursuit of the Professional Researcher Certification. I am proud to represent a company that started with humble beginnings and is currently populated with first and second generation researchers, pioneers and leaders in the industry. It gives me great pleasure to share this insight with clients, industry peers and newcomers to the industry. The combined research wisdom and experience of long-time researchers, and the new ideas and foresight of newcomers, is essential in propelling the industry forward. This is what drives me to get involved; to share this insight and learn from new ideas while being part of shaping the future of our industry.

I remember a funny story about the time you chased down and took a picture of a “cheater” (respondent) who tried to participate in an evening study when she had already been a respondent in a study earlier that day. I believe she even tried to disguise herself for the second group. Can you share more details about this entertaining incident, as well as why participant quality is so important.

This incident occurred during a training session for a new Qualitative Assistant (QA) at our San Francisco facility. I happened to be doing a segment of training on how to deal with respondents who frequently participate in focus groups. They are known as “cheaters and repeaters”. This particular respondent was known to have at least 100 different fascinating aliases. In fact, all of the facilities and independent recruiters in the market are aware of her myriad of personas. As I was training the new QA, this infamous respondent walked in and I quickly recognized her. She presented me with fake identification (a photocopied picture of herself on recycled paper), had changed her hair (put in pigtailed), and was signing in for a video game focus group that consisted of 20-something year old females. Although she attempted to change into clothing that was something age appropriate for the group, it was clear her age was 50-something! In a swift motion, I became “research law enforcement” and chased her out of the facility with a digital camera in hand, stating, “I know who you are! I know who you are!”, while attempting to take a picture of her for future reference. Of course, I later humbly informed the new QA that this was technically not the proper way to handle a cheater or repeater.

Quality respondents are vital to the success of any research project. It’s a basic industry standard and clients are always candid with their feedback regarding the quality of respondents; particularly with regard to how they impact a study. Most of the feedback I receive is based on a particular respondent’s engagement with others, being able to freely articulate their opinions and fitting precisely within the recruiting criteria. I strongly encourage companies to keep their database fresh and continuously manage and build it. This will help provide clients with quality respondents with fresh opinions.

What professionally inspires you? What do you enjoy most about working in the field of marketing research?

I enjoy the journey; how marketing research is ever-changing. I also like learning new ways of gathering information from consumers. When I started, the standard research methodologies included door-to-door, mall and field intercepts, and phone surveys. Today, online marketing research has joined the traditional marketing research norm. We are exploring new ways to collect data with the use of interesting technologies like neural measurement and eye-tracking and we are able to find respondents at their convenience via smart phones, social networking, blogs, etc. This is inspiring because as society changes, the industry adapts. We have come a long way from the days of just using a number two pencil and paper!

How long have you been an MRA member? Tell us a little about how you’ve given back to the profession.

I have been an MRA member since 1993. My first involvement was in 1997 as the Chair of the On-Site Hospitality Committee for the Annual Conference in San Francisco. Subsequently, it was Gene Filipi who encouraged me to join the NorthWest Chapter’s Board of Directors as Secretary in 1997 and I have been volunteering locally and nationally ever since. Through volunteer hours on many committees and task forces, I was able to work with others to develop initiatives, projects and programs; providing benefit and value to MRA’s membership as a whole.

Nichols Research has been involved with the MRA since our company’s beginning and getting involved has become part of our tradition.

What advice would you give to someone who is interested in becoming a volunteer for MRA? In your opinion, what are the greatest benefits of “giving back” to the profession?

First, I would recommend attending local Chapter events. Each of the MRA Chapters work tirelessly to provide
exceptional educational events, localized “Meet and Greets” (my proudest MRA contribution!), networking opportunities and so much more. Participating in your Chapter is a great way to get to know other research professionals in your area. Once you are familiar with your Chapter and its functions and events, offer to volunteer in an area that you are comfortable with and go from there. You will naturally establish a network of industry professionals to freely share insights and questions with. I have established wonderful contacts and friendships because of MRA.

Please tell us about your most rewarding or satisfying experience, or your proudest moment as a MR professional.

In the early years of my career, while recruiting or interviewing on the telephone, I spent a lot of time educating consumers on the difference between marketing research and telemarketing. Respondents would consistently ask, “Are you trying to sell me something?” or exclaim, “I’m not interested in buying anything!” There were instances when respondents allowed time to offer an explanation, but even then, most still refused to answer questions and would simply hang up. It was a trying time, attempting to increase response rates through education. I like to believe that those years of educating respondents were instrumental in reaching the higher response rates we benefit from today. Respondents are much more aware of the difference between marketing research and telemarketing – thanks to various media methodologies and the value of marketing research, you would be a _____. Why? …respondent! For once in my life, I want my opinion to count. In all seriousness, I think I would like to get involved in something that has to do with the protection and care of our environment or nature or work in humanitarian efforts or …… (I have many aspirations and warm-hearted intentions).

Do you have a favorite quote or life philosophy to share?

Live everyday as if it was going to be your last. Celebrate life. It is truly precious.

To recommend an MRA member with a special story or background to be interviewed for a future Member Spotlight, please contact the editor at amy.shields@marketingresearch.org.

Pauline loves mystery novels (when she’s not keeping up with the latest industry news), shopping online and salsa dancing (while checking her messages). Meeting client needs and saving time is very important to Pauline.

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Join us June 4–6 in San Diego for three motivating days of high-level content and organized networking in an energetic, warm and welcoming environment.

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- New research innovation strategies and techniques for conducting business-to-business survey research.
- Facilitate brand development through innovative qualitative research methods.
- Use new media to enhance qualitative research methods.
- Focus research results on insights and implications.
- Use advertising as an effective platform for market research intelligence.
- Incorporate the latest digital technologies to create effective research.
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- Implementing DIY survey tools.
- Integrate social media with traditional survey research methods.

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- CEO Reception and CEO Symposium (C-Level executives only)
- Conference App

Save by registering three or more persons from your organization! Register all at the same time and save 10%.

Register Now! www.MarketingResearch.org/ac12

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<td>CEO Symposium Only</td>
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<td>5:30 PM – 6:30 PM</td>
<td>KEYNOTE: NBA Hall of Fame and NCAA Basketball Legend – Bill Walton, Bill Walton, Inc.</td>
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<td>7:30 AM – 8:30 AM</td>
<td>Breakfast</td>
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<td>8:30 AM – 9:15 AM</td>
<td>Membership Meeting &amp; Awards</td>
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<td>9:15 AM – 10:15 AM</td>
<td>KEYNOTE: Increase Business Intelligence, Leverage Social Media and Join the Revolution in Innovation – Barry Jennings, Dell, Inc.</td>
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<td>10:15 AM – 11:00 AM</td>
<td>Expo</td>
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<td>11:00 AM – 12:00 PM</td>
<td>Marketing Effectiveness Study: How to Measure Daily Deals</td>
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Mobile Research Has Gone Mainstream (Part 2)
By Tim Snaith, Ph.D.

Welcome to the second and final article of Mobile Research Has Gone Mainstream in conjunction with part one, which appeared in the April issue of Alert! magazine.

These articles are designed to:
• illustrate how clients have productized their mobile research products; and
• provide you with multiple easy to read client written micro case studies.

They are logically split by the two primary methods for deploying mobile research:
1. Mobile Originated (Pull), where the participant triggers the survey request inbound; and
2. Mobile Terminated (Push surveys), where the researcher sends the invitation to a person who has given their permission to be contacted.

Last month we focused on Mobile Originated, or Pull surveys. Case studies were provided by Ipsos, Abt SRBI, Auto Trader, Symphony IRI, and Hall & Partners.

This month we focus on Mobile Terminated surveys. The format mirrors part one in that the following micro case studies are written by OnePoint clients and illustrate how they are productizing mobile research, and demonstrate the transition from exploration and innovation in mobile research understanding to the delivery of clearly defined and regularly executed services.
## Case study 6: Nielsen (The World’s Largest Market Research Agency)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>UK</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Product Name</td>
<td>Internal Database Maintenance for Smart Phone Analytics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Client</td>
<td>Internal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Previous Technique</td>
<td>Email with multiple reminders, followed by CATI outreach for the remainder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Business Challenge and Why Mobile was Used</td>
<td>We needed to get as complete information as possible from an existing panel that was not very well engaged. We knew their email address and their mobile number and we knew that all respondents had (or should have had) a smart phone. Of this limited audience, we wanted an 80 percent or higher response rate. Nielsen engaged email and SMS.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sample/Participants</td>
<td>Nielsen’s existing panel of smart phone owners.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Channel</td>
<td>SMS</td>
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**Participant Brief**
Participants received an email inviting them to take an online survey. Those who didn’t respond were given an SMS invitation to take a free survey via SMS. Those who didn’t respond to either were outreached by voice.

**Project Challenges**
Reaching 80 percent or more of the panel was possible because we could always outreach through CATI, but the project was not planned and had no budget, so we needed the most cost effective solution.

**Benefits**
Our initial online outreach achieved a 2 percent response rate, little more than blind outreach. The SMS survey received a 49 percent completion rate between two blasts. Furthermore, 98 percent of the responses were within the first 24 hours, meaning the entire fieldwork period for the SMS interviewing stage was 48 hours, compared to 10 days for the email outreach.

**Cost Per Complete**
$1.62 (excluding programming costs of approximately one-half day and analysis of approximately one-half day)

**The OnePoint View**
Nielsen’s use of mobile to reach and engage its panel is a great example of leveraging an increasing preference for using mobile handsets for communication. The speed and volume of response illustrates how mobile can increase reach and representation in a panel or community, thus making mobile research and insight reliable and enabling the continuation and extension of research services with that panel.
### Case study 7: CR Research (Innovative Marketing Insights Firm)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>USA</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Product Name</td>
<td>Situational Method</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Client</td>
<td>Global Drinks Manufacturer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Previous Technique</td>
<td>Online</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Business Challenge and Why Mobile was Used</td>
<td>The goal was to get feedback from 21 to 27 year old beer consumers who had participated in a promotion that involved a trip and travel. The mobile method was a good fit for the younger target and we wanted their feedback close in time to the promotion experience itself; therefore, the mobile approach complimented this goal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sample/Participants</td>
<td>Client provided mobile numbers of consumers.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Channel</td>
<td>SMS/Mobile Web Choice</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participant Brief</td>
<td>Participants were made aware that they would receive a mobile survey and we solicited responses with the following SMS message: Hi (FIRST NAME). Thanks for attending the (BRAND) event! To take our survey select the LINK or for text survey reply with the word GO.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Challenges</td>
<td>Only with getting the contracted company to provide the full list of mobile numbers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benefits</td>
<td>Our completion rate was 56 percent and immediate. The client was very happy with the results we were able to provide as it reduced the project lifecycle significantly and gained insight at the time of the event.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost Per Complete</td>
<td>$1.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The OnePoint View</td>
<td>Mobile research brings location and immediacy to the researcher’s toolkit. These participants were on a train taking part in an experience and providing real-time insight. This is an ideal example of where mobile plays best and was executed with speed and simplicity by the team at CR Research.</td>
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### Case study 8: Maritz Research (Full Service Global Research Agency)

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<tr>
<th>Country</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Product Name</td>
<td>Telecom In-Store Sales Follow-Up Tracker</td>
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<tr>
<td>Client</td>
<td>Confidential (Major US Telecom Provider)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Previous Technique</td>
<td>CATI Surveys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Business Challenge and Why Mobile was Used</td>
<td>Two main reasons for using SMS: 1. Cost. Due to financial pressures, the original CATI study was eliminated but stakeholders still had a need for timely information. After reviewing several alternatives, this study was redesigned as a shorter SMS version of the survey to allow a more immediate response time and so our client could ensure their customers would not incur a cost for the text messages. For the SMS study we collect 6,600 surveys per month and have not sacrificed too much in the way of response rates. Our SMS surveys have an average response rate of 10 percent, compared to a response rate of 13 percent with the previous CATI survey. 2. Flexibility. While this was not an initial reason for choosing SMS, the telecom provider has been able to respond quickly to changing needs of stakeholders by modifying the survey and the sample design, as needed, quickly and easily.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sample/Participants</td>
<td>Customers who have recently visited a store to activate or upgrade their mobile phone.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Channel</td>
<td>SMS/Mobile Web Choice</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participant Brief</td>
<td>This program was originally designed to solicit feedback that would help the marketing team understand what stimulated customers to go into the store and to provide feedback regarding customer satisfaction with the visit. It has been modified over time to address other timely topics. The objective is to get quick feedback shortly after participants have visited the store.</td>
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## Project Challenges
Given that there are market level quotas, we initially needed to build a front-end interface to manage that, much like one would do with a CATI survey. We modified our SMS invitation rate over time to achieve the targeted number of completes by market, ensuring that they were spread throughout the month. We also conducted a pilot with the following objectives:

- To determine response rates for customers using SMS and Mobile Web surveys. (More respond to SMS and give higher ratings.)
- To determine the ideal survey length, where response rate and data quality are optimized. (Include open-ends last as they result in a high drop rate.)
- To evaluate the quality and content of open-ended responses using SMS and Mobile Web surveys. (CATI and Mobile Web open-end responses are richer than SMS.)

## Benefits
The survey instrument was flexible to market conditions and there was a great deal of opportunity for SMS and Mobile Web responses from one SMS invitation.

## Cost Per Complete
In general, outbound mobile surveys are lower priced than CATI and similar to outbound IVR. There are trade-offs to consider in terms of the length of survey needed, depth of open-ended responses, cost, and flexibility.

The cost for clients who can provide their own short code is lower than those who need to purchase one as part of the service. We worked with a telecom provider to ensure that customers did not incur SMS charges for completing the survey, a fact that was clearly stated to the respondent in the invitation.

## The OnePoint View
Telecom businesses globally are recognizing the advantages of plugging their own gateways and short codes into a OnePoint account through our standard telecoms module. This plug and play module takes only a few days to set up and provides fast, convenient and cost effective consumer insight direct from their mobile phone anywhere in the world in real-time. Other telecom companies are also seeing the benefits of daily completion rates of between 10 and 50 percent as a result of their customers helping to identify business improvement opportunities around loyalty and retention.

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### Case study 9: Allegiance (Voice of Customer [VOC] and Enterprise Feedback Management [EFM] Solutions Provider)

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<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Australia</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Product Name</td>
<td>Engage Voice Of Customer Intelligence (VOCI) Platform</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Client</td>
<td>Confidential (Major International Accounting Business)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Previous Technique</td>
<td>IVR Feedback</td>
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#### The Business Challenge and Why Mobile was Used
The client wanted to move beyond IVR to:

- reach new demographics;
- raise response rates above the two to four percent typically achieved via IVR;
- get started with mobile feedback quickly and easily; and
- use mobile feedback alongside IVR and online.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sample/Participants</th>
<th>Consumers of tax preparation services.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Channel</td>
<td>SMS/Mobile Web Choice</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participant Brief</td>
<td>Every customer was sent an invitation following a tax consultation.</td>
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#### Project Challenges
Tax advisors did not consistently set expectations with clients about the feedback process. Clients were accustomed to being contacted by their advisors, and while many did get advanced notice of the feedback process, those who did not were less prepared to provide feedback.

#### Benefits
Doubled response rates; reached intended younger demographics; deepened insight into customer mind-set around tax consultations; combined SMS with online and IVR feedback in a single platform.

#### Cost Per Complete
$1.12

#### The OnePoint View
Mobile as a research channel is becoming increasingly important to clients who are already engaged in multi-channel Voice of the Customer programs. Customers are increasingly relying on their mobile device; addressing them on this device demonstrates the business’ commitment to contacting the customer on a channel of their preference. The ability to plug a mobile capability into the VOCI platform means that Allegiance customers are benefiting from increased reach and there is less potential for black spots in customer understanding.
**Case study 10: Vets Now (The UK’s Largest Provider of Emergency Veterinary Care)**

**Country**
UK

**Product Name**
CEM – Net Promoter

**Client**
Vets Now

**Previous Technique**
Initially we introduced tablet PCs into the clinic for customers to complete feedback via online surveys. We found this to be restrictive because customers come to pick up their pet and want to get home as quickly as possible. Asking them to complete a survey at this difficult time was found to be unsuccessful in generating the volume of feedback we required to drive business improvements and training initiatives.

**The Business Challenge and Why Mobile was Used**
- To obtain feedback from a higher number of our customers.
- To enable clients to complete the feedback at a convenient time when they felt less under pressure.
- To introduce the NPS scoring methodology and adopt a simple, fast and effective way of asking customers if they would recommend our service.
- To improve customer feedback capture at a clinic level by increasing response rates.

**Sample/Participants**
Customers who provided their mobile number during the initial contact process received a text survey invitation, two days after their initial visit to our clinic. Initially, our goal was to achieve a 20 to 25 percent response rate. We are currently working towards more than 30 percent.

**Channel**
SMS

**Participant Brief**
The customer is sent a text asking them to provide a rating between 0 and 10, whether they would recommend our service to a friend or colleague. Once the rating was received, the customer would receive another text asking why they gave that rating. We have adopted the NPS approach and are reviewing the promoters and detractors of our service.

**Project Challenges**
The collection of mobile numbers by clinic staff; customers are in an emergency situation when they visit our clinics and can still be emotional when we send a text two days later; not all clients have mobile phones so we miss a small proportion of our client base.

**Benefits**
- Increased response rate compared with our expectation.
- The OnePoint solution is a flexible system that enables us to change questions when required or have several surveys running at the same time. This allows us to measure the success of initiatives by adding additional questions specific to the particular initiatives.
- A high number of customers leave us comments in excess of the standard 160 SMS character limit, often spending a lot of time giving us valuable feedback. This is common with both Net promoters and Net detractors.
- Use of automated system alerts driven by ratings provides us with the ability to address user concerns before they turn into negative reviews. By providing an avenue for leaving negative feedback, we can avoid our customers passing on this information to the pet owner community.
- Learning what our customers like or don’t like about our service.
- Complements our existing complaint management system by gathering customer feedback in a completely different way.
- Fast method for setting up ad hoc requirements, e.g. evaluating our Wise Coach program.
- Provides a definitive message to our clients that we care about the quality of service that they receive.

**Cost Per Complete**
$0.68

**The OnePoint View**
Vets Now chose to use mobile as an insight solution at an emotionally difficult time for customers. Their success illustrates the execution of great process aligned with a technology/research channel that provides customers the choice as to when they respond. The fact that such large numbers respond so quickly indicates that people are finding mobile research engaging due to its convenience.
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Over the last two articles we have discussed little about the nature of mobile research as an opportunity. As these 10 client micro case studies indicate, mobile research has very much moved from opportunity to mainstream product/service.

The years of piloting and testing are over. It’s now time more agencies and their clients move on; from delivering interesting one-off bespoke mobile fact finding projects, to a standardization and productization approach that enables them to take advantage of design and scale. Once this happens, they will be better positioned to share their learning and be more proactive in the Mobile Market Research Market with recognized products/services. In turn, this will translate to more knowledgeable and experienced providers who can provide clients with the confidence to move beyond their intuition that mobile makes sense – to actually going mobile.

These articles are therefore a call to the MR industry and beyond to:
- share more case studies with the wider research/client community to provide an understanding of the many ways mobile research works;
- conduct more research on research that will provide the answers to methodological questions, e.g. regarding mobile sample representativeness, the effects of smaller screen sizes on questionnaire design, how mobile data collection compares with other channels, which channels work best in different countries, populations of handset users, etc.;
- support professional organizations that are committed to protecting the channel from misuse and who are setting the standards and guidelines for the ethical use of mobile research as a channel;
- develop the theoretical and practical foundations for a research channel that has the greatest reach the world has ever seen; one that will become the primary channel for research and insight in the future as people at large dictate who and how they will share their “in the moment” and “location based” life experiences; and
- productize their mobile research offerings and benefit from the rapid growth that is happening now.

Common terms:
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**Mobile Originated**
When the survey request originates from the participants’ mobile phone. They are requesting a survey by triggering it by, for example, texting in a keyword to a short code, or by scanning a QR code, also called Pull or Keywords surveys.

**Mobile Terminated**
When you upload a permission-based panel or recipient list and you send the first message or survey invitation to their mobile phone, also called Push surveys.

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MRA’s Alert! Magazine – May 2012
Remember The Telephone?
By Darren Biggs

Remember the telephone? You probably should.

With all the hot new ways to secure data, the word on the street is that telephone interviewing is going the way of the dodo bird. Instead of a professionally trained human extracting data, with all its important nuances intact, a virtual sea of respondents are now hitting a series of radio buttons in record time to get their opinions out there. But who are these people and what’s really motivating them to hit all those buttons?

Whether it is online surveying, blasting Web links to panelled respondents, “gamification”, or social media, there is no denying online reach can be vast, fast, and cheap. However, is there a deeper, unseen cost on such technological reliance for securing data? How solid is the data that is being procured? Are all project questionnaires created equal? After years of inundating panellists’ inboxes with survey link after survey link, there are indications that in some cases, data can be skewed, fragmented and mixed.

The online trend for capturing data has reached a point where we better understand some pretty dramatic pros and cons of exclusively choosing a web-based approach to survey target subjects. Like any business, the bottom line plays a decidedly important and crucial role when scoping out the research methodology landscape. Clients want more for less. Thus, enter the Web. Why not? It’s cheap and fast!

Fast? Maybe. Cheap? Maybe not. Blindly choosing to go with the current “trend” and hopping on a potentially misguided bandwagon of data gathering methods may lead to lots of admittedly inexpensive data, but also quite possibly bad data. From indications of differing patterns in data character, to basic questions about information quality, perhaps the telephone lines shouldn’t be cut quite yet.

Obviously, there isn’t any point to commissioning a research project if the data ultimately being analysed is skewed. Your clients are relying heavily on its conclusions. They are designing marketing campaigns and positioning their products to appeal to certain characteristics of their target market. If the respondents answering your questions – questions that have been strategically constructed to help your client accomplish specific business goals – are biased, over-used, or have other background motivations to participate in your study; what is the real cost of moving completely away from the tried and true telephone interview? Sometimes you do in fact get what you pay for.

What seems to be quietly accepted by some researchers today is that respondents no longer need to be “interviewed” and that online surveying will garner similar results. The fact, in reality, is that no conventional method currently exists for randomly selecting individuals for online survey purposes. Take for example how online participants are typically recruited to participate in an interview. More often, an online panel compromised of demographically pre-screened participants is utilized and project invitations are emailed. However, the full nature and limitation of that panel needs to be scrutinized and understood.

First, who exactly are the panellists being invited and interviewed? Pre-screened panellists can be requested to participate in a number of studies over the course of a month or, in some cases, a week. For example, according to an 11 panel study performed by Grey Matter Research and Consulting, an average of 20.43 invitations were sent out each
month per panelist. In some cases, multiple invitations were sent out daily to the same individual. In addition, many of these studies contained participation incentives in the form of cash or sweepstakes draws to encourage response rates. The study also noted that it was not unusual for there to be tremendous cross-usage from one panel company to the next, compounding the possibility of over-utilizing the same participants from one project topic to the next. This is “convenience sample” at its worst. Essentially, research critical to a client’s market strategy is being self-performed by “professional” respondents – so much for unbiased randomization.

Second, the report suggests that some panelists originally recruited to be polled for a particular study weren’t actually the individuals to complete the questionnaire. A spouse, for example, may fill out responses intended for their partner based on the perception of “knowing” how their significant other would answer certain questions. If that project required specific targets for gender and age, it’s very likely that neither would have been accurately satisfied. After all, how would you know otherwise?

Another dismaying and misguided point surrounding the trend of exclusively polling online is that a number of clients seem to believe they can use practically any length of questionnaire to complete their study. This is especially true for projects with incentives attached, assuming this alone will allow for some extra liberty in terms of length. In essence, the respondent’s patience is being bought. Add to this the mentality of the perceived cost savings attached to choosing an online methodology compared to choosing another, such as telephone interviewing.

What some clients don’t seem to realize when making this choice are the hidden costs. Break-off rates inevitably increase, but even more devastating are the unseen, silent “break offs”, where a respondent has mentally tuned out of the survey and is simply hitting a myriad of radio buttons just to get to the finish line, and of course, that incentive. In other words, that completed survey is incomplete, skewed and incorrect. As previously stated, it is not unusual for a panelist to receive and potentially perform a number of online surveys a day. According to the Gray Matter study, with the average online questionnaire running 18 minutes, and pre-screened respondents possibly doing up to seven or eight of these a day, it is easy to conclude that focus can give way to fatigue – and fatigue can give way to compromised results.

To be clear, the purpose of this article is not to bash online methods for capturing market research data. In fact, there are studies that should be performed over the Web. Rather, it’s a gentle reminder of the importance and special role of telephone interviewing as a sometimes critical choice when collecting data and a cue to re-establish a balanced approach when fielding research projects. The phone is not only a viable choice in the digital world, it is essential whenever projects call for a specific picture of thought and opinion.

Generally, the online trend seems to have developed with it a lost awareness of an essential point within the project creation process: all questionnaires are not created equal. Some projects call for an online approach while others are better served having a professionally trained interviewer engaging a respondent. Online projects are typically a good choice whenever the goal is to measure employee attitudes, for example, or where short-format, aided questions will suffice. Alternately, telephone-based surveys are better positioned using long-format questionnaires, where a scrutinizing interviewer can probe and clarify responses when necessary and note important nuances that the typical radio button will miss.

Relying exclusively on online panels for every kind of research project can lead to skewed data and ultimately misinterpreted analysis. The people who respond to online surveys simply do not necessarily reflect the characteristics of the larger population. A study by Julie Pokela, Ph.D., Elizabeth Denny, Ph.D., and Ingrid Steblea of Market Street Research, Inc. found this group is more representative of a specific population of Web users that lean toward a slightly better-educated, more affluent consumer. In other words, a study requiring opinions of the general population is better suited acquiring its data by using the telephone methodology.

The study also demonstrated that a younger population tends to perform online studies and an older population will be more likely to perform a telephone study. The telephone approach is somewhat compromised because of the younger age groups being under-represented with the prevalence of cell phones as well as not being as responsive to surveys as their older counterparts, while the older groups are more likely to answer a landline and participate. A project designed to represent a specific age group may determine the choice of telephone over online.

Beyond the potential concerns surrounding online “convenience sample”, or the skewing of gender and age ratios, or the over-representation of that or under-representation of this or the average telephone study contains other notably important variables not currently found in the online arena.

Remember quality control? Seemingly
more and more overlooked, telephone interviewing allows for the consistent monitoring and recording of live calls, helping to ensure that the quality and expectation of the client remains intact. If an interviewer needs guidance, a project supervisor can move in and coach, sometimes even while an interview is in process. Smart project managers are utilizing sophisticated and innovative ways to create appointments of convenience for prospective hard-to-find respondents, which in turn maximizes completion rates for tricky research. In addition to this, completed interviews are routinely validated to ensure exact qualifications are met while troubled cases can be removed immediately should there be an inaccuracy. While these well-known facts point to the basics in good data gathering, they're becoming a dangerous secondary consideration.

Another less tangible point, given the currently common-place feel of online survey requests, is that a telephone interview can now present the respondent with a sense of importance surrounding the study at hand. If the project names its client during the call, that client has an opportunity to be professionally represented by a qualified interviewer. This way, clients can also remain in contact with their customers while gleaning important attitudes within their market. Quite simply, data gathering becomes a personal experience again and an atmosphere of accountability is created.

The field work phase in any research project is critical to procuring quality data in order for a project to be truly successful, but this seems to be increasingly overlooked. Telephone data collection vendors allow clients to be personally involved during this very important tier in a project’s life, whereas data generated online tends to be collected at such a fast pace, there simply isn’t time to gauge questionnaire performance anomalies or other problems. While online methods can certainly pull an abundant amount of data quickly; they are no match for questionnaires requiring immense detail and subtle clarifications. The point is; it’s important to look at each project individually and understand its unique needs and know that a “one-size-fits-all” approach can deliver with it false data upon which your client’s business so heavily relies. The implications here are immense – and possibly expensive.

There is perhaps an understandable trend that the telephone deserves be on the endangered species list of data collection methods. On the other hand, it’s very possible that the telephone interview is simply a lost art; one needing to be rediscovered and used to dig down to find more difficult data and even utilized in conjunction with new online trends to assure quality.

With the pervasiveness of newer and newer technologies, it is possible that what was once considered old is actually becoming new again. In other words, a thousand radio buttons can’t compare to the depth, honesty and ability of the expertly performed telephone interview. Integrity-driven, quality-assured, concise and classic, maybe now is exactly the time to remember the original wisdom behind a somewhat older technology – the telephone.

Darren Biggs is with Telepoll Market Research, a boutique data collection firm specializing in telephone market research to assist organizations, manage brands, markets, marketing campaigns and consumer perceptions.

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The Day The Music Died….Or, Did It?
By Ben Smithee

It was cassettes over eight-tracks, CDs over cassettes, and MP3s over CDs. And, it was video that killed the radio star, right?

As a society, the majority of us are somewhat hesitant or averse to dramatic shifts in the way we go about life. This becomes especially apparent when it relates to technological advancement, not to mention when we add money and business into the mix. We would rather just carry on with “business as usual”. It seems reasonable for hesitancy to exist, as well as anxiety over the blind adoption of new and unproven shifts in the way we do things.

Let’s have a gut-check moment here. What is your immediate and natural reaction when I mention things like DIY survey tools, Google Consumer Surveys, and social media for research and recruiting? I suspect about half of you reading this (thanks for doing so!) had neutral or very little reaction, about a quarter of you reacted with positive intrigue, and the remainder possibly cringed with thoughts of lack in quality, significance or validity. This is not a case of right or wrong, but more of a difference in mindset. While many who know me or have heard me speak on various digital topics would likely assume I am in the quartile that is positively intrigued; I can’t say they’re wrong. However, I also see and understand the opposing viewpoints, and this piece will not try to combat them – I promise. In many instances, the concerns around DIY and other emerging (can we still call them emerging?) technologies are largely unproven, or suffer from various shortcomings compared to more traditionally utilized methods. This article, though, revolves around technology’s impact on the industry as a whole; both directly, and in how our industry’s response is viewed by other marketing and communication functions, and the general consumer population as a whole.

Let’s go back to music again for a minute. There is no real argument that technology, specifically the Web, has forever changed the music industry. The question: is it for better or worse? On one hand, we have an influx of peer-to-peer music sharing, piracy issues, and lowering of profits from music sales. On the other hand, the ability for talent to come from anywhere, regardless of their ability to afford large marketing spends, or even very expensive studio time, has created many opportunities for bands that may never have “made it” previously. It is also clear that we are seeing a trend of
It is evident that Google, Facebook and other communities are going to enter the consumer insights and research field. What types of implications does that present, and how must we respond? As a whole, we must be quicker to adapt and understand. In the near future, client-side researchers will further look to research suppliers as an expert clearinghouse for new methods, and must feel comfortable turning to supplier partners for guidance and input. In order for us to be seen as such, we must embrace change and lead the race to understanding and deep knowledge about the changing landscape. While we must not go blindly into adapting new technological tools and methods, we must be eager to acknowledge their potential benefit and quickly learn when and where they fit into our armamentarium of approaches.

The other side of our future pertains to our perceived image in the minds of the consumers. Both suppliers and client-side researchers must work together to improve the image of our industry and advocate for the consumer, ensuring that they view us as having their best interests in mind. I recall an older post by Jeffrey Henning that shared verbatim responses about consumers’ negative reactions to researchers utilizing social media for research. They did not trust researchers to accurately portray their opinions, or even to not go as far as misrepresenting those opinions to better serve the researcher’s motives. These types of findings, no matter how big or small, show us the need to improve the overall image of our beloved industry. Similar to how social media has empowered companies to have more personalized relationships with their customers, how can we continue to develop relations with consumers? How valuable would it be to have relationships with the top 100 “mommy bloggers” out there? What about the top 100 “car enthusiasts”? The possibilities and value of examples like this are real (and very attainable), but I’ve yet to see a large majority of researchers capitalize on them. While it takes valuable time to try and understand the influx of new technologies at every corner, and to form personal relationships with every heavy twitter user and Facebook addict, it is continually becoming more a part of the research world. The industry is clearly evolving; are we? We have begun to take massive steps forward. We are seeing dramatic technological improvements in the tools we use, as well as forward thinking applied to topics such as mobile research – moving from merely another platform to survey consumers, to a whole new way to approaching research in general. If we continue to foster and promote new and innovative thinking, we will continue to thrive as an industry. It is up to us. With the amount of brainpower and creativity in our industry, I am definitely bullish about our future! Admittedly, I feel blessed to be part of the industry at a time where such significant change and evolution is abundant. I am seeing new things that catch my eye from the big players like Google and Facebook, but also seeing startups like Insightpool and CrowdTap taking elements of recruiting and influence identification to the next level. While I won’t be trying to ride every wave that comes my way, you can be sure I will be sizing every one of them up for potential. I encourage everyone to take just 5 to 10 minutes every day to check out something new with regard to technology and its application to research. You would be amazed at what is going on in the world outside of our typical resources. Mashable’s tech and startup pages are a great place to start, and I have yet to pick up magazines, such as Alert!, without learning something new. So, strap on your headphones and help me wave the research banner wildly! 

Ben Smithee is the CEO of Spych Market Analytics, a company providing innovative solutions for companies seeking a better understanding of the Gen Y and Millennial market segments. Ben can be reached at ben@spychresearch.com.
Market Research: Navigating Trends and Technology
By Lee Orr

Market research has undergone a sea change—a transformation, if you will—in recent years. New trends and technology have kept researchers and the organizations they represent on their collective toes, and have brought about two options: expand your horizons or get left in the dust.

The big mover has been text-based research. Customers are supplying feedback in new ways and in great volume; unbelievable volume. The paradigm shift from traditional channels, e.g. focus groups, mail-in surveys, telephone interactions, to new media has been head-spinning. The voice of the customer has truly emerged as a force in understanding why they make the choices they do.

What do these trends and technology mean to researchers? We’ll get into that, but the overarching advice is simple: learn to embrace the new, continue with the old and hold on to your hats.

Big Data
In case you haven’t heard already, Big Data is the latest buzz word in the industry. Heck, it’s even the latest buzz word at the White House.

When I think of a way to explain Big Data, I think of the giant stockroom at the end of Raiders of the Lost Ark...all of
those crates. It’s overwhelming, which is exactly how most companies currently see it, as information paralysis.

To summarize, Big Data consists of the massive amounts of information being collected every day, minute and second from a variety of sources. These sources include social networks, Internet search records, customer relationship management (CRM) software, surveys, call center detail, Web logs, transactional information and more. In research circles, capturing and utilizing Big Data effectively would be a silver bullet for marketers; having a 360 degree view of customers is something companies crave. We know where this feedback is coming from, but what are the best ways to corral all this info and put it to work for us strategically? That’s the billion dollar question.

Greg Timpany, Senior Marketing Research Manager at Global Knowledge, says “From a marketing perspective, most companies don’t have a clue how to handle the data.” Indeed, but that doesn’t mean they aren’t trying.

Products helping companies with their data integration processes are on the market and developers are working night and day to create more effective technology to capture, integrate, analyze and report on all of this siloed data. Why? Because there’s such great value in this information. Because companies know that if they can win the battle vs. Big Data, they’ll be in an enviable position, far ahead of their competitors. That’s enough of a reason to try.

Social Media and Mobile
Market research and social media are married. No matter how dysfunctional this union can sometimes be, the relationship appears permanent. Combining traditional research with social is becoming a vital component in capturing the voice of the customer, and the vast majority of CEOs agree.

The ante has officially been “upped” for market researchers, especially with the introduction of mobile technology.

There’s no doubt that mobile technology has changed the game for market researchers. We can now survey attendees as they walk out the door of a closing reception at a conference. Diners can comment proactively about their service at a restaurant while they’re paying a bill. Movie critiques and concert reviews can all be “published” in an instant. Whether or not this is a good or a bad thing, it is our reality.

The upside to this is that businesses now have the chance to react on the fly. When someone posts on a review site that their steak wasn’t cooked properly or they received less than stellar service, management immediately contacts the poster and offers their next meal gratis. Problem solved. Now they may very well have a customer for life and new advocate for their business.

Another bonus: this feedback is all free. All you need to do is gather it. I know, you just read about how it’s not that easy, but still, this instant information is a dream to researchers. The work is essentially being done for you.

It’s been said that smart phones account for half of all mobile phones in the US, and this will only increase in the coming years. As part of this growth, actual phone usage is going up as well. Gone are the days of just watching television, focusing solely on the giant flat screen that takes up half your living room. We live in a multi-tasking world, thus it makes sense that Neilson Research says 88 percent of tablet owners and 86 percent of smart phone users indicate that they use their devices while watching television at least once during a 30-day period. Among the reasons: checking email, looking up product information or searching for details (or commenting!) on the program they’re watching. No surprise that people love their gadgets.

A Pew Research report also notes that by the year 2020, “most people will have embraced and fully adopted the use of smart-device swiping for purchases they make, nearly eliminating the need for cash or credit cards.” So, now we can tie transaction data to smart phones? Did we mention “sea of change”?

This all points to the fact that the more consumers use their “devices,” the more companies and researchers are going to learn about their personal preferences and buying habits, adding even more to the Big Data pool. I hope you have your water wings ready.

Text Analysis (or Data Mining)
Market researchers...it’s up to you now. The answer? Something called multi-modal data collection. Combining multiple modes of data collection to completely understand customers (surveys, mobile, mail, social networks).

Quantitative? Solved. Qualitative? We’re working on it. Integrating them? The holy grail of research (sorry, another Indiana Jones reference).

Getting a holistic view of constituents is every organization’s goal. But as we discussed in the Big Data section, gathering qualitative data is a challenge. It comes in fast and from a variety of sources; it’s unstructured and inevitably leads to a lot of head-scratching. It’s been hypothesized that roughly 80 percent of business-relevant information originates in unstructured form, primarily as text. There has to be a solution.

One of the solutions for the Big Data conundrum currently being utilized is Text Analysis, or “data mining.” This next gen method is becoming very popular for those who understand it, particularly when it comes to surveys and social media. It’s a way to hear what your customers are really saying.

Basically, this research method consists of gathering that unstructured content (from various sources), and using software to extract it for meaning and insight. The intention is to secure “high quality” information for companies and researchers. Good data equals knowledge.

The benefits are clear, as effective analysis can lead to strategy and applications that include brand management and customer experience tracking. The flip side? All of this open-ended text data can be hard to assess.

The challenge for researchers is that typical, automated techniques used in quantitative data gathering don’t apply to text analytics. Capturing data from blogs, Web chats, social media, etc. can be time consuming; and in the race to react to the voice of the customer, speed equals success. Third party software solutions have expedited the process to the point where researchers can analyze data in close to real-time. A Google search will show you how these providers are elevating their way to the front of the line to earn your business.

The promise of delivering integrated insights is music to the ears of companies. This methodology is still embryonic, but whoever captures this segment is going to be making a mint.

Surveys
This leads us to a traditional and highly effective source of gathering data: the survey. By marrying quantitative
surveys with qualitative data from text analysis, market researchers can gain that sometimes unattainable, holistic view of their constituents. Leveraging surveys can actually be a less difficult undertaking because we can control the content a bit more than, for example, the comment section on a consumer Web page. Even with open-ended questioning, we can drive responses.

Customer surveys will always play a role in research and are constantly being developed, augmented and repurposed. They are relatively quick to put together and produce, inexpensive and yield valuable information. If you’re in the business of collecting surveys, there are new methods and formats constantly being developed.

While tried-and-true methods like MaxDiff and Conjoint Analysis will continue to be applied, more engaging and interactive experiences for respondents are being developed and augmented. These allow the survey process to be more enjoyable for respondents, cut down on frustrating abandonment rates and yield better analytics, which makes the process of gathering Big Data even more of a worthwhile venture for organizations. Here are a few great survey types that are helpful in keeping respondents engaged:

**The Slider Scale** allows you to ask questions based on a range, typically something such as “how would you rate Alert! magazine’s editorial content on a scale of 1-10?” Or, “how much do you agree with this statement…?” Users (on their computers, tablets or smart phones) slide their cursor or finger to indicate their choice. Cool…right?

**Image Ranking Surveys** offer respondents the opportunity to visualize their answers, then drag and drop images into their preferred order. A car rental company could have logos for Ford, Chrysler, Chevrolet, Toyota and Honda, and ask you to drag and drop the logos one by one in order of preference. Again, the goal here is keeping the respondent engaged.

Additionally, as we become more global, the ability to deploy multi-language surveys to reach constituents all over the world is becoming increasingly necessary. Translation programming software means that we don’t have to hope customers have English as a second language. This only expands the reach of our survey tools and data collection abilities.

Survey ingenuity alone isn’t the key. Researchers need to target their questions to customers in a particular way. Open-ended questions at the conclusion of your survey will go a long way in capturing a customer’s voice and will provide you with the qualitative data needed to react.

Budding technology will continue to play a role in how surveys are presented to customers. Timpany believes, “as tech expands, the touch points will continue to expand…GPS, Skype, TelePresence, and in general, greater use of multi-media in surveys.”

This is an exciting trend, but as we mentioned earlier, abandoning the meat-and-potatoes feedback principles for the sake of flash is a mistake.

**The Future**

This brings us to our final point, that tools don’t make talent. In other words, just because you have a guitar, it doesn’t mean you can play like Eric Clapton.

It’s tempting to sit back and let the tech take over. Technology is having a profound effect on the way marketers sell products and services, and how they collect feedback. All of which provides better campaigns and customer support, and assistance with decision making processes.

Before you dive in, take heed of this advice: with all of the new technologies, content, media, analytics, CRM, marketing automation, social media, reporting – take a breath and step back. Review these innovations, plan your strategy and test. Decide what best suits your goals and what you expect in terms of return. In the meantime, remember to hold onto your hats.

Lee Orr is the Senior Director of Feedback Management at Cvent, an event, survey and eMarketing solutions company.
Now that more field services and qualitative research consultants are using social media to assist them in recruiting for qualitative studies, it is important, QRCA believes, to understand more about how this new type of recruiting works, what the issues are and how to use it effectively and properly.

Heard anything about social media lately? Maybe the question should be, if you haven’t heard anything about social media lately, where have you been? Of course, this is a hot topic today for just about everyone. In our profession, qualitative researchers are involved in studying social media, participating in it, using it to build their businesses and now for recruiting study participants.

In order to learn how social media (SM) is being used for qualitative fieldwork today, the QRCA Field Committee decided to do its own research on advantages and issues. Two online bulletin boards were conducted. Most participants were field service managers, some of them qualitative research consultants as well; some were QRCs with experience using SM recruiting. (Social media was defined as various online technology tools that enable people to communicate, share information and resources via the Internet and mobile devices. Discussion forums and sites such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and Craigslist were given as examples.)

Study highlights:
- SM use in qualitative research recruiting is on the rise, participants said, yet there were wide-ranging estimates of how much it is currently employed.
- Looking ahead, there was agreement that SM recruiting is likely to continue growing. However, participants do not expect it to replace regular qualitative recruiting in most cases.
- Key advantages of SM recruiting cited center on locating low incidence respondents who are difficult, even impossible, to find in other ways, and for verifying some respondent information (for example, employment, job title). SM recruiting can save field services – and as a result, clients – time and effort in recruiting.
- Several cautions about SM use were also raised. Some population segments are not highly involved with SM yet. Regular phone follow-up screening and confirmations are needed in addition to online contact, participants emphasized, so potential respondents can be questioned in depth and the research process can be explained. Other issues include: finding the right websites, forums, etc. can be quite time-consuming; some sites are less trustworthy, attracting “cheaters” who lie about their qualifications; recruiters and QRCs need to be careful about protecting respondent privacy.
- Should QRCs/clients be informed or asked permission about recruiters using social media? This question evoked divided reactions. On one side, some participants feel clients should be told, while others said clients trust their field services to use appropriate recruiting methods.
- Best practices suggested by participants combine pragmatic and ethical considerations:
  - Use the more reputable SM sites, avoiding ones recruiters have found to attract people who are more likely to lie about their qualifications.
  - Use SM recruiting only as a pre-screening tool, following up with detailed screening by phone.
  - Word initial messages and pre-screens carefully: do not provide so much information about the study specifications that make it is easy for potential respondents to cheat (“yes, I fit those specs exactly!”); do not use non-professional or “hyped-up” language, e.g. about making lots of money.
  - Respect respondent privacy. While SM sites can be useful for recruiting and for verifying screen answers, recruiters should not pass along respondents’ “personally identifiable information” to clients.
  - Consider a special non-disclosure agreement stating that respondents will not divulge proprietary information from the study on blogs or online forums.
  - Follow SM proper etiquette for online forums and community sites. For example, recruiters should not intrude on discussions without regard for participants’ feelings and desire for privacy.

The Field Committee suggests some other points for field services:
- Training of recruiters might be very helpful since the use of SM recruiting is still relatively new.
- Consider informing and educating field clients about plans to employ SM recruiting for a project, including reasons why, which sites will/will not be used, and guidelines that will be followed. This may prove to be unnecessary but it can prevent communication problems later.

For the full report, see the QRCA website in the “Publications” section or e-mail judy@langerqual.com.

QRCA would like to thank the following individuals for their participation in the study referenced in this white paper.

Field Committee study researchers:
Michelle Finzel, Helen Karchner, Judy Langer

Study participants:
Gary Altschul, Kay Aubrey, Erin Bishop, Jim Bryson, Sean Campbell, Barbara Gassaway, Terri-Lyn Hawley, Jeff Henn, Daphne Hussey, Chris Lee, Betsy Leichliter, Alice Marshall, Julie Medalis, Chelle Precht, Julia Rhines, Kay Salvio, Steve Schlesinger, Adam Schrager, Kristin Schwitzer, Terri Sorenson, Ben Smithee, Mark Sumpter, Brianna Sylvester, Freddie Williams

Online platform provider contributors: iTracks, 20/20 Research
Making the Leap from Market Research to Insight
Part Three: Quantitative Data
By Thom Pulliam

This is the final of a three part series that has provided practical counsel on the subject of insights and where they hide. In January’s issue, we looked at *The Four Places Insights Hide*, using the “Don’t Mess With Texas” campaign as an example of how a few words can communicate so much and to so many – effectively. The second article, published in March, focused on drawing insights from qualitative data.

As mentioned in earlier editorials, as market researchers and brand strategists, we hunt for insights – unique combinations of information that give meaning to the marketplace. We are familiar with a myriad of methodologies used in the collection of data, but oftentimes struggle with making the information we find useful. How do we transform information into insight? This third and final piece for *Alert!* magazine will focus on answering this question as it relates to quantitative data.

Quantitative research measures queries on a numerical scale and encompasses three types of research techniques: observation, physiological measurement (i.e. eye tracking and brain wave studying), and survey research. Raw data derived from a quantitative study is useless by itself; only data that have been thoroughly analyzed is of any value to decision makers. Thus, one of the major roles of the researcher and strategist is to examine, organize, and statistically test the data so that meaningful conclusions and insights can be drawn. All too often, clients conduct quantitative research only to have the work result in a “data dump” with no discernible conclusions, implications, or direction for implementation of the results. Likewise, clients frequently spend significant sums of money not on actionable and insightful research, but on reports and binders of quantitative data that sit – largely unused – on shelves or in filing cabinets. This happens, not because quantitative research is inherently unable to surface insights, but because the approach is often not optimized to do so.

If you put garbage in, you get garbage out. When embarking on any research project it is of vital importance to start with clear research objectives. When using quantitative research to test hypotheses, concepts, copy, products, etc., it is very clear what your research objective is: figure out how an audience responds to the work. Do they like it? Does it resonate? Is the brand linkage there? Clients adverse to risk frequently rely on this type of testing to validate their direction before bringing something to market. But, what are the best ways to use quantitative research early on, as an input of the discovery process; when you are searching for a leading insight to inspire strategy? The key first insightful and actionable step to quantitative research is for both researcher and client to define and agree upon what they want to learn. By always setting research objectives first, before determining what questions to ask or how to ask them, you set yourself up for success.
What are your research objectives? If you want to learn what an audience’s top motivators for visiting the Biltmore Estate in autumn are, then you can count on asking questions about price, travel distance, weather, attractions, and holiday vacation time. If you are looking to understand, by market, how consumers compare ULTA to Sephora, then your line of inquiries would involve selection, proximity, price, customer experience, store environment, and networks of communication.

Once your research objectives are established, your questions developed, and your study fielded, it is time to analyze the information and uncover insights. In quantitative research, insights live in the juxtaposition of data with surrounding observed associations. These associations, represented as correlations, indexes, and scales provide context and meaning to the data and allow us to make statements about the likelihood of an event given the occurrence of another event. Quantitative research allows us to zoom out and see patterns that are not obvious from our usual vantage point. For example, data mining helped retailer Victoria’s Secret find geographic differences in preferences for bra sizes and colors that were previously unnoted. As a result, the company improved its purchasing and inventory management efficiency. In a different example of zooming out with quantitative analysis, Berger and Le Mens looked at the prevalence of first names going back to 1880 (as recorded by the US Census). They found that the faster a name becomes popular, based on the number per one million children, the faster it declines to “pre fad” levels. Only by “zooming out” in a temporal sense and looking at data over a long period (and a large number of names) could the researchers discover this pattern.

Another technique for making quantitative research more actionable is to set it up with discovery qualitative research. In other words, use methods such as qualitative focus groups to expand your thinking on a research objective and better articulate your quantitative methodology. For example, when the research objective is to understand what consumer wants and needs are driving the shift from agent-based auto insurance providers to direct-to-consumer providers, talking with consumers before setting up the quantitative survey helps provide a more exhaustive set of variables to test. This qualitative discovery provides the people writing the quantitative research with more knowledge about the consumer mindset and marketplace, and helps inform the creation of quantitative methodology.

Qualitative research provides rich understanding of consumers and the marketplace, while quantitative also has its place and is more than a tool used to post-test ideas. When set up with the right research objectives and thoughtful analysis, the raw data from quantitative research yields meaningful insights. Furthermore, the power of quantitative research lies in the safety of statistical significance – knowing at a specific confidence level that your insight is representative of the larger population, and not an anomaly reflected by a few outliers (as is the risk with qualitative research).

Thom Pulliam is an independent strategic communications professional newly residing in Los Angeles, CA.
There’s no doubt about it, MRA is on a roll. We have seen so many positive changes in our products and services, that it is hard to keep track of all of them. I don’t think the value of my MRA membership has ever been stronger.

We kicked off the year with a new logo and website, both of which were long overdue. The website has become more of a destination for people. The Insights Café has turned into a resource for members to converse on the most advanced topic, or to get an answer to a simple question. Strong attendance at our Annual Conference last June gave the first hint that the recession was coming to an end. This gave us a great kick-start to our fiscal year.

We boldly held the first Corporate Researchers Conference in September. Somewhat of a novelty for our industry, the Conference was co-sponsored with Quirk’s Marketing Research Review and the Corporate Executive Board. This Conference bested our estimates for attendance and the buzz on the street was amazing. People who took a risk on an inaugural event were glad they did, while those who did not attend realized they missed something special. Strong attendance at our Annual Conference last June gave the first hint that the recession was coming to an end. This gave us a great kick-start to our fiscal year.

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I recommend you hold the dates for our sophomore year – to be held in Dallas from September 19–21, 2012.

We listened and tweaked the online search capabilities for Blue Book, significantly expanded circulation for Alert! magazine, offered more free webinars, and streamlined the process for gaining and maintaining PRC status. We also worked diligently with state and federal legislatures to protect the industry from any harmful or costly government regulation. In the middle of all of this, we moved headquarters to Washington, DC. We are the only industry association based in our nation’s capital. We felt this was critical given the expanding need for advocacy on behalf of the industry.

This was also our first year with a streamlined MRA Board of Directors. We went from 19 board members to 11. The change was phenomenal. While I dearly miss the board members who did not continue with us, it was clear that the board had grown too large to be fully effective. The new board structure has let us move more quickly and wisely, in a focused direction. And thankfully, many past board members are still actively volunteering in other roles.

None of this would have been possible without the dedication of the staff and many volunteers; however, I will save my acknowledgements for the June issue of Alert! When I accepted the chairmanship, it was with both trepidation and joy. I’m happy to say that joy won. I had the pleasure of working with a wonderful team and made some friendships that I will always cherish.
Endless Possibilities
By Debby Schlesinger-Hellman, PRC, Chairman Elect (2012-2013)

June is fast approaching and a few things come to mind: We celebrate Father’s Day and it is the most popular month for weddings. June is also the month when many schools end their terms. There will be graduations from elementary school, high school and college. It is the completion of a term of learning and then new beginnings. This holds true for the end of our term and the beginning of the new is highlighted at the MRA Annual Conference. This year we are in beautiful San Diego. I am especially excited because I will be following in the footsteps of so many of my friends and colleagues as the new Chairman of the Board for MRA. I am eager to work directly with our wonderful Board, alongside the great MRA staff on our path of continued improvements for this Association. My predecessors, Ken Roberts, Elisa Galloway and Kim Larson have done some of the “heavy lifting” as we made some difficult, but needed changes, and now we will have the opportunity to push further down that path and reap the benefits. Thank you Ken, Elisa and Kim!

We have many passionate members who have or are currently volunteering for MRA. These members are the foundation of our Association. I feel honored and privileged to hold the Chair position for 2012-2013 as a volunteer. It is with great pride that this Board will work with you, the members, to continue our efforts in upholding MRA’s:

• Vision: The preeminent association promoting, unifying and advancing the insight, opinion and marketing research profession.
• Mission: MRA vigorously supports and advocates for our members’ professional growth and success.

This is very important as we remember the values we hold dear: quality, integrity, leadership, innovation, education, community and protection. The possibilities are endless for the 2012-2013 year. Following are some of the lofty goals that have already been set:

• A strategic plan for MRA’s next 3 to 5 years; some much needed big ideas so we continue to grow in membership, content and breadth of industry needs. Every company, including associations, should have a plan that will give direction for evolution.
• An image campaign for MRA; a more inclusive image that represents the preeminent marketing research organization, regardless of research mode - where common interests are identified and addressed effectively.
• PRC; continued efforts to streamline the process and encourage and engage the industry to elevate the proficiency and expertise in our profession.
• A new online education forum; a place to gain knowledge, insight and grow with ease and efficiency.
• Partnerships with other associations; finding common ground and including other groups and leaders to better serve our community with an all-encompassing environment.

MRA is energized. We ask all of you to join our volunteer forces as we grow and offer the best resources to those in our industry.

Moving Forward
By David W. Almy, MRA, CEO

2011 was a challenging year of growth and change for MRA members, as the economy continued to fluctuate and uncertainty seemed to have been the watchword. While times are improving and certainly are much improved over the darkest days of 2009, the pressures on margins and perceived threats to traditional research from big data and DIY continue to vex many. Corporate researchers have seen downsizing both of staff and budgets. But there were bright spots, too, as many members reported a resurgence in research activity and a pent up demand for marketing insights, signaling an enduring appreciation for research as a solution to economic stagnation.

For its part, MRA had a fantastic year of growth and change in 2011, culminating in the relocation of our headquarters from Connecticut to Washington, DC, as we turned the corner into 2012. Alert! and Blue Book both ended the year in strong positions, with Alert! gaining a new look and content from a new designer and editor. With co-sponsors Quirk’s and the Market Research Executive Board, MRA launched the Corporate Researchers Conference in September in Chicago, which replaced our First Outlook Conference as MRA’s fall major event. New events are always a risk, particularly in a tough economy, but the new CRC was a resounding success, attracting more than 400 attendees to our inaugural run, and an expanded, repeat performance is in preparation for 2012.

MRA continues to attract new members as we broaden our ranks to provide an association home for corporate researchers around the world. As we survey member and prospective member needs, we’ll roll out new and better programs to address industry and governmental affairs issues and support marketing researchers – of all kinds – everywhere.
Treasurer’s Report

With continued sound financial practices and tight fiscal management, I’m happy to report a net gain of $83,179 in 2011. Like many MRA members, we have weathered difficult economic times. For the first time in three years the MRA is ending the year with a profit. And we began 2012 with an even stronger financial footprint, having fully paid our short term loan. With our conference schedule stronger than ever, we expect this profitable financial trend to continue.

Statement of Financial Position

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INVESTMENTS

MRA’s investment funds are intended to be a six month contingency operating reserve. In 2011 MRA’s investment funds increased 14.75 percent from 2010. The ending balance in investment securities was $1,534,190.

PROFIT & LOSS STATEMENT

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<td><strong>Net Income/Loss</strong></td>
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MRA Board of Directors 2011-2012

Executive Committee

Chairman of the Board
Ken Roberts, PRC
Cooper Roberts, Inc.

Immediate Past President
Elisa Galloway, PRC
Galloway Research Service

Secretary
Jill Donahue
Nestle Purina PetCare

Chairman Elect
Debby Schlesinger-Hellman, PRC
Schlesinger Associates

Treasurer
Kevin Lonnie, PRC
KL Communications, Inc.

Ex Officio Director
David Almy, CEO
MRA

Directors At Large

Scott Baker, PRC
Adept Consumer Testing

Ted Donnelly, PRC
Baltimore Research

Vaughn Mordecai, PRC
Discovery Research Group

Melissa Pepper, PRC
Tammadge Market Research, Inc.

Cathy Scott, PRC
Kimberly-Clark Corporation

Dan Womack, PRC
Aflac, Inc.

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KL Communications, Inc.

Colleen Meltzer Moore, PRC
Moore Research Services

Ken Roberts, PRC
Cooper Roberts, Inc.

Schlesinger Associates

Vaughn Mordecai, PRC
Discovery Research Group

Trends & Technology Committee 2011-2012

Chair
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Jim Bryson
20/20 Research, Inc.

Janet Savoie, PRC
Online Survey Solution

Committee Members
Jerry Arbittier
SurveyHealthCare

Aaron Hill, PRC
Sawtooth Software, Inc.

Lynn Welsh
Olsen Research Group, Inc.

Kevin Lonnie, PRC
KL Communications, Inc.

John Zarrella, PRC
Research Results, Inc.

Standards & Ethics Committee 2011-2012

Chair
Jay White, PRC
Baltimore Research

Jerry Haselmeyer
Seek, Inc.

Kim White, PRC
EFG Research

Committee Members
Elyse Gammer

Merrill Shugoll, PRC
Shugoll Research

Ben Smithee
Spych Market Analytics
Government Affairs Committee 2011-2012

Chair
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Cohen Research Group

Committee Members
Robert Baranoff
LIMRA International
Dan Bernard
Confirmit

Jim Bryson
20/20 Research
Kathy Frankovic
CBS News
Diane Kosobud
Ipsos
Jackie Lorch, PRC
SSI

George Pappachen
Kantar Group
Howard Schlesinger
Schlesinger Associates
Kara Westerbeek, PRC
Rosetta Stone

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Lightspeed Research

Committee Members
Chanttel Allen, PRC
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Amber Esco, PRC
Schlesinger Associates
Lori Kaplan
National Public Radio

Ginny Kevorkian, PRC
Memorial Health System
Paul Poslusny
Marketing Systems Group
Paul Valdez, PRC
Nichols Research

Board Liaison
Melissa Pepper, PRC
Tammadge Market Research, Inc.

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Chair
Alice Butler, PRC
M/A/R/C Research

CRC Committee Chair
Dave Koch, PRC
ADAPT Inc.

Publications Chair
Melanie Courtright, PRC
Research Now

Annual Conference Program Chair
Chuck Miller
DM2 Digital Marketing & Measurement

Board Liaison
Scott Baker, PRC
Adept Consumer Testing

Corporate Researchers Conference Committee 2011-2012

Chair
Dave Koch, PRC
ADAPT Inc.

Education Chair
Alice Butler, PRC
M/A/R/C Research

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MRA’s Alert! Magazine – May 2012
John Locke was a British philosopher who espoused the notion that individuals have what is known as natural rights. These natural rights are universal and unalienable.

According to Locke, the primary rights are “life, liberty and property”. Other philosophers and the founding fathers of the United States have also shared their interpretation of natural rights as stated in the United States Declaration of Independence as “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.” Although consistencies within natural rights may ebb, the overarching theme is constant – the right. The concept of a right is consistent throughout shaping policies and practices and is a central focus on understanding accessibility to data. Survey researchers engaged in data collection should understand the right to data is a privilege and guidelines on data protection of that right are paramount to successful data collection.

**What is Data?**

The concept of data may appear to be an elementary term for discussion. In its most basic and broadest sense, data translates to facts, measurements or statistics. Within that context, however, depending on subtext, the data may be categorized based on varying interpretations or analysis.

More specifically, data is defined as either:

1. factual information used as a basis for reasoning, discussion or calculation;
2. information output by a sensing device or organ that includes both useful and irrelevant or redundant information and must be processed to be meaningful; or
3. information in numerical form that can be digitally transmitted or processed.

Data may also be viewed based on examples and can exist in multiple forms and is fluid depending on the business and its practices. Generally, one can rely on the following explicit instances as data:

- Emails and attachments
- Instant messages
- Word-processing files
- Spreadsheet files
- Database files
- Financial and accounting files
- Human resource and payroll files
- Internet files
- Browser cookies
- Intranet files
- Graphics files
- Desktop faxes
- Other application files

Data consists of both the internal and external affairs of businesses. The dual nature of data requires businesses to understand and intimately know its data practices and procedures. Consideration and insightful care in data practices are especially prudent when engaging the rights of individuals and the protection of their data.

**Understanding the Global Dialogue: US-EU Joint Statement on Privacy**

In the United States, there is no explicit law that provides a fundamental right to privacy. Privacy and the protection of personal information are implemented based according to decisions and precedent of the United States Supreme Court and also according to the implementation of certain laws according to various sectors; certain state laws, constitutions and aspects of federal law tend to infer a right to privacy.

In the European Union, however, privacy is viewed as a basic fundamental right; this is explicitly expounded in Article 8 of 1950 European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights & Fundamental Freedoms. Fundamental rights are guaranteed for every individual, and the protection of personal data is viewed as an extension of a right to privacy.

Countries with two separate models on privacy, the European Union and the United States, in a joint statement by EU Commission Vice-President, Viviane Reding, and US Commerce Secretary, John Bryson, agreed in a shared committed to promote “the rights of individuals to have their personal data protected and to facilitating interoperability of our commercial data privacy regimes.”

Given the nature of a globalized perspective, businesses must operate within the framework that while it is acceptable to collect individual data, it must do so with the understanding that individuals have a right to have their personal data protected and businesses must take efforts to ensure that their actions are mitigating any action that would be deemed harmful.

**Protecting the Data Collection Right: Best Practices**

Understanding the rights of individuals to data protection and balancing the needs of businesses in the data collection process is a delicate measure. Businesses want to obtain the necessary data to conduct their business needs; yet, business needs cannot be undertaken without a consideration of the data rights of individuals.

So, how can one best achieve this balance? In general, whatever method is being used to collect data, the following guidelines should be implemented:

1. make sure the respondent/individual knows who you are;
2. what the data will be used for; and
3. whether or not the information will be shared with others.

Overall, the most common theme is to know your constituent – in this case, the respondent/individual. Be as open and transparent in the survey research process as possible to promote a spirit of cooperation and understanding. Access to data being shared by the respondent/individual is a privilege for a business, and businesses (especially survey research businesses), should understand that that access is not guaranteed and as such the right of data protection should not be ignored.

LaToya Rembert-Lang, J.D., LL.M, CIPP is MRA’s General Counsel.
MRA Hires New Vice President of Research Quality

MRA is pleased to announce that Mike Donatello has joined the Association as Vice President, Research Quality. Mike brings 26 years of experience in marketing, media and public opinion research to the position. He has held senior-level research management positions with both corporate and supplier organizations, including The Washington Post Co. and USA TODAY. His areas of specialization include audience and product development research for online and print media, research design and quantitative analytics. An MRA member for several years, Donatello also serves as the president-elect of MRA’s Mid-Atlantic chapter. Donatello’s short-term initiatives include working with MRA’s Standards and Ethics Committee to revamp the existing MRA Code, streamline and contemporize the professional guidelines by which all MRA members agree to abide. Donatello will also restart the Association’s Panel Verification program, and contribute to other MRA products and initiatives.

20/20 Research President Steps Down to Launch Marketing Consulting Firm

Steve Henke, President of Nashville-based 20/20 Research announced that he has resigned from the firm to launch Harpeth Marketing, a consulting firm serving exclusively the market research industry. Harpeth Marketing will work with its clients to create and then execute marketing and sales plans that help grow revenue.

A New Day is Dawning at Taylor Research

After having worked for over 18 years at Taylor, the last seven as President/CEO, Patsy Trice will be retiring this June. The new President/CEO, effective June 25, will be Jeffrey Taylor, the son of Taylor Research’s founder, Susan Taylor. “It has been a great experience working at Taylor, and I will miss working with the colleagues, associates, and clients that I formed close relationships with over the years,” said Ms. Trice. “I am very glad that Jeff will be taking over, because I know his experience and capabilities will enable Taylor Research to continue to grow and prosper without missing a beat.” Further, the first of July, Taylor Research will be moving into a new facility a short distance from their existing location. The new facility is over 10,000 square feet, will retain Taylor’s popular large auditorium-style room, and offer many additional amenities, including a spa/workout room. Every capability and service that Taylor’s clients have enjoyed of the years at the old location will continue, but at an even higher level of excellence, comfort and functionality. Contact Taylor Research directly or visit their website for more news and information; 619-299-6368 or www.taylorresearch.com.

Schlesinger Associates Appoints Head of Interactive Services

Schlesinger Associates is pleased to announce that Anne Hedde has joined their team as Managing Director of Schlesinger Interactive, a fast-growing business initiative dedicated to online and other innovative technologies aimed at meeting current and future research needs in a rapidly evolving digital environment. Anne will lead the development of Schlesinger Interactive as a high-quality source for global digital solutions, including expanding online data collection capabilities, developing interactive communities and utilizing new and evolving technologies to address growing demand for new platforms and solutions.

Roda Marketing Research Has a New Address

Roda Marketing Research, founded in 1976, has changed their address. RMR is a full-service marketing research company with state-of-the-art interviewing and data collection. For more information, please contact Adele Roda, President, and update your records with their new address: Roda Marketing Research, Inc., The Pavillion, Ste. 404, 261 Old York Road, Jenkintown, PA 19046; aroda@rodaresearch.com; www.rodaresearch.com.

Long-Time Industry Professional Launches New Field Research Company

The Marketing Research Source, www.TMRSource.com, recently opened as a quantitative and qualitative field research company. Tracy Sanders, who has extensive experience and a rich history of assisting clients and vendors with all of their research needs, is the company’s Founder and will serve as its President. Tracy will also continue to serve on the Board of the MRA Florida Chapter and can be reached at Tracy.Sanders@TMRSource.com.

Laura Winn Promoted To Vice President Of Client Solutions for CMI

Laura Winn has been promoted from Qualitative Manager to Vice President of Client Solutions for CMI, a full-service marketing research firm. The promotion is in recognition of Winn’s demonstrated commitment to innovative research approaches, her recognized status as a thought leader in traditional and digital ethnographic research, and her ability to answer clients’ strategic business questions. While Winn will continue to leverage her expertise in qualitative research, this new role will allow her to expand her strategic responsibility for managing and developing key accounts across research solutions, as well as product development, and thought leadership.

itracks Expands Team and Names New VP of Client Development

itracks announced that well-known industry veteran, Doug Pryor, has joined the organization. Formerly the Director of Sales with Amplitude Research and Client Development Manager at Research Now (an e-Rewards Company), Mr. Pryor has nearly 20 years of experience in business development roles. Alan Mavretish was recently promoted to itracks’ VP of Client Development after working with itracks for over eight years as a Corporate Account Executive and Client Development Director.

Andrea Schrager Gains Recognition

Andrea Schrager, founder and CEO of Meadowlands Consumer Center, a Global Marketing Research and Consulting Company, has been recognized by the Meadowlands Regional Chamber of Commerce (MRC) with the prestigious 2012 Arline Simpson Leadership Award. This honor recognizes individuals who through their leadership and commitment have made significant contributions to both the Community and to the Chamber.
Directions Research Announces Promotion and New Hire

Directions Research Inc. (DRI) has announced the promotion of **Lora Eleam** to Account Executive. Lora is responsible for research design, client consultation, data analysis, presentation of findings and general client services. Lora joined DRI in June, 2005 and resides in Redmond, WA. **Melissa McMillan** has been hired as a Senior Project Manager. Prior to joining DRI, Melissa had 25 years experience most recently at Ipsos ASI. In her new role she manages projects from questionnaire design through final reporting and is involved with estimating, data collection, development of field materials, field progress monitoring, tab planning, assisting with analytic needs and cost management. Melissa has a M.S. in Management from Indiana Wesleyan University and resides in Sharonville, OH.

**Donna Wydra Joins CMI’s Consumer and Shopper Strategy Solutions**

**Donna Wydra** has joined CMI to expand the company’s Consumer and Shopper Strategy solutions for manufacturers, retailers, and restaurants. As senior vice president of consumer and shopper strategy, Wydra will provide counsel on key business issues through strategic insights into external influencers, individual motivations and attitudes, and competitive forces that drive consumer and shopper decisions regarding specific brands, stores and SKUs. Wydra is a recognized industry leader with more than 25 years devoted to marketing and research.

**Thomas Gallagher Joins Ipsos Loyalty’s Financial Services Team**

Ipsos Loyalty intends to cash in on three decades of research excellence and experience. **Thomas Gallagher**, a highly accomplished researcher, has joined the company’s loyalty research specialty as Vice President in the financial services practice. Prior to Ipsos, Gallagher was President and Co-Founder of Gallagher-Lee Research, a consulting business specializing in brand tracking, brand equity, and other strategic research applications.

**The Universal Group of Companies Welcomes Two Industry Veterans to Their Team**

Seasoned industry veterans **Kean Spencer** and **Mary Ellen Fasano** have joined the Universal group of companies, which include UniversalSurvey, OpinionSite and SurveyHealthCare. Over a decade ago, Kean pioneered “Language of Choice” interviewing. Today, in partnership with Mary Ellen, they’ll now be able to offer offline CATI data collection in over two dozen languages, global online panel and river solutions, and healthcare specific data collection.

**Burke, Inc. Promotes Ken Strunk to Vice President, Data Collection Services**

Burke, Inc. announces the promotion of **Ken Strunk** to Vice President, Data Collection Services. Burke’s Data Collection Services area is focused on providing and coordinating the technological tools, processes, and quality people needed to effectively collect and deliver the data that Burke interprets for clients. Ken began his career at Burke in 1990. His past responsibilities have included directing the activities of the sample department and overseeing all Burke’s telephone data collection. Ken has been very active in industry organizations, including serving as President of the Great Lakes Chapter of the Marketing Research Association (MRA).

CETRA Language Solutions Opens Office in Ireland

Dr. Jiri Stejskal, President and CEO of CETRA, a language services provider headquartered in the US, is pleased to announce the opening of a new company location in Limerick, Ireland. CETRA Ireland Ltd. was formed as a wholly owned subsidiary of CETRA, Inc. to better serve the company’s existing clients and to further grow its EMEA client base. CETRA is establishing its European Service Centre with the support of the Irish Development Agency and plans to create 20 jobs in Limerick over the next few years. CETRA Ireland Ltd. staff will include management, administration, project managers and sales staff.

**Ipsos Celebrates Quality Research and Rising Stars**

The Advertising Research Foundation (ARF) has honored Ipsos with three prestigious awards, recognizing the company’s commitment to excellence and innovation in research. Researchers from Ipsos took home two Gold awards and a Quality in Research award at the Great Mind Awards Luncheon held on March 28 during the ARF Re:think 2012 Convention in New York.

**Bell Falla And Associates Welcomes Expert in Pharmaceutical Marketing Research**

The marketing research and consulting firm Bell Falla and Associates, LLC is pleased to announce that **Victoria Chen**, a seasoned marketing research professional, has joined the firm. Victoria (also known as “Vic”) comes with a wealth of expertise in both qualitative and quantitative research. Prior to joining Bell Falla and Associates, she was Senior Vice President, Research and Consulting, at GfK Healthcare.

**Kate Svoboda Promoted to Vice President of Operations at Research Now**

Research Now, a global online sampling and data collection company, announced the promotion of **Kate Svoboda** to Vice President of Operations for Canada, the US Northeast and the US West. Kate will continue to oversee project management and sampling teams in Canada and San Francisco, and will work closely with the global operations team to ensure the continued improvement of operational processes worldwide. Kate joined the company in 2004 and most recently served as Director of Operations for Canada, the US Northeast and the US West. During her tenure, she has managed teams through several years of rapid organic growth and two corporate mergers.

Send press releases and announcements to Amy Shields, PRC at amy.shields@marketingresearch.org.
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