

# MARKETING RESEARCH: ONLINE PANELS

*An overview of what, when, and why?*

Around 40%  
of the  
world population  
has an  
internet connection.

[www.internetlivestats.com](http://www.internetlivestats.com)

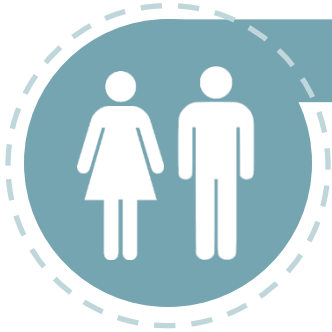


Are you listening?

# what?

*What does an “online panel” offer anyway?*

An **Online panel** or **Internet access panel** is a group of pre-screened respondents who have expressed a willingness to participate in surveys and/or customer feedback sessions.



## TARGETED RESPONDENT POOL

Respondents can be chosen based on specific demographic criteria, or they can be selected at random. However, it must be considered that while the approach to inviting individual panel members may be random, the pool from which respondents are selected is established on a voluntary basis.



## VARIED RESEARCH APPLICATIONS

Online panels can address research needs within the Consumer Market (e.g. brand awareness) or it can be applied to a Business-to-Business project (e.g. purchasing info).



## QUALITATIVE & QUANTITATIVE

Respondents can provide feedback in both qualitative and quantitative forms. This allows for a varied approach to research questions depending on the desired information and the ultimate application of panel findings.



## NOT A FOCUS GROUP

An online panel is **NOT** a focus group. A focus group involves more emotional descriptions, whereas the online panel provides straightforward responses to pre-formed, consistent questions.

# when?

When is an online panel a good option?

An online panel can certainly be an effective way to collect data from your desired target group, however it may not be appropriate for every research objective or situation.

## STRICT PROJECT SCHEDULE

Due to the voluntary nature of most online panels, an open line of communication is consistently available. This allows for a quick turn-around if you are looking to operate on a tight schedule.



## MODERATE SURVEY LENGTH

In general, it is a good practice to consider the length of your survey in relation to the potential respondent. Often times the higher the interest and/or engagement level on the part of the respondent the more likely they will be to complete lengthy surveys. Online panels are a good option if you can limit the number of questions and length of time respondents are asked to spend. This will help ensure high rates of completion.



## EXISTING RESPONDENT POOL

The difference between an *online panel* and a *custom online panel* is the respondent pool to whom you send survey invitations. If you have an existing client contact list and are interested in engaging these people, then the timing may be appropriate to create a custom online panel. If you do not have an existing contact list, this phase can be supplemented by a number of panel companies who offer access to their pool of potential respondents with costs dependent on your target's level of focus.



# why?

*Why should I even consider an online panel?*

Depending on the size and scope of your research study, an online panel can often help streamline survey distribution and expedite data collection.



## BENEFITS OF ONLINE PANELS

### **Accessibility**

Voluntary, double opt-in registration ensures the pool of respondents are engaged and willing to participate in your study.

### **Promptness**

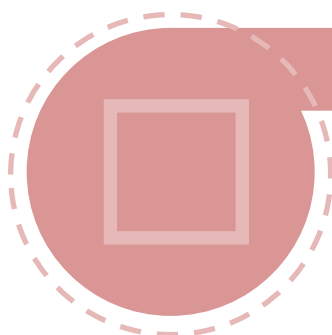
Conducting a study completely online allows for an efficient survey distribution and data collection processes.

### **Targeted Respondents**

An online panel group allows you to target as broad or as specific a respondent group as you see fit.

### **Return on Investment**

Unlike other forms of primary market research which distribute surveys with no promise of participation, most online panels operate on a “per-complete” basis which ensures you will achieve your desired response count.



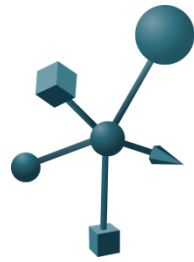
## CONCERNS OF ONLINE PANELS

### **Cost**

Due to the often focused nature of online panel studies, and the assurance of useful completes, the cost per-survey could be higher than using another method.

### **Professional Respondents**

Too much knowledge of the research process and/or industry techniques can negatively influence response accuracy.



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