

White Paper

Mobile Research Using Mobile Devices for Intercept Sampling

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Intercept sampling is still popular, especially at events or malls. How does the mobile device change how intercept sampling is done? Recently we used the mobile device to change how the Tour of Utah, a cycling event, surveyed their spectators. The Tour of Utah was an open invitation event requiring no tickets to observe or attend. The most effective method of sampling the event spectators was an intercept sample.

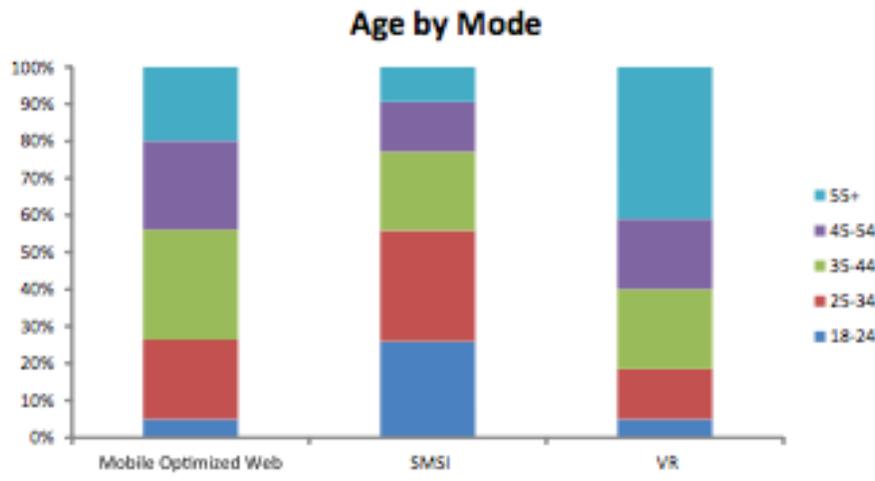
Originally intercept sampling meant that you needed a trained interviewer at the location to engage those passing by to complete a survey – on location under their supervision. Mall intercepts are still done this way despite the enormous cost. Combining mobile technology with online survey research techniques reduces the expense and the hassle of surveying event based sample frames.

Choice is the key to successful intercept sampling with a mobile device. There are a few key elements to the invitations we used during the Tour of Utah (found below). First, a complete explanation on how to access the survey was included for all three options: SMS text survey, online survey, and an IVR phone number. Each of these options is fully automated and completely eliminates interviewer bias. The invitations were the size of a common business card and easy to pocket with minimal hassle at the event. To improve security and track success at each event location, a pin number was provided on each invitation. For this research effort, we realized an active response rate - around 10% of the cards handed out were completed and almost every spectator received a card.



Using all three modes was essential to get a good representation of our audience. Age was the easiest difference to see and is shown in the graph below. Providing an SMS text option encouraged a younger crowd (under 35) to provide feedback while providing an IVR option encourages an older crowd (55+) to provide feedback. An important caution to note is that not everyone provides immediate feedback. Many respondents waited until after they were home to respond to the survey. However, as the approximate time the card was handed out and the exact time of response is known, these immediacy effects can provide important insight.

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Using the survey respondent’s mobile device, we were able to efficiently provide quality data from an intercept sample with minimal expense and hassle. Giving the respondents choice, especially the option to access the mobile survey through conventional mobile phones and more capable smart phones, was essential to providing actionable results. Ultimately, the Tour of Utah’s market researchers were able to obtain a comprehensive view of the spectators at the event using mobile research technology to conduct intercept sampling.