Mobile Research: The Future Of Fieldwork

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Tim Macer, one of the keynote speakers at next monthâ€™s Mobile Research Conference, believes that the mobile phone will revolutionize self-completion surveys in the very near future because it offers the potential to address several challenges that market research companies face today.

These include reaching representative samples, respondent engagement, turnaround times and cost.

Macer has over 25 years experience as a research technology practitioner and consultant and is a respected independent writer and commentator on software in survey research.

Previewing the content of his conference session in London on 16th/17th February he said:

â€œThe potential for using mobile phones as a legitimate, quality interviewing channel is simply huge, but until now the technical challenges have worked against it in all but a few niche situations. I see that changing now for a number of reasons. All the capabilities are in place from both a software and network perspective and respondents are more accustomed to using their phones for a range of functions, not just making voice calls. It is time for research companies to wake up to mobile research and benefit from another useful stream of research data."

Mobile research is coming of age due to the continually improving capacity of data networks. Interviewing respondents using the web-browser capabilities now common among mobile handsets in circulation means that self-completion surveys can be fielded quickly, easily and inexpensively to a far wider base of respondents than can be achieved using telephone or conventional web-based interviewing. It could replace many surveys that still have to be done on paper because CATI and web surveys are unsuitable.

Macer also believes that the demise of paper-based interviews, coupled with the immediacy of the mobile phone, will improve not only data quality and delivery times, but the whole image and reputation of research.

Macer will be speaking in more detail on these topics in London at the Mobile Research Conference on 16-17 February 2009. Hosted by Globalpark, a leading provider of online feedback software and mobile research technology, the agenda will discuss the opportunities and challenges presented by the evolution of the mobile as a research platform. Over a day and a half delegates will hear the experiences, perspectives and techniques of market researchers from both corporate and academic backgrounds.

For further details go to www.mobileresearch09.com.

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