

Live From The MRC 2010: Our Senior Speakers Agree: The Rise Of Mobile Research Is Unstoppable

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With a room of commercial researchers, the Mobile Marketing Association (MMA) and two highly respected academics specialising in the field of survey research, you might not expect there to be much agreement on the topic of mobile research.

However despite their different backgrounds, today's highly-respected speakers agreed on one thing: the rise of mobile research is unstoppable and the market research industry has a lot to gain from the platform.

The first day of the two day conference had a real sense of excitement about it "of being on the cusp of a new research methodology that is about to go mainstream.

Paul Berney of the MMA kicked off the day with an upbeat look at the growth of mobile. In particular, the various ways brands and consumers engage with each other and the high conversion rates enjoyed in comparison to traditional marketing methods.

Mick Couper

Research Professor in the Survey Research Center at the Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan has been described as a "rock star" in his field.

A self-proclaimed Luddite, Couper revealed how elements of online survey design "from what might be considered minor to the major "impact the way respondents answer questions, and therefore research results.

Although his research is primarily carried out in the area of online surveys, he believes this has a massive impact for surveys carried out by mobile phone.

As a survey expert, he wondered if respondents should be given devices to run surveys so they can be presented in a consistent manner - otherwise each experience is different, and this impacts the results.

Dr Liz Nelson

Executive Chairperson of Fly Research and a vocal advocate of mobile research for many years, took her opportunity to respond by listing some of the advantages of using the mobile platform for research.

Along with Scott Dodgson of SKOPOS market insight, they outlined "in the moment" research, ethnography and high response rates as some of those benefits.

Mario Callegaro

Survey Methodologist at Google USA told the audience that researchers can no longer control where people are doing online surveys. If they choose to launch their web browser from the mobile device, it is not feasible to send people to go back to their PCs.

As a result, researchers need to know what platforms are being used for survey completion and adapt to them.

Marek Fuchs

an associate professor for research methods at the Technical University of Darmstadt, believes the mobile web is at the intersection of two dominant, emerging trends "the decline of the landline phone and the growth of mobile web.

Whilst he agreed with Liz and Mario that respondents should be given a choice of how and where they choose to complete a survey, as a specialist in survey design and its impact on responses and respondents, he would prefer all research to be carried out in a controlled environment, with no outside stimulus.

The commercial researchers in the room understood the sentiment, but as Liz said, we have to be realistic.

So the conclusion of day one of the MRC?

From respondents completing surveys designed for the PC on their mobile device, or brands using it for "in the moment" research when shopping, during a live event or to reach a niche audience of 15 year olds, the 120 delegates from across the research industry and the globe agree on one thing "mobile research is going to continue to grow in popularity.

Respondents are taking surveys on mobile devices whether you know it or not. The challenge for researchers is to offer consistent experience across devices.

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By identifying and empowering influential advocates, they build reputation and extend reach.

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