

1/3 Of US College Students Say Phone Is An Extension Of Themselves

Contributed by Anderson Analytics
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New Survey Technology allows you to “listen” to the voice of the customer:

A third of college students say their mobile phone is an extension/reflection of themselves

Stamford, CT “ November 9, 2006 “ The vast majority of marketing research surveys are conducted online due to the convenience and the accessibility today. But how do telephone interviews and telephone surveys fit in today’s research landscape?

Anderson Analytics recently teamed up with Big Ears, a company specialized in fully automated telephone surveys and interviews, to conduct a survey asking how college students feel about their cell phones. The hybrid study employed both the online and the telephone survey methods in parallel.

The BigEars Service is fully automated and hosted, and operates much like a web-based survey tool. The difference is that the respondent answers over the phone, rather than on a web browser. Access is typically by an 800 number. “By eliminating the human interviewer from the call, we can allow the caller to participate whenever it suits them, rather than when it suits us”, said Tom Anderson, Managing Partner of Anderson Analytics, “Consumers are becoming more and more aware of the value of their time. The key to maintaining a quality dialog with them, is to make it really convenient for them to engage, whenever and wherever they want”.

The survey results indicated that the main advantage of using telephone surveys is its ability to encourage longer and more robust responses to open-ended questions. As Mark Forsyth, Managing Director of BigEars, puts it “talking isn’t work”. Answers given to open-ended questions over the phone were 15% longer than answers typed in an online survey. In addition, the voice recording offered opportunities for in-depth qualitative analysis; for example, emotion and inflection in voice of individual voice clips were used to examine the outliers in the study. Telephone surveys such as this are a hybrid of survey and focus group methodologies, and can be a powerful tool for companies who need to conduct in-depth voice-of-customers studies.

“This new survey technology can be more convenient than online surveys in certain situations”, said Jesse Chen, Senior Consultant and developer at Anderson Analytics “If you want reaction to an event or transaction, such as a visit to a store, you can capture your data immediately, while it’s fresh in the person’s mind. People don’t have to be tied to a computer to be surveyed. Also, some people are more comfortable on the web, and some are more comfortable on the phone “by catering to these differences you can broaden participation.”

Many respondents who were given a choice of completing the survey online or via the phone preferred the new technology “I was busy doing some stuff online, and I had my cell phone on hand so I decided to do the survey by phone and finish off what I was doing online at the same time”, “It’s easy. All I have to do is to speak into the phone”, “I don’t like looking at a computer screen for too long when [doing] a survey. This is pretty easy, I’m just sitting in the park and I’m enjoying it a lot more,” said another student.

Besides comparing telephone survey results with the Internet counterpart, the survey explored how college students feel about their cell phones. 34% of the students agreed that the cell phone is a reflection of their self-image. Among them, 50% expressed that their cell phone is an extension of their fashion sense and personal style, and their phone needs to be trendy and technologically up-to-date. The other 50% feel that their cell phone makes a statement about their practicality.

When choosing a new phone college students said that the look, phone style, and phone size are the primary factors. Camera and various other functionalities such as text messaging came in as second tier priorities, followed by product/service and price. Almost no one mentioned the choice of games as an important factor. However, when asked about why they chose their current phone, cost was the predominant reason. “Being able to listen to the actual voices of the students, rather than simply coding or reading the responses allows for a whole new dimension of analysis, and confidence in the findings”, said Tom Anderson, “We look forward to advantages that this new technology can give our clients, and it will definitely be an important part of our methodological toolbox giving our clients an information advantage”.

To see a top-line report of this study go to:

<http://www.andersonanalytics.com/reports/AndersonAnalyticsBigEars.ppt>

About Anderson Analytics

Anderson Analytics is a full-service market research consultancy and helping clients gain the “Information Advantage” is our main goal. We do this by combining new technologies with traditional marketing research, providing quantitative and qualitative solutions to help solve challenging marketing problems and discover hidden opportunities. We combine the efficiencies and business experience found in large research firms with the rigorous methodological understanding from academia with the enthusiasm and creativity found only in smaller firms. For more information, please see www.andersonanalytics.com.

About Big Ears

Big Ears is a unique market research and survey service that makes it easy and efficient to listen to your customers. The fully hosted service makes it simple to conduct powerful automated telephone surveys and interviews, for both quantitative and qualitative studies. Respondents answer all questions by voice over any phone. Big Ears Surveys are created, and results viewed, via a comprehensive web interface in real time.

Big Ears applications include customer and staff surveys, polling, consultation, and recruitment interviews.

<http://www.yourbigears.com/>

Listen to your customers