



ESOMAR 26

Company Profile

What experience does your company have with providing online samples for market research?

Since 1997 Universal Survey has been providing exceptional data collection quality and service to the market research industry. Clients come to us not only because we're easy to work with, but because they can rely on us to get the job done. We are the only data collection firm to align our services with your industry specializations.

Universal Survey's **Opinionsite** is known for its strength in providing sample for highly specialized fields such as Business Decision Makers, IT Professionals, Patients, and Healthcare Professionals. We are proud of our precise, census-balanced, general market Consumer and Corporate Consumer sampling. We can get the respondents you need, regardless of the number of completes required for the project, from smaller studies to tens of thousands of completed interviews when you need them, no matter how difficult to reach, or to engage.

Today, Universal Survey's **Opinionsite** supplies the largest Online Communities with highly-involved, excited, responsive panelists for consumer and B2B market research needs. With over 500 targeted data points, Universal Survey's **Opinionsite** provides precision targeting to achieve fast, accurate and robust results.

The quality of our panel, along with Universal Survey's unwavering commitment to exceeding client expectations, is the cornerstone of our success.



Sample Source

Please describe and explain the types of source(s) for the online sample that you provide (are these databases, actively managed panels, direct marketing lists, web intercept sampling, river sampling or other)?

Our panel was grown from the ground up through participation in live focus groups and telephone surveys as well as through leveraging our previously existing qualitative database. We also recruit via a controlled mix of opt-in email lists, online social networking websites including twitter and facebook, targeted panel referrals, banner advertisements, newspaper classified advertisements, elite alumni networks and other media.

Our panel is more than just a database! Universal Survey places a great deal of importance on the panelist's engagement process, so panelists maintain their participation in our panel for the long term, and continue to provide high-quality responses to the online surveys they receive. By providing our panelists with their own member page, they have an interactive communication tool to keep their profile robust with changes in their lifestyle as they happen: whether they need to update their information; review the status of a check request; or contact us regarding any concerns they have. We closely monitor the volume of surveys administered to minimize panelist fatigue and we continually update the look and feel of panel member websites, survey invitations and forms to keep panelists engaged.

To encourage active participation, reminder emails are sent to our panelists 6 times per year, encouraging them to update their profile. These emails also serve to inform panelists of any new developments in Universal Survey's **Opinionsite** community.



What do you consider to be the primary advantage of your sample over other sample sources in the marketplace?

Our primary advantage is how our panel is built. **Opinionsite** members have pursued membership by visiting our site, reviewed our materials and have made the determination they want to be part of a market research community. Our panelists are interested in participation in market research projects such as focus groups and telephone surveys, not co-registration. Therefore, you are likely to find engaged, unique members not found in other online panels.

Since our panel is also used for focus group and telephone surveys, our staff has personal contact with our panel members, which is really a unique factor of **Opinionsite**.

If the sample source is a panel or database, is the panel or database used solely for market research? If not, please explain.

Yes, our panel is used exclusively and solely for market research.

How do you source groups that may be hard-to-reach on the internet?

Given that our panel is built differently than other online panels, and is also used for highly compensated qualitative research, we may already have some of those harder-to-reach segments. Recruiting panelists from a variety of sources, including gen pop phone interviews, as well as more targeted approaches through opt in social networking sites, lists and banner ads enables us to target harder to reach respondents.



If we don't have sufficient sample to supply all the completed interviews required for a successful project, we work with other panels to blend our sample with theirs so the end client has a full solution.

Lastly, if panel companies have to pass on a particular project because sample is not available from any source, we can offer a mix of online and offline solutions such as phone recruit to the web survey, either from our database or lists.

What are people told when they are recruited?

When recruited into our panel, they are asked to join a market research community to share their thoughts and opinions, periodically and on a variety of subject matters for market research purposes only. They are told that participation in surveys is optional. All panelists are alerted that survey information and responses are confidential and provided in aggregate, unless they give us their explicit permission to release their individual answers. They are also informed about compensation, that participation to a survey is optional, and that they can leave the panel at any time without consequences.

Panel Recruitment

If the sample comes from a panel, what is your annual panel turnover / attrition / retention rate and how is it calculated?

Our average panel turnover / attrition rate is 5% annually. We base this average on panel opt-out requests, undeliverable emails that return either a one-time hard bounce or repeated soft bounces, and panelist wishing to be removed for any reason.



While we do not immediately remove non-responders, we flag a panel account after three months of inactivity. If we cannot re-engage a panelist, they are deleted from the data base.

As of 2010, the average tenure of an active panelist is just over 24 months from the date they double opt-in. Inactive members are not included in any of our panel size counts or survey deployment activities.

Please describe the opt-in process.

Prospective members must provide demographic and household information in our registration survey and agree to our “Terms and Conditions” and “Privacy Policy”. They are required to confirm their email address through a double opt-in registration process.

Do you have a confirmation of identity procedure? Do you have procedures to detect fraudulent respondents at the time of registration with the panel? If so, please describe.

Opinionsite takes confirmation of identity extremely seriously and has multiple procedures used to detect and purge fraudulent respondents at the time of registration, including: use of a backend algorithm to check panel members mailing addresses (which are later verified against USPS records); detection of previously registered email addresses; examination of IP addresses; placement of temporary survey cookies; and proxy server detection.

What profile data is kept on panel members? For how many members is this data collected and how often is this data updated?



In addition to all mandatory fields in the registration process which include basic socio-demographic information such as gender, age, ethnicity, location, level of education, household income, etc., we maintain over 500 unique voluntary data points. These include number of employees at company, position, industry, decision making authority, car make/model, and many more. Panel members are allowed to update their information at any time via their own member profile page, and are reminded to do so 6 times per year via email. We typically update our panel targeting capabilities twice per year unless a trend has developed within our industry with a growing or pressing need for profiling. When this is the case, we immediately revise our profiling to accommodate the necessary data points.

What are the size and/or the capacity of the panel, based on active panel members on a given date? Can you provide an overview of active panelists by type of source?

Opinionsite includes active panel members in our counts. Our panel contains over 550,000 active US panelists. **Opinionsite** defines an active panelist as one who participates in studies for which they would qualify by giving open and honest answers and in-depth open ended responses. Members should attempt a survey in the past 12 months.

PANEL AND SAMPLE MANAGEMENT

Please describe your sampling process including your exclusion procedures, if applicable. Can samples be deployed as batches/replicates, by time zones, geography, etc? If so, how is this controlled?

The sample of panelists is selected for each study based on the study specifications provided by the client. Samples are deployed in waves , and balanced by predetermined criteria such as region, usually beginning with a soft launch of about 10% of the sample frame. Our



deployment plan allows us to review response rates and modify the sampling proportions placing a greater weight on those with a lower response rates.

Waves can be controlled by time zone, geography (regions, DMAs, zip codes, etc.), and by other means as available and requested by the client. This is controlled by the Project Director and team in charge of managing the invitations, as well as by internal processes for sending the invitations in controlled batches.

When an audience is clearly defined our sampling process is done by targeting as many data points as possible that are relevant to qualifying for the survey. Only highly targeted panelists are emailed initially, followed by those less targeted. Invitations to take part in the survey are sent to the panelists email address with a unique identifier and a link to a survey or website.

Explain how people are invited to take part in a survey. What does a typical invitation look like?

Panel members are invited to take part in a survey via an email invitation. Typical invitations indicate the length of the survey and the incentive. It is extremely important to maintain unbiased email invitations. Mindful of the panelist's experience, every survey invitation contains instructions on how to claim incentive payment, an easy opt-out link, and an email link for questions or concerns.

Please describe the nature of your incentive system(s). How does this vary by length of interview, respondent characteristics, or other factors you may consider?



Panel members are paid either a cash incentive upon completion of any online survey or are awarded entries into a monthly raffle/sweepstakes. Cash incentives begin at \$1 and increase depending on the incidence, length of survey, and other qualifying criteria. Raffle / sweepstakes entries are determined by whether a panel member successfully qualifies and completes the survey or is disqualified prior to completion.

All incentives are built into the cost-per-complete (CPC) provided in the original bid. Once a respondent has earned an account balance of \$20.00, they may request a check from us sent to their verified mailing address on file.

How often are individual members contacted for online surveys within a given time period? Do you keep data on panelist participation history and are limits placed on the frequency that members are contacted and asked to participate in a survey?

Our panel members may complete no more than 2 surveys in any given month and receive a maximum of 4 survey invitations / reminders for the same study. Our standard 2 survey per month rule can be relaxed for a client upon request if additional sample is required. We maintain panel member's participation history.

POLICIES AND COMPLIANCE

Is there a privacy policy in place? If so, what does it state? Is the panel compliant with all regional, national and local laws with respect to privacy, data protection and children e.g. EU Safe Harbour, and COPPA in the US? What other research industry standards do you comply with e.g. ICC / ESOMAR International Code on Market and Social Research, CASRO guidelines etc.?



We have a privacy policy which states that a panel member's personal information is private, direction to third-party sites is for survey taking purposes only, data collection is in aggregate, "cookies" may be placed, opt-out panel ability, in-ability for children under the age of 13 to sign-up, site security, and the ability to contact us at any time.

To the best of our knowledge, **Opinionsite** is compliant with all laws regarding privacy, data protection, and children. Specific mention is made to COPPA and, because our panel is U.S. only, EU requirements are not applicable. We also comply with all CASRO and MRA rules and regulations.

What data protection/security measures do you have in place?

Opinionsite stores all respondent information within secure password protected data storage areas. Our storage areas are secured by industry standard firewalls and stringent IT security policy framework.

Opinionsite uses IP address detection, determining of proxy servers, profile scanning, and other internal measures to protect data and silently purge professional and fraudulent respondents. We rely on survey programming to guard against straight-lining and loss of concentration, and regularly advise our clients on implanting these verification measures within the survey programming.

We also request client feedback on each and every study in order to remove panel members not providing legitimate data so as to never again use these members for future survey invitations. This ensures our panel is consistently kept fresh, authentic, and responsive.



Do you apply a quality management system? Please describe it.

We are dedicated to increasing the quality of our internal processes. Our management team is trained to continuously recommend and improve the quality of our systems. We have put together a detailed work flow process from receipt of the RFP through the completion of a study. Every client has an Account Director whose primary role is to understand your business, provide guidance and support, a Client Service Manager who is responsible for the implementation of your project, and Field Project Manager who works with our sampling, field and programmers to insure the study is getting the attention it needs.

Do you conduct online surveys with children and young people? If so, please describe the process for obtaining permission.

Yes, we field surveys requiring the participation of children and/or young people. We follow the guidelines and rules set forth by the major Market Research Associations. Our process is to contact parents, informing them the study is for their child and they can make the decision as to whether their child can participate or not.

PARTNERSHIPS AND MULTIPLE PANEL MEMBERSHIP

Do you supplement your samples with samples from other providers? How do you select these partners? Is it your policy to notify a client in advance when using a third party provider? Do you de-duplicate the sample when using multiple sample providers?

Only when required, and with permission from our client, will **Opinionsite** supplement with sample from other providers. When this is the case, our partner providers must pass our data



quality process to ensure elimination of duplicates, speeders, and cheaters. All of our partners are verified to ensure they abide by the standards of conduct required by the leading market research associations. They all must have an excellent reputation within the industry and are held to the same standards to which our clients hold us, in terms of data quality and customer service.

Do you have a policy regarding multi-panel membership? What efforts do you undertake to ensure that survey results are unbiased given that some individuals belong to multiple panels?

This is obviously an issue we frown upon and to which we prefer our panelists do not take part. However, it is also something that cannot be easily monitored unless all panel providers shared panel information. We make every effort to ensure we recruit only the highest quality panel members and our recruiting methods are chosen based on this very issue. For example,

We do not recruit via co-registration websites in order to ensure we are not recruiting panel members already registered with other market research firms.

When we do find a “professional” or multi-panel member within our panel, we flag them as such and do not continue to recruit them going forward.

DATA QUALITY AND VALIDATION

What is likely survey start rates drop-out and participation rates in connection with a provided sample? How are these computed?

Response rates can vary from 10% to 40% percent depending on the topic, incentive provided, population being studied, and credibility of study sponsor when allowed to use their name and



subject matter and the length of the interview. They can also vary based on the metric used in the calculation of the response rate and whether they are computed based on the number of panelists who are sent invitations, click on a given survey link, and reach an end-page or they include the panelist who drop off from the interview before it is completed.

Do you maintain individual level data such as recent participation history, date of entry, source, etc., on your panelists? Are you able to supply your client with a per job analysis of such individual level data?

Yes, we maintain participant and project level data on all panel members and are able to provide this to our clients as requested.

Do you use data quality analysis and validation techniques to identify inattentive and fraudulent respondents? If yes, what techniques are used and at what point in the process are they applied?

Universal Survey's **Opinionsite** institutes a variety of validation techniques commencing from the very first moment a panel member registers with us. Beginning with our double opt-in recruitment process, and continuing with checks including proxy server detection, IP address verification, past survey participation history, survey time testing, and use of unique survey links on each and every survey, **Opinionsite** silently purges fraudulent respondents to constantly ensure fresh, authentic panel members.

Do you measure respondent satisfaction?

We make a very strong effort to keep our panel members satisfied. Even though we cannot control their experience within a particular survey, we respond promptly to all panelists help email and telephone requests. In addition we pay attention to the time it takes to complete a survey and all comments regarding the survey and incentive.

Universal
Survey



Opinionsite
Panel Services

What information do you provide to debrief your client after the project has finished?

We are able to provide any information that is relevant to the study at the request of the client. Information often requested include number of panelists deployed, number that dropped out, incidence rates, number of completes, screen outs by question number and survey length.