

Rakuten Insight

ESOMAR 28 QUESTIONS

March 22, 2013

Introduction

ESOMAR's 28 questions explain Rakuten Research's sampling methods and protection of personal information for our clients and panel members. Questions are designed to help ensure that researchers receive what they expect from our online panel and other services.

Sample Sources and Recruitment

Q1. What experience does your company have in providing online samples for market research?

Rakuten Research is one of the first online market research companies in Japan and currently ranks in the top 3.

Feb, 2000 Cyber Brains was founded

Dec, 2002 Infoseek, Inc. started Infoseek Research

Dec, 2005 Rakuten Research, Inc. was founded, merging the two services.

As a member of ESOMAR and Japan Market Research Association (JMRA), we provide online research services to over 15,000 clients from over 1,200 companies.

Our online services include:

- Online survey
- Online recruiting
- Online survey hosting
- Panel supply (provide samples for online surveys)

Q2. Please describe and explain the type(s) of online sample sources from which you get respondents. Are these databases? Actively managed research panels? Direct marketing lists? Social networks? Web intercept (also known as river) samples?

Rakuten Research manages online research panels for our clients. We recruit panel members from users of Rakuten Group services. We recruit from over 83 million users (as of Dec, 2012) in Rakuten Group, using banners and mail magazines.

Rakuten Group has various types of online services including:

- E-commerce
- Travel reservation
- Banking
- Securities
- Online research portal
- Golf course reservation and more

Q3. If you provide samples from more than one source: How are the different sample sources blended together to ensure validity? How can this be replicated over time to provide reliability? How do you deal with the possibility of duplication of respondents across sources?

We have a single-source panel, where we recruit from Rakuten Group services (one ID per person) to reduce the risks of duplicate panelists. Rakuten Group offers some of the most widely used internet services in Japan; 85% of Japanese internet users are Rakuten members. Rakuten Research recruits from Rakuten Group members, therefore members are a close representation of an average Japanese person. Additionally, having Rakuten Group as a single-source panel reduces the risks of recruiting professional survey takers

Q4. Are your sample source(s) used solely for market research? If not, what other purposes are they used for?

Rakuten Research's panels are used solely for market research. We strictly prohibit using it for any other purposes.

Q5. How do you source groups that may be hard to reach on the internet?

We source our panel from a wide range of Rakuten Group services, therefore we maintain a diverse yet balanced proportion of respondents. To assure the quality of our panel, we send out a survey to our panelists with the same content/survey as the Japanese national census then compare the results. In the past several years there has been no major difference between the two surveys results, supporting our assertion that our panel resembles the Japanese population.

The booklet containing more detailed information is provided to clients (in Japanese only).

Q6. If, on a particular project, you need to supplement your sample(s) with sample(s) from other providers, how do you select those partners? Is it your policy to notify a client in advance when using a third party provider?

In the case we need additional samples from other providers, we will notify our clients in advance.

We will select the third party supplier from members of JMRA, who has fulfilled the basic requirements as an online research panel provider.

Q7. If, on a particular project, you need to supplement your sample(s) with sample(s) from other providers, how do you select those partners? Is it your policy to notify a client in advance when using a third party provider?

We randomly select respondents from our panel to send out survey invitations.

In order to acquire samples without a bias, we send out surveys according to the representation of the targeted population. For example, we send out survey invitations according to the age and sex distribution of Japan to avoid offset in the data.

Q8. Do you employ a survey router?

We do not employ survey routing systems.

Q9. If you use a router: Please describe the allocation process within your router. How do you decide which surveys might be considered for a respondent? On what priority basis are respondents allocated to surveys?

We do not employ survey routing systems.

Q10. If you use a router: What measures do you take to guard against, or mitigate, any bias arising from employing a router? How do you measure and report any bias?

We do not employ survey routing systems.

Q11. If you use a router: Who in your company sets the parameters of the router? Is it a dedicated team or individual project managers?

We do not employ survey routing systems.

Q12. What profiling data is held on respondents? How is it done? How does this differ across sample sources? How is it kept up-to-date? If no relevant profiling data is held, how are low incidence projects dealt with?

We hold the following profiling data:

- Name
- Sex
- Birth date
- Email address
- Address
- Telephone number
- Marital status
- Have children or not
- Employment status
- Industry you work in
- Household income
- Number of people in household
- Educational background
- Have driver's license or not
- Own a car or not
- Type of housing

Name, sex, birth date, email address, and address are mandatory, but other information may be inconsistent since changes have been made in the profile survey in the past years.

We ask our panel members to input the information when they register to our panel and update their profile whenever there is a change. We also conduct an annual campaign to update their profiles. This allows us to offer our clients the most accurate and up-to-date information regarding our panel members.

We also offer Special Panels for targeting, with over 20 detailed categories. We update the panels once a year and utilize them to collect low incidence samples efficiently.

Q13. What profiling data is held on respondents? How is it done? How does this differ across sample sources? How is it kept up-to-date? If no relevant profiling data is held, how are low incidence projects dealt with?

We send out invitations through email with a link directing members to their MyPage. Respondents either click the link in the e-mail or go directly to our website and log into their MyPage to answer surveys.

Our invitation mail contains the following information:

- (Panel supply) survey host
- Survey title
- Time and date of the invitation
- Name of invitation receiver
- URL link to the survey and to MyPage
- Number of expected points rewarded
- When the reward points will be given
- Other notices

Q14. Please describe the incentives that respondents are offered for taking part in your surveys. How does this differ by sample source, by interview length, by respondent characteristics?

We provide Rakuten Super Point as a reward, which can be redeemed through various Rakuten Group services. The number of reward points differs by the length/difficulty of the survey and other special terms.

Q15. What information about a project do you need in order to give an accurate estimate of feasibility using your own resources?

We ask our clients the following to check the feasibility of the study:

- Number of questions
- Number of images and URL links
- Incidence rate of the target sample
- Quota and number of samples needed
- Schedule: date of receiving finalized survey and due date of output
- Supplementary options to online survey
- Budget
- Survey design

If the incidence rate is unconfirmed, we conduct a free incidence rate survey prior to the actual survey to confirm its feasibility.

We also check if the study should be conducted online and if the survey can be programmed using our system.

Q16. Do you measure respondent satisfaction? Is this information made available to clients?

We do not measure respondent satisfaction after each survey, but we send surveys to panel members who have not participated in our survey for a certain period and ask for their opinion on our service.

Additionally, we ask withdrawing members reasons for withdrawing, and also attach a satisfaction survey to our response to any panelist inquiries.

Results are used to improve our service and to advise clients to conduct better studies, but the result itself is not made public to clients.

Q17. What information do you provide to debrief your client after the project has finished?

We can provide the following:

- Gross sample
 - Participation rate
 - Invitation/contact text
 - Time and date of invitations sent
 - Time and date of the individual responses
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Data Quality and Validation

Q18. Who is responsible for data quality checks? If it is you, do you have in place procedures to reduce or eliminate undesired within survey behaviors, such as (a) random responding, (b) illogical or inconsistent responding, (c) overuse of item non-response (e.g. "Don't Know") or (d) speeding (too rapid survey completion)? Please describe these procedures.

The Data Processing Team checks and eliminates any undesirable responses from each survey to ensure high quality data. Actual rules are confidential. Following are some of the check points:

- Illogical response
 - Inappropriate free answers
 - Inappropriate response patterns
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Q19. How often can the same individual be contacted to take part in a survey within a specified period whether they respond to the contact or not? How does this vary across your sample sources?

In order to keep the number of invitations leveled, we randomly select respondents to answer the survey. The average number of invitations sent to a single panelist is 2-3 per day.

Q20. How often can the same individual take part in a survey within a specified period? How does this vary across your sample sources? How do you manage this within categories and/or time periods?

The average number of main surveys responded by one member is 1-2 per month. We make careful estimations on the response rate, to calculate the number of invitation mails which need to be sent out over a period of time. Calculating the numbers of invitations help even out the duration of time surveys are answered which avoid bias in respondent characteristics. We ask clients to keep at least 24 hours (preferably 72 hours) for fieldwork to decrease response bias.

Q21. Do you maintain individual level data such as recent participation history, date of entry, source, etc., on your survey respondents? Are you able to supply your client with a project analysis of such individual level data?

We store respondent data regarding entry and participation history, but we do not provide them to our clients.

Q22. Do you have a confirmation of respondent identity procedure? Do you have procedures to detect fraudulent respondents? Please describe these procedures as they are implemented at sample source registration and/or at the point of entry to a survey or router. If you offer B2B samples what are the procedures there, if any?

We check the reliability of the individual through the following procedure:

- Check the validity of email registered
- Check the registered information
- Monthly check of the whole panel on the registered information
- Check information on the online recruiting form
- Check validity of the responses

Actual rules are confidential.

Policies and Compliance

Q23. Do you have a confirmation of respondent identity procedure? Do you have procedures to detect fraudulent respondents? Please describe these procedures as they are implemented at sample source registration and/or at the point of entry to a survey or router. If you offer B2B samples what are the procedures there, if any?

We take a double opt-in process.

The following are steps members take to register.

- 1) Register for Rakuten Group ID
- 2) Register for Rakuten Research service
- 3) Receive a confirmation e-mail -> click on the URL
- 4) Registration is finalized

Q24. Do you have a confirmation of respondent identity procedure? Do you have procedures to detect fraudulent respondents? Please describe these procedures as they are implemented at sample source registration and/or at the point of entry to a survey or router. If you offer B2B samples what are the procedures there, if any?

Rakuten Research holds the Privacy Mark (JIPDEC) certificate, a widely accepted certificate protecting panel member and client personal information. Links to the Privacy Policy are provided on our website and on each survey invitation e-mail.

Below is the Privacy Policy link (in Japanese).

<<http://research.rakuten.co.jp/company/privacy.html>>

Q25. Please describe the measures you take to ensure data protection and data security.

We protect data following the ISO/IEC27001 requirements.

Q26. What practices do you follow to decide whether online research should be used to present commercially sensitive client data or materials to survey respondents?

We only accept audio, video, images etc. which do not infringe upon other's rights.

We conduct the following measures to protect client and survey information/results:

- Copy-and-paste function does not work on our survey screen
- Panel members agree to a confidentiality rule
- Reassure the confidentiality obligation on the top page of each survey

Despite these protection measures, we cannot assure 100% security on client materials. In the case of protecting extremely confidential materials, we advise using other methods.

Q27. Are you certified to any specific quality system? If so, which one(s)?

Privacy Mark (JIPDEC)

ISO/IEC27001

Q28. Do you conduct online surveys with children and young people? If so, do you adhere to the standards that ESOMAR provides? What other rules or standards, for example COPPA in the United States, do you comply with?

We require all minors under (and including) the 9th grade, to gain permission from a guardian before registration to our panel. We also ask they gain permission when answering a survey.

Visit our website for more information

<http://research.rakuten.co.jp/>