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Technical Report

Making Electoral Democracy Work

University of Western Ontario

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Introduction

We are pleased to submit this technical report to the Making Electoral Democracy Work team. Harris/Decima assembled a team of seasoned researchers on from our Public Affairs team to work on this project. Their roles were as follows:

- Doug Anderson served as the Senior Project Manager. Mr. Anderson was responsible for overall project direction and ensuring the contractual obligations were met. He directed the project team, ensured quality control throughout the life cycle of the project and reviewed final deliverables.
- John Bremer served as a Project Consultant providing advice and guidance on electoral surveying. In particular, Mr. Bremer was responsible for the final weighting scheme of the data.
- Megan Tam served as Lead Consultant and was responsible for supporting the project analyst and overseeing field operations.
- Lauren Skelly served as the project analyst overseeing the day-to-day management of the project, managing field, suppliers and sampling. Furthermore, Ms. Skelly was the main point of client contact during the project.
- Bram Dean oversaw the online data collection, data entry and production of the data files.

Making Electoral Democracy Work

The Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada has been awarded a significant grant for a seven-year research project entitled *Making Electoral Democracy Work (MEDW).*

This project brings together an exceptional team of economists, political scientists and psychologists from Canada, Europe, and the United States to undertake the most ambitious study ever undertaken on the impact of electoral rules on the functioning of democracy. The project will examine 27 elections in five countries.

The goal of the project is to examine the determinants of vote choice (including decision to vote or not to vote) in different election contexts.

The North Rhine Westphalia Pilot Test

The MEDW Team sought the services of a public opinion research firm to collect online data for the MEDW Pilot test to be held in North Rhine Westphalia studying the state election held on May 9th, 2010. As with the larger project, this study included a pre- and post election survey implemented through a return to sample methodology.

Harris/Decima completed 1,016 pre-election surveys and 809 post-election surveys online in the month of May.

This report presents a detailed description of the survey methodology used to complete this research, including sample design, recruitment, survey administration, response

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rates, weighting and recommendations for the future. This document contains all the details necessary to replicate this study in the future.

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Survey Methodology

Questionnaire Design – CAWI

The MEDW team was responsible for providing the English and German versions of the pre and post election survey questionnaire.

Harris/Decima provided limited consultation on the questionnaire design to facilitate online survey administration. This survey was fielded in German and all translation of the survey instruments were provided by the MEDW team.

Programming

Once the survey was finalized, it was programmed by Harris/Decima's in house programming team. Harris/Decima uses VOXCO's Interviewer Web CAWI software for data collection in online surveys. Interviewer Web includes support for random respondent selection, respondent identity verification via passwords (numeric passwords up to 12 digits) and for quota control. It also features adaptive questionnaire logic designed to provide many of the same methodological safeguards associated with traditional CATI telephone interviewing (i.e., randomized ordering of variables being tested in a battery, skip patterns based on responses given). The package allows the project manager to track non-responses to survey requests and provides estimates of non-response bias.

Survey Pre-Tests

Prior to being finalized, the online survey was pre-tested or slow started with 11 respondents on Thursday, April 29th. After the slow start, Harris/Decima analysts checked all of the frequencies and skip logic to ensure it elicited the required information.

Sample Design and Selection

The sample for this survey was designed to complete 1,000 interviews with North Rhine Westphalia residents in the pre-election survey and a return-to-sample targeting 750 interviews in the post. A stratified, quota-based sampling approach was used, since this generates substantive estimates across and within specific key segments of interest, which in turn permits extrapolation to the broader population with greater confidence. Quotas were set by controlling for age, gender and education status.

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Based on statistics from the Landesbetrieb Information and Technik Nordrhein-Westfalen (which is the North Rhine Westphalia agency for information and technology), the following demographic quotas were set for the pre-election survey:

		% of Population	Quota	% of Sample
Gender	Male	48.23%	482	48.23%
	Female	51.77%	518	51.77%
	Total	100.00%	1000	100.00%
Age	18-34	23.98%	240	23.98%
	35-54	37.62%	376	37.62%
	55+	38.40%	384	38.40%
	Total	100.00%	1000	100.00%
Education[1]	1. No certificate / certificate of secondary school	50.53%	505	50.53%
	2. General certificate of secondary school / Certificate of … GDR	27.82%	278	27.82%
	3. Advanced technical college entrance qualification / General university entrance qualification	10.75%	107	10.75%
	4. University degree	10.90%	109	10.90%
	Total	100.00%	1000	100.00%

Education was matched in close consultation with representatives from Harris Interactive Germany who used their knowledge of the education system to match the quota categories with the categories listed in the survey education question.

Given that the post test was a return to sample only, no quotas were set for this portion of this study.

Quotas were monitored daily by the Harris/Decima project manager and daily updates were communicated with suppliers and the project team. Sample pulls and reminders were based on quota needs.

[1] Education levels specifically for North Rhine Westphalia were not available. As such an analysis of education levels in said region was undertaken using a yearly conducted, national representative survey (true random sampling) with approximately 20,000 respondents in total. For more information please see: http://www.tdwi.com/englishsummary.html

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Sample was pulled by SSI on the following dates:

- April 29th, 2010
- April 30th, 2010
- May 3rd, 2010
- May 4th, 2010
- May 7th, 2010

Sample was pulled based on the following criteria:

- Age greater than 18
- Language set to German
- Area set to North Rhine Westphalia
- Education levels
- Gender

For the post wave, no further sample was pulled – invites were sent only to those who completed the first wave only.

Supplier Panel Information

Harris/Decima contracted Survey Sampling International (SSI) as a sample provider for this study. In turn, SSI contracted a German sample provider, Panel Biz for a portion of the sample. For detailed descriptions of SSI's and PanelBiz's panels, including company profile, panel recruitment, panel and sample management, policies and compliance, partnerships and multiple panel membership information and data quality and validation, please see Appendix B.

Survey Administration

To complete the online survey, respondents were sent an invitation and clicked on a survey URL with an embedded password where the survey was hosted. The survey included an information and consent form which provided information about the study, encouraged their participation, provided them with the necessary privacy information and reiterated that by clicking "Weiter" (German translation of 'next') on the survey they consented to participation.

The survey was accessible 24 hours a day, seven days a week from any web-enabled computer.

Dates in Field and Reminders

Pre-Test

A soft launch of 11 respondents was conducted on April 29th, 2010 with the full launch commencing on April 30th, 2010. Additional invites were sent on May 3rd, 2010, followed by reminders on May 4th, 2010 and May 7th, 2010. Data collection for this phase of the research closed on May 8th, 2010.

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Post Test

All post test invitations were distributed on May 10th, 2010 and reminders were sent on May 12th, 2010 and May 14th, 2010. Data collection for this period closed on May 17th, 2010.

Incentives

As is customary with all online panel surveys, participants were provided with an incentive upon the completion of the survey.

For sample sourced from SSI, 200 points were given if respondents completed the first wave and 400 points for the post-election follow up. On May 7th, SSI increased the incentive by 100 points to boost response rates to ensure the pre-test was completely by May 9th (the election day).

For sample sourced from PanelBiz, 3 Euros were provided for respondents completing the pre-wave and 1 Euro was provided for completing the post-wave.

Passwords

Harris/Decima provided SSI with a generic link so that when respondents came into the survey their password was appended to the end of the URL. Cookies were enabled to control access to the survey so respondents could only complete the survey once.

Sample Distribution and Response Rate

The table below presents the overall participation rate for the pre and post wave portions of this research:

	Pre Wave	Post Wave
A: Total Invitations [2]	19606	1016
B: Undeliverables	36	0
C: Net Usable invitations	19570	1016
D: Total Completes	1016	809
E: Qualified break offs	607	71
F: Disqualified	0	0
G: Not responded	16570	136
H: Quota filled	1377	0
Contact Rate (d+e+f+h)/c	15.33%	86.61%
Participation Rate (d+f+h)/c	12.23%	79.63%

[2] For the pre-test, 7184 invitations were sent through PanelBiz and 12,422 through SSI. For the post test, 236 invitations were sent from PanelBiz and 780 were sent from SSI.

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As a point of reference, SSI experiences an average response rate of 15.6% in Germany across all projects. All surveys are different and response rates do vary from project to project. In general, political surveys tend to have a lower response rate because they may ask for sensitive information on voting habits.

The following table indicates how many completes were achieved each day. For a more detailed breakdown of these numbers by quota please see Appendix A.

Completions by Date: Pre and Post Wave

	Pre Wave
Thursday, April 29, 2010	11
Friday, April 30, 2010	254
Saturday, May 01, 2010	144
Sunday, May 02, 2010	60
Monday, May 03, 2010	65
Tuesday, May 04, 2010	196
Wednesday, May 05, 2010	17
Thursday, May 06, 2010	140
Friday, May 07, 2010	104
Saturday, May 08, 2010	25
Total	**1016**
	Post Wave
Monday, May 10, 2010	233
Tuesday, May 11, 2010	336
Wednesday, May 12, 2010	131
Thursday, May 13, 2010	42
Friday, May 14, 2010	44
Saturday, May 15, 2010	9
Sunday, May 16, 2010	10
Monday, May 17, 2010	4
Total	**809**

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Data Analysis

Upon completion of data collection, Harris/Decima cleaned and weighted the data. There were two respondents who had the same ID number and were identified as duplicates. As such, both of these respondents were removed from the final data set.

Data Validity and Integrity Checks

Our custom system immediately identifies cases where the interview length is unrealistically short, contradicts established facts or presents patterns of response deserving attention. As a result, we can determine whether a case should be excluded from the final sample if necessary. All of these checks are preformed manually and cleaned out of the data in the back end of the project. Harris/Decima uses a checklist to ensure all data that is delivered to the client has gone through a rigorous quality control process. During this time Harris/Decima also cross referenced all IDs between the pre and post surveys to ensure all responses were valid.

During the integrity check process, Harris/Decima requested regional information from SSI. Upon receipt of this document, we had realized that roughly 8% of the sample was tagged as being from areas outside of North-Rhine Westphalia. When asked for a response to why this is, SSI/PanelBiz provided Harris/Decima with the following response:

> "Although the sample was pulled with specific geographic targeting, there is always a small percentage of people who move and then update their information. Therefore, they are invited into the survey as the status they were listed on the day the sample was pulled. Thus, this would explain respondents coming into the survey from outside the area. This is quite common – usually somewhere around 5%."

Given the response from SSI, Harris/Decima decided that it would be important to create a variable which flags respondents whose regional information did not fit with the original regional specifications – all respondents must be a resident of North Rhine Westphalia. If a respondent was marked as not a resident of NRW by SSI, they are included in the flag variable. We felt it was important to include this variable in the final dataset in case of any skew in the data that could be attributed to this error.

Data Cleaning

Harris/Decima analysts have considerable experience in cleaning data files, conducting statistical routines, producing tabular output, and weighting data to provide an accurate measure of the population as a whole.

The following are the basic steps taken when cleaning data files:

- Ensure that all coded questions have updated codes and multiple mentions do not have duplicate codes;
- Create all new variables as a result of programming;
- Confirm that all relevant variables are included in the data file;

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- Final frequency check (for out-of-range values) and recodes created, including those for outliers;
- Verify that variable names and question numbers match the final version of the questionnaire; and
- Create and verify new variable creations (against source variables) as outlined in the analysis plan and perform spell check on all variables.

In addition to these generic rules, project specific requirements are also taken into account. It is also noteworthy that because the CAWI software controls the questionnaire flow and data entry, data are typically quite clean from the outset.

Para Data

Harris/Decima was able to append time stamp and electoral constituency to the final data.

Time Stamps: The way that timing variables work in this study is that they each capture how long the survey has taken (in seconds) at the point the respondent crosses the variable. To analyze how long someone has taken between two timestamps, subtract the first time stamp variable from the second and this will represent how long it took the respondent to get from the first variable to the second. The formula below represents how to analyze the time it took a respondent to complete Q6 of the pre-election survey and covert the time to minutes.

COMP TIMEREPORT=(NUMBER(T008,F10)-NUMBER(T007,F10))/60.

By running this formula in SPSS, you are able to run statistical tests to get the mean or whatever other measures the MEDW team sees fit. The Post Election study timing variables start at T102, so the clock rests for each individual timing variable after T102.

Electoral Constituency: Harris/Decima did a comprehensive search online for electoral constituency information. We started by looking at postal code maps and comparing them to electoral constituency maps which resulted in data that we didn't feel comfortable matching to electoral districts. Next we found a website (http://www.plzdir.de/postleitzahlen.php) for Germany and looked-up postal codes for many of the cases but later found this website was returning towns or provinces that shared similar names with electoral districts.

We then started doing the look-ups on another site (http://www.wen-waehlen.de/) and cross referenced with an electoral constituency map. However, for many of the cases we entered in a postal code and multiple constituencies were returned.

Finally we tried working with this website (http://www.abgeordnetenwatch.de/) which has proved to be slightly more successful than the other two attempts. However, postal codes were still returning multiple constituencies. The MEDW also looked into additional resources to help deciper postal codes with multiple constituencies. .

In the final data set, Harris/Decima appended all the electoral constituency information we could find. Three variables were created for electoral constituency as our lookups returned more than one constituency in some cases.

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Weighting

At the conclusion of the data collection and cleaning, Harris/Decima created several weights for the data. First, we weighted the data by each quota stratum to reflect the actual proportions found in the population. This ensures the findings from the research can be extrapolated to the entire population with accuracy. Harris/Decima uses a standard procedure for calculating weighting factors, based on established methodological standards and extensive experience in sample weighting over literally hundreds of projects. This procedure involves calculating the actual population within each segment and the true proportion of the sample that would fall into each segment if the survey were conducted on strictly a random basis. Into this number is divided the actual segment sub-sample to produce a weighting factor that is then used to "weight" the data for that segment. While there are various ways of accomplishing this task, this procedure is straightforward and effective.

The following weights were developed in this manner.

	Name	Factors	Pre/Post
1	WEIGHT1	Age, gender	Pre
2	WEIGHT2	Education	Pre
3	WEIGHT	Age, gender, education	Pre

RIM Weighting

RIM weighting (Random Iterative Method - also called raking) weighting was used to create weights. This method of weighting puts selected non-interlocking and grouped interlocking variables in isolation through an iterative sequence of weighting adjustments. The sequence adjusts for each rim in turn and then repeats itself as many times as is required in order to obtain a convergence, in which the sum of the weighted rims matches the target population estimates, or is as close as it is possible to achieve. The number of iterations is indicated in the table below.

Propensity Weighting

WEIGHTFIN, the last weight created, includes a propensity score.

Propensity score weighting is a statistical technique that minimizes potential bias associated the choices Internet based panel members make in order to participate in a survey. The propensity score is calculated by using a parallel high quality telephone survey to compare to the responses from the online survey. A logistic regression model is run with the dependent variable being whether one participated in the reference survey or the online survey. The independent variables include the specific attitudinal and behavioral variables included in the survey for the model as well as demographic variables. The propensity score was included with traditional demographic variables (age, gender, and education) in the weighting algorithm using a rim or raking algorithm. The target distribution for the propensity score was obtained from the telephone data and applied to the online data.

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Data Sources

The data used for the demographic weights were taken from the same sources as used for the quotas, the Landesbetrieb Information and Technik Nordrhein-Westfalen - the North Rhine Westphalia agency for information and technology - and a yearly conducted, national representative survey (true random sampling) with approximately 20,000 respondents in total.

The data used for propensity weighting came from a RDD telephone survey that Harris Interactive conducted in Germany, asking a proprietary set of questions which were repeated in the online survey.

The source of the official turnout and statistics were taken from various polling companies (http://www.wahlrecht.de/umfragen/landtage/nrw.htm).

As a matter of convention, the average weight was set to 1 so that the unweighted base is the same as the weighted base.

Although weighting caps were set, these caps are not hard, but were instead capped by trimming and then after normalization the range in some instances moved slightly.

The datafile includes the following weights, each of which was created to suit a unique purpose and some of which were used to create other weights.

Name	Factors	Use for Pre/Post	# iterations	Cap - low	Cap - high
wt1	Demo wt: age, gender, education	Both	4 (RIM)	0.25	4
wt2	Demo wt: age, gender, education, region, religion	Both	5 (RIM)	0.25	4
wt3_pre	wt2 + turnout	Pre	6 (RIM)	0.25	4
wt3_post	wt2 + turnout	Post	6 (RIM)	0.25	4
wt4_pre	wt2 + vote	Pre	5 (RIM)	0.25	4
wt4_post	wt2 + vote	Post	4 (RIM)	0.25	4
wt5_pre	(formerly wtpre) wt2 + vote + turnout	Pre	7 (RIM)	0.25	4
wt5_post	(formerly wtpost) wt2 + vote + turnout	Post	9 (RIM)	0.25	4
WTPREGES	Age, gender, education, administrative region, religion, political interest and party ID	Pre	9 (RIM)	0.2	5

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WTPOSTGES	Age, gender, education, administrative region, religion, political interest and party ID	Post	10 (RIM)	0.2	5
WTFIN	Age, gender, education, propensity score (based on proprietary questions measuring social engagement and attitudes to privacy)	Pre	4 (RIM + propensity)	0.25	4

Challenges and Recommendations for Project Improvement

Challenge #1: Accuracy of Sample Composition Among Sample Providers

Accurate sampling within this research is integral to the overall success of the project, especially during the pre-election survey. After we requested the regional demographic information from SSI, we noticed there had been respondents included that were not from the region in question. Although our expectations had been articulated, this error nonetheless occurred. Going forward, we recognize that it will be important for us to ensure that all sample providers fully understand what the expectations are of the MEDW project, the importance of the study, the sampling frame, the incentives and the importance of consistency between each of these project elements are enforced.

Proposed Solution: Comprehensive supplier briefing

Given the academic, stringent nature of this study and the need for transparency, Harris/Decima recommends that the MEDW hold a kick-off meeting with all suppliers participating in this research at the project outset. While this is typically above and beyond the norm for a project, we feel that providing suppliers with a comprehensive understanding of the project from the MEDW team's perspective will help mitigate consistency issues going forward. Additionally, we recommend that the MEDW team put together a comprehensive briefing document for this study to circulate amongst the suppliers involved in the MEDW project. While we are able to convey the needs and requirements to the suppliers we feel that it important for us and our suppliers to understand the processes, including but not limited to the ethics board process, associated with this study. Our consulting staff will be available to review these documents prior to their dissemination to assist in ensuring all pertinent information is provided.

Proposed Solution: One point of contact among suppliers

Harris/Decima recommends having one point of contact or project manager for all suppliers. During the NRW pilot test the Harris/Decima PM was the point of contact for

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SSI but SSI was the point of contact for PanelBiz. Going forward, we suggest having the Harris/Decima PM manage all suppliers and be copied on all project related communications.

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Challenge #2: Scheduling Constraints

Due to the fact that aspects of this project are reliant upon a fixed election date – beyond our control – Harris/Decima found the allotted timing for programming, pretesting and review was tight.

Proposed Solution: Additional Time Prior to Pre-Survey Launch

The proposed timeline in our proposal stipulates that we require a finalized questionnaire 4 weeks before the pre-test. While normally this would be more than enough time to complete programming and pretesting, we feel that in this case we could benefit from more time. Harris/Decima proposes a 6 week time period from the pre-survey launch date. The survey needs to be pre-tested by not only Harris/Decima and the MEDW team but also the suppliers, who have to test the survey to ensure it complies with their standards, policies and guidelines in their agreements with their panelists.

Proposed Solution: Firm Deadline for Survey Changes

Harris/Decima also proposes firm deadline for survey changes wherein no additional changes will be accepted. Due to the coordination of external suppliers and internal departments adding this time buffer will alleviate last minute stresses.

Challenge #3: Matching Respondents to Respective Electoral Constituency

Harris/Decima encountered problems with matching survey respondents' postal code to their electoral constituency. Respondents were asked to enter their postal code and we had anticipated matching said postal code to their electoral constituency. Given that respondents could skip questions and accounting for human error, we ended up with incomplete postal codes and as such, incomplete electoral constituency data.

Proposed Solution: Including more regional information in the survey instrument

Harris/Decima suggests including more regional information in the survey instrument such as asking respondent for their postal code, city and address. This will provide more opportunity to match and append additional data such as electoral constituency and any other data of interest to the MEDW team.

Proposed Solution: Investigate electoral constituency definitions for all countries prior to survey launch

Given the international scope of this project, Harris/Decima suggests undertaking a comprehensive review of all areas in question and how each area defines electoral constituency. We feel that this will provide us with the tools we need to append this para-data upon survey completion and will identify what additional regional questions, if any, will need to be included in the survey instrument.

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Challenge #4: Respondents from Other Areas Completing the Survey

Harris/Decima encountered respondents living outside North Rhine Westphalia completing the survey.

Proposed Solution: Screen respondents out based on region

To mitigate this problem going forward, Harris/Decima recommends including a screen-out question at the beginning of the survey, after the information and consent form, which states:

"Are you currently living in [INSERT REGION OF STUDY] and 18 years of age or older?"

As we learned from this pilot test, when sample is pulled there is a chance that respondents from other areas could be included in the sample. We feel that adding in additional measures to ensure the respondent lives in the area in question will reduce the incidence of this happening in future studies included in this research project.

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Appendix A: Pre Test Quota Completions by Date[3]

		No Certificate	General Certificate	Advanced technical college/entrance qualification	University Degree
Education	Thursday, April 29, 2010	4	2	3	2
	Friday, April 30, 2010	54	80	69	51
	Saturday, May 01, 2010	32	55	33	23
	Sunday, May 02, 2010	24	18	2	16
	Monday, May 03, 2010	18	29	0	18
	Tuesday, May 04, 2010	100	94	0	0
	Wednesday, May 05, 2010	17	0	0	0
	Thursday, May 06, 2010	139	0	0	0
	Friday, May 07, 2010	93	5	2	1
	Saturday, May 08, 2010	16	5	2	1
	Total	**497**	**288**	**111**	**112**
		18-34	**35-54**	**55+**	
Age	Thursday, April 29, 2010	4	6	1	
	Friday, April 30, 2010	65	117	72	
	Saturday, May 01, 2010	43	73	27	
	Sunday, May 02, 2010	15	33	12	
	Monday, May 03, 2010	13	42	10	
	Tuesday, May 04, 2010	29	119	48	
	Wednesday, May 05, 2010	5	0	12	
	Thursday, May 06, 2010	76	4	60	
	Friday, May 07, 2010	4	6	94	
	Saturday, May 08, 2010	4	0	21	
	Total	**258**	**400**	**357**	
		Female	**Male**		
Gender	Thursday, April 29, 2010	7	4		
	Friday, April 30, 2010	103	150		
	Saturday, May 01, 2010	82	61		
	Sunday, May 02, 2010	28	32		
	Monday, May 03, 2010	25	40		
	Tuesday, May 04, 2010	114	81		
	Wednesday, May 05, 2010	6	11		
	Thursday, May 06, 2010	75	64		
	Friday, May 07, 2010	52	50		
	Saturday, May 08, 2010	24	0		
	Total	**516**	**493**		

[3] Given that respondents were able to skip all questions the totals for each demographics will not match the total completes as listed on page 5.

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Appendix B: Supplier Panel Information

panelbiz

COMPANY PROFILE

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

panelbiz was founded in 2005 as a joint venture of Holtzbrinck Ventures and Innofact AG. With the takeover of meinungsplatz.de, which had been operating since 1998 by Innofact AG, panelbiz GmbH was able to access Germany's largest and most established online panel. Therefore, panelbiz is a leading specialist for services relating to online panels. We combine extensive know-how in the area of online market research with the Holtzbrinck Group's uniquely broad online and offline recruitment channels.

In terms of the panel's daily operations, this means that only a dedicated and highly experienced panel management team can guarantee reliable answers and a high level of responsiveness. panelbiz has the very unique advantage of being able to offer each and every customer access even to the most difficult of target audiences in order to achieve the most accurate study possible.

panelbiz offers high quality online-samples for market research: With our partner Holtzbrinck Group we generate 17 million contacts on a daily basis and are able to recruit in the broadest possible way. Along with the user panel, panelbiz began creating and expanding a pool of specialized panels in 2006. These panels are particularly useful for specific user groups (such as silver surfers) and for studies in the B2B segment.

SAMPLE SOURCE

2) **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)?**

The sources are actively managed panels of local languages, used only for market research surveys.

The system is efficient and transparent: at "meinungsplatz.de" (.at/.ch), participants can register for paid online surveys. Registration is free and participants are under no obligation.

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

Firstly, with the comprehensive and multi-layered recruiting channels of the Holtzbrinck Group and other large media players, the online panel "meinungsplatz.de" offers a widely varied panel structure. Its highly-developed profiling process ensures the most up-to-date data and, with the high level of user satisfaction, an optimal response rate is guaranteed.

For particularly difficult study questions, panelbiz offers a variety of special panels and customized/private panels. For example, we offer special panels in sections automotive,

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IT decision maker, silver surfer, teens, and many more. By Holtzbrinck Group and the collaboration with Financial Times Deutschland, we built a specialized decision makers panel ("FTD Panel") consisting of high-ranking decision makers in different kinds of industry sectors and business areas.

Secondly, the identity of our panel participants is secured because of the monetary incentive we offer for participation in a survey: when registering, panelists have to enter their unique bank account which identifies them as unique users. Fake registration is therefore impossible.

4) **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 for market research only in compliance with ICC/ESOMAR Code and Esomar and BVM guidelines. We do not send unsolicited emails to our panelists or abuse their membership in any way. Additionally, panelbiz never supplies e-mail database or individual e-mail addresses to any third party and we never use our panel for any other purposes than market research.

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

panelbiz has the very unique advantage of being able to offer each and every customer access to the most difficult of target audiences in order to achieve the most accurate study possible. With the benefit of the Holtzbrinck Group's (one of Germanys biggest media company) and other large media players' broad recruitment channels both online and offline, our panel structure is extremely diverse. Therefore, even with the most difficult topics and lowest incidence rates, we are able to convene a highly representative panel. For particularly difficult study questions, panelbiz offers a variety of special panels and customized/private panels, as mentioned in question 3.

6) **What are people told when they are recruited?**

In the recruiting process we tell our potential panel members that they can influence the products and services of tomorrow by participating in our surveys. We also tell them that they get paid cash for their opinion. Our website is very transparent: it includes our privacy policies in adherence to German data protection act, our terms and conditions, and we provide a hotline where people can address themselves to in case of any questions.

PANEL RECRUITMENT

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

Our panel's attrition rate is round about 6% per year, the net growth about 10% per year. Through continuous recruitment of consumers and special target groups, our panel is growing on a long term basis.

8) **Please describe the opt-in process.**

At "meinungsplatz.de" (.at/.ch), participants can register for paid online surveys. We do have the double opt-in process. Because of the monetary incentive we offer, panel

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participants are securely registered by entering their bank information. After filling in the registration form, respondents receive an E-Mail asking to confirm their registration (double-opt-in). We work in adherence to the German data protection act which is one of the most rigid protections of data privacy in the world.

9) **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.**

Yes, we do have identity procedures in place. Because of the monetary incentive we offer, panel participants have to enter their bank account details in order to receive their incentive. By this obligation, each panel member is securely registered and it is ensured that people do not register in our panel with multiple or wrong identities: in Germany, it is only possible to open a bank account on one's real name, so each identity is proved by its bank in the first place. Registering in our panel with another person's name and bank account wouldn't make sense, because in this case this other person would receive the monetary incentive on its bank account instead of the actual panelist himself. Therefore, we can rule out and exclude fake registrations in our panel.

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

Upon registration, we collect the following: age, gender, postal address, country, education status, and employment status. Different to competitors, we screen our members through the surveys themselves. This dynamic process provides us with more up-to-date information of our panel members. There are about 100 profile questions which are asked depending on their half life period, based on a ranking that comprehends the amount of time since this profile question was asked last time and the probability that the questions answer will have changed.

11) **What is 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?**

Currently, our panel in Germany consists of 250.000 unique active members and is constantly growing. Our newly founded panel in Switzerland already counts 15.000 participants. The source of our panel is the website "meinungsplatz.de" (.at/.ch). Almost 80% of our active panelists are recruited via Online-Ads, another 10% via Offline-Ads. The remaining are recruited via postal invites, direct mail or special campaigns (such as Tell A Friend).

PANEL AND SAMPLE MANAGEMENT

12) **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?**

Yes, we can deploy sample in batches and soft/full launch depending on the client´s requirements. Our panel-team takes care of this process and will provide realtime-reportings if requested. Since all regional information of each panel member is stored in our database, naturally we are able to deploy sample according to geography. We follow

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Nielsen area guidelines and can guarantee an almost 99% covering of Nielsen areas in Germany and Switzerland.

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

Our panelists are invited via email to take part in surveys being conducted on the internet (online questionnaires). Invitations are designed in neutral layout and give no indication of product, target group, or client's identity. In each invitation, we individually state the length of survey and the incentive we will pay. Additionally, we provide a link to our panel support participants can contact in case of any questions.

14) 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?

Our panel members receive a monetary incentive for their truthful participation in a survey. The amount of the incentive depends on target group, length and difficulty of the survey and is stated in the invitation individually for each survey. The system is transparent: each panelist can check his/her member account which lists all surveys he/her took part in including the monetary incentive.

15) 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?

Response rates and activity of each member are fully stored in our database. It is our experience that panel participants would take part rather in more than in fewer surveys. Nevertheless, we are careful to invite participants at a frequency that ensures that they are neither under-utilized, nor are they over-burdened. Depending on the target group, our members receive up to 12 invitations a quarter, with a survey completion rate of 3 to 4 surveys a quarter.

POLICIES AND COMPLIANCE

16) 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.?

To ensure the highest level of quality, which both panelbiz and the customer demand when conducting panel surveys, we guarantee adherence to all ESOMAR regulations. panelbiz works according to ESOMAR standards as well as BVM and DGOF standards. Of course we guarantee to observe the legal regulations of German data protection as well, which are one of the highest in Europe and the world.

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

All respondent information is stored within secured password protected data storage areas. Our IT is secured by industry standard firewalls and a stringent IT security policy.

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Servers are in secured in state of the art controlled data centers. Staff who have access to panelist information are subject to confidentiality agreements.

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

To ensure quality, we have systems in place which consists of:

- Best recruiting channels
- Exclusive panel build-up according to client needs
- Secure identities through required bank account for incentive
- Double-Opt-In registration
- Reliable incentive program
- Neither over- nor under-entertainment
- Constant check during online studies for consistent answers
- Panel cleaning twice a year
- Reliable user helpdesk

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

panelbiz does not contact children to take part in research unless they are over the age legally required for such contact and in compliance with ESOMAR and local country association guidelines. To enable research with children below the age of 14, panelbiz obtains parental consent and requests parental supervision.

PARTNERSHIPS AND MULTIPLE PANEL MEMBERSHIP

20) 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?

We never supplement our samples with samples from other providers in Germany. Sometimes we conduct studies in countries where we do not have own panels. Then we use third party providers, of course in advance notification of our client. De-duplication is only necessary if you use several panels for one and the same country which is something we never do

21) 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?

We never use several panels for one and the same country therefore we do not have this problem. Nevertheless, we previously conducted surveys to identify panelists having a multi panel membership – the results showed that only 0.8% of our panelists also have a membership in other panels in Germany.

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DATA QUALITY AND VALIDATION

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

This also depends on the survey-design, field time and target group. In average we do have a 30-40% start rate and a dropout rate which is about 2-5%. So the participation rate ranges between 28-25 % and 38-35%. This is computed by our own developed panel-management solution and its feedback system.

23) 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 detailed user data and we are able to supply our clients with some information. We are not allowed to and of course never do deliver any confidential information of single panel members.

24) 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?

We work with different kinds of consistency checks and also check for speedsters. We use tricky questions to identify inattentive respondents. We put them on a watch list and ban them from our panel if they behave in a fraudulent way. We do this continuously. We also validate our panelists via their bank account.

25) Do you measure respondent satisfaction?

We measure satisfaction every quarter asking our panelists more than 30 questions concerning satisfaction.

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

It depends on what our customers want. Any facts we are allowed to pass on like field time, response-rate, and number of invites, dropout-rate and so on are possible. Of course we never give any private information of our panel members such as name, email-address etc because we comply with the German data protection act and the ICC/Esomar Code.

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Survey Sampling International

Please double click on the image below to open up the appended document.

Survey Sampling International

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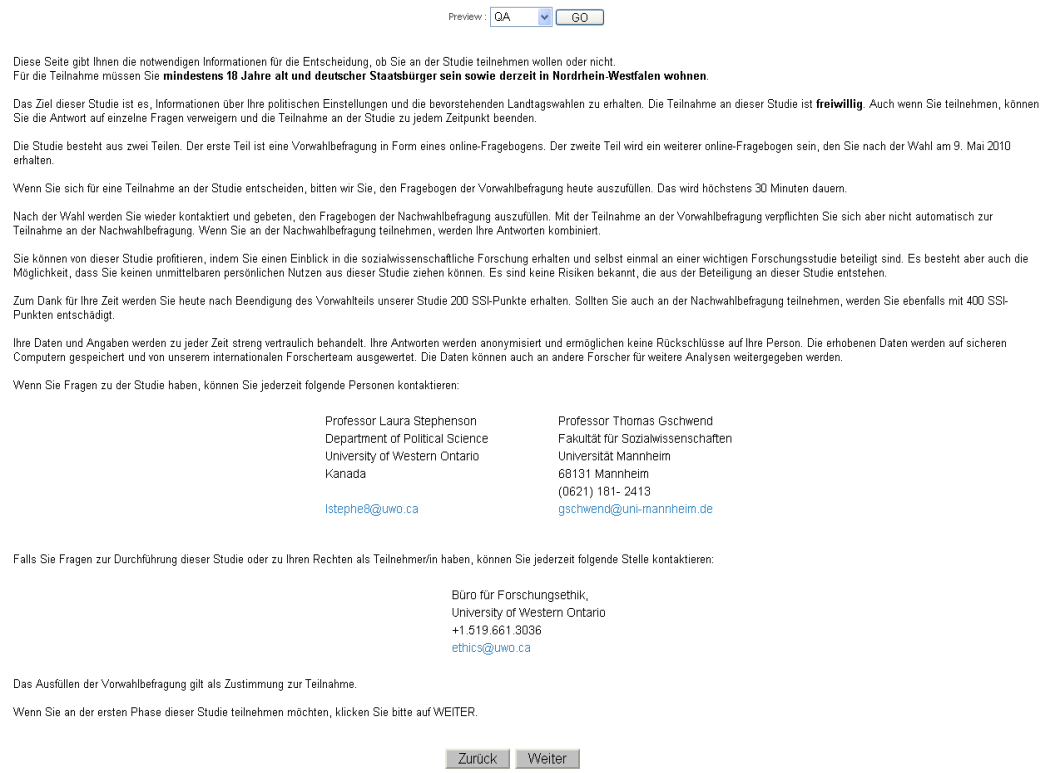
Appendix C: Information and Consent Screen and Invitation Text



Preview : QA GO

Diese Seite gibt Ihnen die notwendigen Informationen für die Entscheidung, ob Sie an der Studie teilnehmen wollen oder nicht.
Für die Teilnahme müssen Sie **mindestens 18 Jahre alt und deutscher Staatsbürger sein sowie derzeit in Nordrhein-Westfalen wohnen**.

Das Ziel dieser Studie ist es, Informationen über Ihre politischen Einstellungen und die bevorstehenden Landtagswahlen zu erhalten. Die Teilnahme an dieser Studie ist **freiwillig**. Auch wenn Sie teilnehmen, können Sie die Antwort auf einzelne Fragen verweigern und die Teilnahme an der Studie zu jedem Zeitpunkt beenden.

Die Studie besteht aus zwei Teilen. Der erste Teil ist eine Vorwahlbefragung in Form eines online-Fragebogens. Der zweite Teil wird ein weiterer online-Fragebogen sein, den Sie nach der Wahl am 9. Mai 2010 erhalten.

Wenn Sie sich für eine Teilnahme an der Studie entscheiden, bitten wir Sie, den Fragebogen der Vorwahlbefragung heute auszufüllen. Das wird höchstens 30 Minuten dauern.

Nach der Wahl werden Sie wieder kontaktiert und gebeten, den Fragebogen der Nachwahlbefragung auszufüllen. Mit der Teilnahme an der Vorwahlbefragung verpflichten Sie sich aber nicht automatisch zur Teilnahme an der Nachwahlbefragung. Wenn Sie an der Nachwahlbefragung teilnehmen, werden Ihre Antworten kombiniert.

Sie können von dieser Studie profitieren, indem Sie einen Einblick in die sozialwissenschaftliche Forschung erhalten und selbst einmal an einer wichtigen Forschungsstudie beteiligt sind. Es besteht aber auch die Möglichkeit, dass Sie keinen unmittelbaren persönlichen Nutzen aus dieser Studie ziehen können. Es sind keine Risiken bekannt, die aus der Beteiligung an dieser Studie entstehen.

Zum Dank für Ihre Zeit werden Sie heute nach Beendigung des Vorwahlteils unserer Studie 200 SSI-Punkte erhalten. Sollten Sie auch an der Nachwahlbefragung teilnehmen, werden Sie ebenfalls mit 400 SSI-Punkten entschädigt.

Ihre Daten und Angaben werden zu jeder Zeit streng vertraulich behandelt. Ihre Antworten werden anonymisiert und ermöglichen keine Rückschlüsse auf Ihre Person. Die erhobenen Daten werden auf sicheren Computern gespeichert und von unserem internationalen Forscherteam ausgewertet. Die Daten können auch an andere Forscher für weitere Analysen weitergegeben werden.

Wenn Sie Fragen zu der Studie haben, können Sie jederzeit folgende Personen kontaktieren:

Professor Laura Stephenson
Department of Political Science
University of Western Ontario
Kanada

lstephe8@uwo.ca

Professor Thomas Gschwend
Fakultät für Sozialwissenschaften
Universität Mannheim
68131 Mannheim
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Falls Sie Fragen zur Durchführung dieser Studie oder zu Ihren Rechten als Teilnehmer/in haben, können Sie jederzeit folgende Stelle kontaktieren:

Büro für Forschungsethik,
University of Western Ontario
+1.519.661.3036
ethics@uwo.ca

Das Ausfüllen der Vorwahlbefragung gilt als Zustimmung zur Teilnahme.

Wenn Sie an der ersten Phase dieser Studie teilnehmen möchten, klicken Sie bitte auf WEITER.

Zurück Weiter

RECRUIT E-MAIL INVITATION
Invitation Heading: Wahlumfrage
Body text:
Das internationale Meinungsforschungsinstitut Harris/Decima, führt für eine internationale Wissenschaftlergruppe eine Umfrage unter den Bewohnern Nordrhein-Westfalens durch. Diese Studie dient der Informationsgewinnung über politische Einstellungen.

Die Studie besteht aus zwei Teilen. Der erste Teil, den zu bearbeiten Sie heute eingeladen sind, ist ein Fragebogen, den Sie in nur ca. 30 Minuten ausfüllen können. Ihre Teilnahme ist freiwillig und jede Ihrer angegebenen Informationen wird streng vertraulich behandelt. Für Ihre Teilnahme werden Sie mit SSI-Punkten entschädigt. Außerdem werden wir Sie zu einem späteren Zeitpunkt nochmals kontaktieren und Sie zur Beantwortung eines weiteren Fragebogens einladen. Ihre Teilnahme ist auch zu diesem Zeitpunkt freiwillig. Sollten Sie auch den zweiten Fragebogen beantworten, werden Sie ebenfalls mit SSI-Punkten entschädigt.

Falls Sie weitere Fragen haben oder Informationen benötigen, kontaktieren Sie bitte Professor Laura Stephenson Department of Political Science University of Western Ontario Kanada lstephe8@uwo.ca

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RECONTACT E-MAIL INVITATION
Invitation Heading: Zweiter Teil der Wahlumfrage

Body Text:
Das internationale Meinungsforschungsinstitut Harris/Decima, führt für eine internationale Wissenschaftlergruppe eine Umfrage unter den Bewohnern Nordrhein-Westfalens durch. Diese Studie dient der Informationsgewinnung über politische Einstellungen.

Der Fragebogen, den wir Sie bitten heute auszufüllen, benötigt etwa 10 Minuten. Ihre Teilnahme ist freiwillig und jede Ihrer angegebenen Informationen wird streng vertraulich behandelt. Da dies eine Fortführung der vorangegangenen Studie ist, würden wir uns über Ihre Teilnahme sehr freuen.

Für Ihre Teilnahme werden Sie mit SSI-Punkten entschädigt.
Falls Sie weitere Fragen haben oder Informationen benötigen, bitte kontaktieren Sie Professor Laura Stephenson Department of Political Science University of Western Ontario Kanada lstephe8@uwo.ca
Professor Thomas Gschwend Fakultät für Sozialwissenschaften Universität Mannheim 68131 Mannheim (0621) 181- 2413 gschwend@uni-mannheim.de

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