



## Response to ESOMAR 26 Questions to Help Research Buyers of Online Samples

---



# Company Profile

Knowledge Networks (KN) specializes in solving complex, high-impact problems, providing extraordinary quality and service to leaders in business, government and academia. We work closely with clients to create healthy consumer-brand connections, effective marketing and advertising, sound public policies, and accurate social science research. We have established respected practices in media, marketing, advertising, and government & academic studies. KN excels in study design, analytics, and custom panel creation; we deliver affordable, statistically valid online research through KnowledgePanel®—the only available probability selected, nationally representative Internet panel in the U.S.

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

### ESOMAR Context

This answer might help you to form an opinion about the relevant experience of the sample provider. How long has the sample provider been providing this service and do they have for example a market research, direct marketing or more technological ESOMAR context? Are the samples solely provided for third party research, or does the company also conduct proprietary work using their samples?

### KN Response

Knowledge Networks (KN) was founded in 1998 to bring statistically valid research to the online world. We have conducted proprietary market research and government/public policy research since 1999. We remain the only firm to

take advantage of new technology and probability based sample selection, to enable a nationally representative U.S. sample online.

KN's large-scale, nationwide research panel, KnowledgePanel, has led to our 2008 ranking as 21<sup>st</sup> largest research company in the U.S., and to attaining the highest organic growth among the top 15 U.S. custom survey research companies. KnowledgePanel® members are randomly selected from a dual sampling frame, and households are subsequently provided—if needed—with Internet access and a laptop PC for the completion of online surveys. Thus the sample is not limited to those in the population who already have Internet access. The distribution of the sample on this Web-enabled panel closely tracks the distribution of United States Census counts for the U.S. population—eighteen years of age or older—on age, race, Hispanic ethnicity, geographical

region, employment status, income, education, and other demographics.

Drawing on our unique experience with bringing representative research to the Internet, Knowledge Networks launched KnowledgePanel Latino<sup>SM</sup> in summer 2008. It is the first online panel that enables researchers, public policy makers and marketers to conduct statistically balanced Web-based surveys on the full U.S. Latino population.

Our clients include Fortune 500 companies as well as governmental agencies and academic institutions. The KN Service Bureau provides sample for third party research.

For more information concerning the methodology of the U.S. sample, please visit the KN Web site:

[www.knowledgenetworks.com](http://www.knowledgenetworks.com)

# 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)?

### ESOMAR Context

The description of the type of source a provider uses for delivering an online sample might provide insight into the quality of the sample. An actively managed panel is one which contains only active panel members—see question 11. Note that not all online samples are based on online access panels.

### KN Response

KnowledgePanel® is an actively managed panel. With 100% of its members recruited based upon probability based sampling as described below

The first RDD recruitment to KnowledgePanel was conducted in 1999. At that time, all households recruited were given a WebTV to use for answering surveys. In August 2002, KN began allowing households to use their own computers connected to the Internet for taking surveys. Starting in January 2009, new Windows-based

laptops were provided to non-Internet households instead of WebTV units. Until recently, KnowledgePanel's probability-based recruitment had been based exclusively on a national RDD frame. In 2009, KN moved to address-based sample (ABS) frame to supplement the RDD frame in response to the growing number of cell-phone-only households that are outside of the RDD frame and in response to declining RDD response rate.

ABS involves probability-based sampling of addresses from the U.S. Postal Service's Delivery Sequence File. Randomly sampled addresses are invited to join KnowledgePanel through a series of mailings (English and Spanish) and in some cases by telephone refusal conversion calls when a telephone number can be matched to the sampled address. Invited households can join the panel by one of several means: by completing and mailing back a paper form in a postage-paid envelope; by calling a toll-free hotline maintained by KN; or by going to a designated KN Web site and completing the recruitment form at the website. For those members recruited prior to 2009, the RDD-based sampling, KN used list-assisted RDD sampling techniques on the sample frame consisting of the entire U.S. residential telephone population. Knowledge

Networks excluded only those banks of telephone numbers (each consisting of 100 telephone numbers) that had zero or one directory-listed phone number. Two strata were defined using 2000 Census Decennial Census data that had been appended to all telephone exchanges. The first stratum had a higher concentration of Black and Hispanic households, while the second stratum had a lower concentration of these groups relative to the national estimates. Telephone numbers were selected with equal probability of selection for each number within each of the two strata, with the higher concentration Black and Hispanic stratum being sampled at approximately twice the rate of the other stratum. Sampling is done without replacement.

For the RDD recruitment, the households for which there was an address-matched telephone number were sent an advance mailing (in English and Spanish) informing them that they had been selected to participate in KnowledgePanel. Seven to nine days following the advance letter, the telephone recruitment process began for sampled numbers. Cases sent to telephone interviewers were dialed up to 90 days, with at least 10 dial attempts on cases where no one answers the phone. Extensive refusal conversion was also performed. Experienced interviewers conducted all recruitment interviews. The recruitment interview, which typically required about 10 minutes, began with the interviewer informing the household member that they had been selected to

join Knowledge Panel Latino or KnowledgePanel®.

For all new panel members, demographic information such as gender, age, race/ethnicity, income, and education are collected in an online “profile” survey. This information is used to determine eligibility for specific studies and eliminates the need for gathering basic demographic information on each panel survey. Once this survey is completed, the panel member is regarded as active and ready to be sampled for other surveys. Recruits to KnowledgePanel Latino are asked in a separate survey about language usage and proficiency, language spoken at home and at work, media usage in Spanish and English, country of birth, and other topics. As you can see, unlike access panels no one can volunteer to join KnowledgePanel. Further, 7.6% of the panel is now cell phone-only -- a metric we expect to approach 10% or higher in 2010 due to our ABS recruitment methodology.

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

#### **ESOMAR Context**

The answer to this question may simplify the comparison of online sample providers in the market.

#### **KN Response**

Our primary sample advantage is *accuracy and national representation*.

Knowledge Networks has recruited the first and only online U.S. research panel— KnowledgePanel®—that is representative of the U.S. population.

A recent assessment of probability based sampling *versus* non-probability based sampling appears in Public Opinion Quarterly (August 2009). It is titled “Comparing the Accuracy of RDD Telephone Surveys and Internet Surveys Conducted with Probability and Non-Probability Samples” (Yeager, Krosnick, Chang, Javitz, Levindusky, Simpser, and Wang). A key conclusion of the authors is “ ***Non-probability Internet surveys were less accurate, and customary weighting adjustments did not uniformly improve them.***”

The full Yeager, Krosnick et al paper can be found at:

<http://www.knowledgenetworks.com/insights/Mode4-Probability-Based-Studies.html>

This accuracy is derived from the fact that our sample is scientifically based. Panel members are randomly recruited from Random Digit Dial (RDD) telephone and Address-Based sampling, and households are provided with access to the Internet and hardware, if needed. Unlike other Internet research panels that sample only individuals with Internet access who volunteer for research, Knowledge Networks panel members are recruited based on a dual sampling frame which

- Is drawn from a probability- based sample
- Is not limited to current Internet users or computer owners

- Does not accept self-selected volunteers
- Includes complete and comprehensive coverage of the U.S. Latino population missed in opt-in online panels.

*The advantage is that our results are fully projectable to the U.S. population, and accurate sizing and views of populations can be gained.*

*Unlike opt-in or river samples, KnowledgePanel is not a polling or survey club that may or may not be representative of anything.* Knowledge Networks’ panel recruitment methodology uses the quality standards established by selected RDD surveys conducted for the Federal Government (such as the CDC-sponsored National Immunization Survey).

There are in fact two classes of online access panels:

- VAP: Volunteer Access Panels, which any respondent can join from any venue, and
- NVAP: Non-volunteer Access Panels, for which the research company chooses potential panel members by a statistically valid sampling method, using a known published sampling frame for that recruitment to establish panel representativeness

In the case of a non-volunteer panel, such as our KnowledgePanel, a statistically valid sample frame is the starting point, so a response rate can be

determined. The same cannot be done with a Volunteer Access Panel.

We feel strongly that through this distinction, the industry clients can understand the differences between the two, in areas such as coverage bias, self-selection bias, and non-response bias. These definitional differences affect how one would select the correct Access Panel “class” to use to meet the need of the study being contemplated.

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

**ESOMAR Context**

Combining panelists for different types of usage (like direct marketing) might cause survey effects.

**KN Response**

KnowledgePanel®, as its name connotes, is an actively managed panel, used solely for market research and government/academic research. Our panel is never used for direct marketing purposes.

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

**ESOMAR Context**

The inclusion of hard-to-reach groups on the Internet (like ethnic minority groups, young people, seniors etc.) might improve the quality of the sample provided.

**KN Response**

Representativeness of KnowledgePanel® sample—including hard-to-reach groups such as young adults, males and minorities, for specific studies—has been documented in a number of papers and publications (Baker, Wagner et al 2003; Baker, Bundorf et al, 2003; Schlenger and Silver, 2006; Silver, Holman et al, 2002; Heeren et al, 2008). Importantly, the extent to which KnowledgePanel samples, including the aforementioned hard-to-reach groups, are representative of the studied population is a result of the design and procedures described in this document: the probability-based sample design; our dual frame sampling approach which does not solely rely on Internet recruitment but instead utilizes ABS-based mailed recruiting material; the sample coverage of non-Internet households; the training and skill of the telephone recruiters; refusal conversion during the telephone interviewing at recruitment; the efforts made to assist new panelists take their first survey online and support them during their panel tenure; panel retention and respondent incentive protocols; and our patented technique for drawing panel samples.

Knowledge Networks’ patented system for load balancing the survey invitation prevents over-surveying of high-demand groups. This safeguard scientifically corrects for biases created as a result of previous sample draws from KnowledgePanel during the course of normal operations. Our approach diminishes the possibility of these groups being “over-surveyed” and produces

representative panel samples for our customers.

A further example is found in KnowledgePanel Latino<sup>SM</sup>. We source from an RDD recruit and a surname sample, and we provide laptop PC's and Internet access to U.S. Latino households that do not have them.

## 6. What are the people told when they are recruited?

### ESOMAR Context

The type of rewards and proposition could influence the type of people who agree to answer a questionnaire or join a specific panel and can therefore influence sample quality.

### KN Response

KN 's current ABS recruitment begins with informing the household member that he/she has been selected to join KnowledgePanel. People are asked to participate in survey research, such that they have a "voice" in the development of public policy, new products, as well as the marketing of established brands and services.

First and foremost, panel management consists of keeping our promises made to our Panel members at the point of recruitment and throughout their membership as described in the following Panel Members' Bill of Rights (detailed at the recruitment phase):

- Knowledge Networks will never try to sell you anything. We operate under the standards set by the Council of American Research

Organizations (CASRO) and are a TRUSTe member.

- Your survey responses and information are provided to our clients in anonymous form, unless you have given your express permission.
- Occasionally, we may contact you to validate responses. We will never misrepresent ourselves or what we are doing.
- Your decision about participating in KnowledgePanel® or responding to specific questions will be respected without question.
- We will do our best to be sure your participation on KnowledgePanel is a pleasant experience. We will provide ongoing support and technical advice as needed.
- All equipment and connection to the Internet is free to active panel members.
- You will be asked to take about three to four surveys per month of 15 minutes in length.

Respondent incentives that will be provided are described; these include two types: survey specific and non-survey specific incentives. Non-survey incentives are used to maintain a high degree of panel loyalty, and to mitigate attrition from the panel. For the households provided laptop PC's and an Internet connection, their "panel loyalty" incentive is the hardware and

Internet service that we at KN provide free. The survey-specific incentives are provided to respondents as a result of one of two conditions: 1) the survey is expected to require more than 15 minutes of time to complete; or 2) there is an unusual request being made of the respondent, such as specimen collection, the viewing of a specific television program, or completion of a daily diary.

# Panel Recruitment

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

## **ESOMAR Context**

The panel attrition rate may be an indicator of panelists' satisfaction and (therefore) panel management, but a high turnover could also be a result of placing surveys which are too long with poor question design. The method of calculation is important, because it can have a significant impact on the rate quoted.

## **KN Response**

The turnover of survey-ready households and the recruitment of new ones assure a mix of panelists with varying degrees of experience in panel participation. KnowledgePanel's attrition rate is approximately three percent per month. Panelists are permitted to miss eight to ten consecutive surveys without loss of panel membership.

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

## **ESOMAR Context**

The opt-in process might indicate the respondents' relationship with the panel provider. The market generally makes a distinction between single and double opt-in. Double opt-in describes the process by which a check is made to confirm that the person joining the panel wishes to be a member and understands what to expect.

## **KN Response**

During recruitment, all household members are enumerated, and some initial demo and ESOMAR context info are collected. Knowledge Networks makes attempts to recruit all household members, and we only count additional household members as KnowledgePanel members if they complete an initial profile survey. The information from the household enumeration is used to set up unique log-ins for each member of the panel. The log-in information is used for individuals to log-in and participate in surveys assigned to them as individuals. For all new panel members, we send an initial profile survey. Upon completion, the panel member is regarded as active and ready to be sampled for other surveys.

**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.**

**ESOMAR Context**

Confirmation of identity might increase quality by decreasing multiple entries, fraudulent panelists, etc.

**KN Response**

Participation in KnowledgePanel® is by invitation only. Only those households whose phone numbers are part of our RDD sample frame or whose address is part of the U.S. Postal Service’s Delivery Sequence File can participate. As such, no professional respondents can voluntarily join KnowledgePanel unless they are part of the random selection sample frame—thus mitigating fraud. Sample selection is followed by a reverse address match. Following agreement to join KnowledgePanel, yet still in the “on boarding” to the panel, each panel member receives a separate and confidential username and password that must be used before entering or completing any surveys. We also regularly refresh and compare demographic information collected during different points of time to ensure consistency of response.

Post recruitment, all of our surveys include standard programming and the use of digital fingerprinting through the use of Peanut Labs Optimus tool that can detect “potentially bad panel members” with the following fraudulent

behavior: panel members belonging to multiple consumer research panels; panel members consistently completing surveys in a shorter than average time; panel members consistently selecting similar answer class in surveys; and panel members who do not reside in the U.S. (and many others). Depending on the outcomes of this data examination, such panel members may be withdrawn.

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

**ESOMAR Context**

Extended and up-to-date profile data increases the effectiveness of low incidence sampling and reduces pre-screening of panelists.

**KN Response**

KN maintains extensive profile data, including attitudes, behaviors, beliefs, values and memberships/associations for all active members of KnowledgePanel. On average, we have several thousand profile questions including demos, address, financial circumstances, shopping, health and wellness, lifestyles, and more. All key demographic and household composition information is updated on an annual basis. In addition, because we interact with KnowledgePanel members outside the survey context, we have frequent opportunities to update the profiles as needed.

**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?**

**ESOMAR Context**

The size of the panel might give an indication of the capacity of a panel. In general terms, a panel's capacity is a function of the availability of specific target groups and the actual completion rate. There is no agreed definition of an active panel member, so it is important to establish how this is defined. It is likely that the new ISO for access panels which is being discussed will propose that an active panel member is defined as a member that has participated in at least one survey, or updated his/her profile data, or registered to join the panel, within the last 12 months. The type and number of sources might be an indicator of source effects and source effects might influence the data quality. For example, if the sample is sourced from a loyalty programme (travel, shopping, etc.) respondents may be unrepresentatively high users of certain services or products.

**KN Response**

This question usually elicits a high degree of obfuscation by online sample providers, but it should not. It amounts to answering the following, more simple question: If I were to send a survey invitation to every panelist who I have today, how many would complete that

survey within seven to ten days? The answer for KnowledgePanel is 32,000 (on average). That is, KnowledgePanel consists of about 45,000 adults, and we maintain an average seven to ten day survey completion rate of 70% ( $45,000 \times 70\% = 32,000$ ); this can range from 50% to 90%. All panel members are recruited using a representative probability-based sample as described in our answer to question two; the source never varies and we *do not* use Web sites, pop-up solicitations or other opt-in methods used by Volunteer Access Panels, by which any respondent can join from any venue.

# Panel and Sample Recruitment

**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?**

## **ESOMAR Context**

The sampling processes for the sample sources used are a main factor in sample provision. A systematic approach based on market research fundamentals may increase sample quality.

## **KN Response**

For client-based surveys, a sample is drawn at random from active KnowledgePanel® members who meet the screening criteria (if any) for the client's study.

Once assigned to a survey, KnowledgePanel members receive a notification email on either their laptop PC (provided by KN) or their personal email if using their own PC. The email notification alerts them that there is a new survey available to take and contains a button to start the survey.

Email reminders are sent to unresponsive members. If email does not generate a response, a telephone reminder is initiated. The usual protocol is to wait at least three days and to permit a weekend to pass before calling. Knowledge Networks also operates an ongoing incentive program to encourage participation and create member loyalty. To assist panel members with their survey taking, each individual has a personalized "home page" that lists all assigned surveys that have yet to be completed.

Samples are drawn according to the specifications of the study. Samples can then be deployed in batches/replicates if required. This is controlled by the Statistics group, who has responsibility for all survey assignments.

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

#### **ESOMAR Context**

Survey results can sometimes be influenced by the wording used in subject lines or in the body of an invitation.

#### **KN Response**

For KnowledgePanel®, typically a survey invitation is sent via email and also can be viewed at the member page. The email subject does not contain any mention of the survey topic, the length of the survey or possible incentives. Specifically, the email subject is “Your Latest KnowledgePanel Survey.” Similar treatment is applied to the email body which contains a “Click here to start survey” link to each specific survey. Failing this, the email recipient can also copy the full address directly into a browser window. Once a panel member starts the survey, no indication is given as to the length of the survey or possible incentives. The only customized section of the email body is the salutation, which contains the name of the panel member receiving the survey invitation. Also included is a link to the KnowledgePanel Web site and information on how to contact our Panel member Support Center free of charge, for questions or comments.

Because the privacy of our panel members is very important to Knowledge Networks, all survey invitation emails also include a link to KnowledgePanel’s Privacy Policy, which

is written to meet the rigorous standards established by TRUSTe and CASRO. To ensure that we meet the highest compliance standard for anti-spam, we clearly stipulate the intended email recipient in the email. For those email recipients who believe that they have received the email in error, a toll-free number and an email address of the Panel member Support Center are provided for questions or comments.

In the member page, which can be accessed only with a combination of username and password unique to each panel member, each survey link is titled “Your Latest KnowledgePanel Survey.”

KnowledgePanel, with consent from clients, may, from time to time, send customized email invitations with survey topics and/or incentives clearly mentioned. However, such actions are outside of our normal practices and only performed after discussions and agreement from clients.

### **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?**

#### **ESOMAR Context**

The reward or incentive system might impact on the reasons why people participate in a specific panel and these effects can cause bias to the sample.

#### **KN Response**

Respondent incentives include two types: survey specific and non-survey

specific. Non-survey incentives are used to maintain a high degree of panel loyalty and to mitigate attrition from the panel. For households provided laptop PC's and Internet connections, their "panel loyalty" incentive is the hardware and Internet service that Knowledge Networks provides free. The survey specific incentives are provided to respondents as a result of one of two conditions: 1) the survey is expected to require more than 15 minutes of time to complete; or 2) there is an unusual request being made of the respondent, such as specimen collection, the viewing of a specific television program, or completion of a daily diary.

**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?**

**ESOMAR Context**

Frequency of survey participation might increase conditioning effects whereas a controlled survey load environment can lead to higher data quality.

**KN Response**

Knowledge Networks' primary sampling rule is not to assign more than six surveys per month to panel members, with the expectation that on average, four surveys a month will be completed. In certain cases, a survey sample calls for pre-screening; that is, members are

drawn from a sub-sample of the panel (e.g., females, Republicans). In such cases, care is taken to ensure that all subsequent survey samples drawn that week are selected in such a way as to result in a sample that is representative of the panel distributions.

In September 2007, Knowledge Networks was assigned a U.S. Patent (U.S. Patent No. 7,269,570) for its unique methodology for selecting online survey samples. The selection methodology, which has been used by KN since 2000, assures that KN panel samples will closely track the U.S. population.

KN developed this selection methodology in recognition of the practical issue that different surveys target different subpopulations. Often, only panel members with certain characteristics are selected for a survey. This can skew the remaining panel sample and affect the sample representativeness of later surveys. The methodology was also developed to attempt to correct for non-response and non-coverage error in the panel sample.

In addition, Knowledge Networks maintains data on panelist participation in surveys.

# 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.?**

## **ESOMAR Context**

Not complying with local and international privacy laws might mean the sample provider is operating illegally.

## **KN Response**

Here is a link to Knowledge Networks' privacy policy:  
<http://www.knowledgenetworks.com/company/privacy.html>

KnowledgePanel® follows the industry standards that have been defined for RDD telephone research. KnowledgePanel is also maintained in full compliance with the CASRO

guidelines for online research. We are TRUSTe-certified and compliant with COPPA—please visit:  
<http://www.truste.org/ivalidate.php?url=www.knowledgenetworks.com&sealid=101>

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

## **ESOMAR Context**

The sample provider usually stores sensitive and confidential information on panelists and clients in databases. These need to be properly secured and backed-up, as does any confidential information provided by the client.

## **KN Response**

Knowledge Networks takes numerous steps to secure our data—be it about our panelists or our survey results. An SOP security policy and process is in place and monitored for compliance. The highlights are:

- We separate identifying and non-identifying data into different database systems, each of which has its own defined security roles.

- Only IT and Panel Management staff with a need to know have access to personally identifying information on our panelists.
- Throughout the interview process, questionnaire data is copied to a secured, centralized database for data processing.
- Data is backed up onsite every three hours and replicated to a disaster recovery site every minute. This data is retained.
- Access to the backups is restricted to our senior IT staff, all of whom have a signed confidentiality agreement.
- Access to survey result data is accessible by the relevant KN research staff but explicitly denied to anybody who may deal with panel information. On a case by case basis, an individual client project can be restricted to individual people due to client need or restriction.
- We leverage strong passwords and enforce a strict password policy to ensure that access isn't leaked or circumvented.
- We leverage a multi-layered security policy that includes network perimeter security via firewalls, host based security via HIPS, and application based security by leveraging best practices during our application development lifecycle.

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

### ESOMAR Context

A quality management system is a system by which processes in a company are described and employees are accountable. The system should be based on continuous improvement. Certification of these processes can be independently done by auditing organizations, based for instance, on ISO norms.

### KN Response

Yes we do. Specifically, Knowledge Networks employees are trained to follow a very detailed workflow process that is now in its fourth major release in a ten-year history, due to a focus on continual improvement. The workflow steps are not only engrained in our employees; checks and balances are also built in, via software capture, of step completion that is required prior to survey field and data reporting. In addition, Knowledge Networks employs Optimus Digital Fingerprinting and the Optimus Research Database within workflow, to assess panel hygiene and bad respondent responses for examination or deletion for a study.

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

**ESOMAR Context**

The ICC/ESOMAR International Code required special permissions for interviewing children.

**KN Response**

We are TRUSTe-certified and compliant with COPPA—please visit: <http://www.truste.org/ivalidate.php?url=www.knowledgenetworks.com&sealid=101>

Knowledge Networks complies with all applicable national and international children's privacy regulations. We do not permit children who are under 13 years of age to become KnowledgePanel® members. We do not collect any Personal Information from children under 13 years of age. As part of the registration process for new panel members, however, we collect from the new panel member the name, age, and gender of each individual in the panel member's household, which may include children who are under 13 years of age. We collect this information about the minors only if the parent or legal guardian is readily willing to share it. Occasionally, we may send a survey to a panel member who is a parent or guardian of a child under the age of 13, which asks that the panel member to have his or her child who is under 13 answer the survey. We take all reasonable steps to ensure parental consent to such procedure by sending

the survey to the parent or guardian's password-protected email address. The information collected in response to such surveys is not combined with identifying information about the child. In every case such survey does not collect Personal Information about the child, and we comply with the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act of 1998.

# Partnerships and Multiple Panel Relationships

- 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?**

## **ESOMAR Context**

Many providers work with third parties. This means that the quality of the sample is also dependent on the quality of sample providers that the buyer did not select. Transparency is a key issue in this situation. Overlap between different panel providers can be significant in some cases and de-duplication removes this source of error, and frustration for respondents.

## **KN Response**

For a specific project, Knowledge Networks can work with any online panel with the sample to meet clients' needs. This is only done when sample needs require it—i.e., very low

incidence. De-duplication is standard. We do not, however, use opt-in or river samples to create KnowledgePanel®.

Selection of external sample sources is based upon our experience with the quality of the sample and service.

Sample source is revealed to the client at the proposal stage, and again at the sample plan stage, within the context of the type of research needed and the business issue.

- 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?**

## **ESOMAR Context**

It is not that uncommon for a panelist to be a member of more than one panel nowadays. The effects of multi-panel membership by country, survey topic, etc., are not yet fully known. Proactive

and clear policies on how any potential negative effects are minimized by recruitment, sampling, and weighting practices are important.

### **KN Response**

We can and do examine survey results based upon numerous cohorts—multi-panel membership being one of them. Given that a person cannot volunteer to join KnowledgePanel®, our rate of multiple panel membership is considerably less than found in opt-in panels. This has been verified using Optimus' fingerprint technology. We utilize Optimus from Peanut Labs not only to determine participation on multiple panels, but also respondent behavior, as well as speeding and duplicate response.

# 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?

### ESOMAR Context

Panel response might be a function of factors like invitation frequency, panel management (cleaning) policies, incentive systems and so on. Although not a quality measure by itself these rates can provide an indication of the way a panel is managed. A high start rate might indicate a strong relationship between the panel member and the panel. A high drop-out rate might be a result of poor questionnaire design, questionnaire length, survey topic or incentive scheme as well as an effect of panel management. The new ISO for access panels will likely propose that participation rate is defined as the number of panel members who have provided a usable response divided by the total number of initial personal invitations requesting members to participate.

### KN Response

For KnowledgePanel surveys in recent months, the survey start rate has

averaged two to five percentage points higher than the survey participation rate. Stated another way, cases that “drop out” of a survey tend to lower the survey participation rate by two to five percentage points. Drop-out cases are those non-interviews caused by panelists’ starting the survey by clicking on the survey invitation link, but not completing the survey by answering the final question in the survey.

For example, in a survey that has a survey participation rate of 70 percent, the survey start rate would be between 72 and 75 percent.

The actual survey participation rate varies as a result of several study-specific factors. The most important factor is the length of the survey field period. Surveys having a field period of at least seven days tend to have a survey participation rate of 65 to 75 percent, with the actual rate being influenced by other factors such as the length of the survey questionnaire; the salience of the survey topic; the use and amount of respondent incentives; the credibility of the study sponsor (if permission is obtained to provide the sponsor name to the panelists); the demographic composition of the targeted population,

and other factors. Surveys with shorter field periods can have a survey participation rate of 50 to 65 percent, again subject to variability due to study-specific factors. The survey participation rate is the number of panelists completing the survey divided by the number invited to participate.

**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?**

**ESOMAR Context**

This type of data per respondent increases the possibility of analysis for data quality, as described in ESOMAR's Guideline on Access Panels.

**KN Response**

Yes, we have this individual-level data, and it can be supplied to the client.

Further, KnowledgePanel surveys are coded for content—allowing us to exclude panelists according to subject matter from subsequent surveys. The need to do so, however, is evaluated on a case by case basis.

**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?**

**ESOMAR Context**

When the sample provider is also hosting the online survey, preliminary data quality analysis and validation is usually preferable.

**KN Response**

Knowledge Networks uses several techniques to minimize the likelihood of behaviors that contribute to survey bias:

- Check the interview survey data to identify respondents who skipped questions outside the normal range
- Check the survey administration length timing, and identify cases that were inattentive as shown in the short administration length
- Utilize current technology available to market researchers; Knowledge Networks utilizes Optimus while a survey is in field
- Optimus enables us to examine data from inattentive or fraudulent responders, to determine if the data should be excluded from results

However, there are more upstream methods that we use and apply including:

- Pre-testing the survey
- Minimizing the length of our surveys whenever possible
- Minimizing the need for scrolling
- Minimizing the use of long “grids”
- Asking the respondent what they thought of the survey
- Using “trap” questions

## 25. Do you measure respondent satisfaction?

### ESOMAR Context

Respondent satisfaction may be an indicator of willingness to take future surveys. Respondent reactions to your survey from self-reported feedback or from an analysis of suspend points might be very valuable to help understand survey results.

### KN Response

KnowledgePanel® member satisfaction is measured annually; according to our most recent survey, 76% of our panel members surveyed believe that they're part of something important. We also measure satisfaction with each survey.

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

### ESOMAR Context

One might expect a full sample provider debrief report, including gross sample, start rate, participation rate, drop-out rate, the invitation text, a description of the field work process, and so on.

### KN Response

Knowledge Networks provides the following details to clients as part of a technical appendix; other metrics are available upon request:

- Response rate and/or completion rate calculation (not representing completion rate as the response rate)
- Incidence rate
- Error rate
- Description of non-response and non-coverage issues
- Texts from email reminders (+ dates sent)
- Survey length & incentives
- Detailed description of recruitment methodology, including sample sources
- Basic demos
- Complete description of weighting procedure employed, such as base weights, post stratification weights
- Surveys used, including screener & main survey
- Description of data file deliverables