AUSTRIAN ONLINEPOOL

ESOMAR - 28 Questions to help research buyers

www.austrian-onlinepool.at

COMPANY PROFILE

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

The „AUSTRIAN ONLINEPOOL" is operated jointly by the two full-service institutes INTEGRAL and SPECTRA.

INTEGRAL Markt- und Meinungsforschung is a full-service market research company and was founded in 1987. Since the mid-90ies INTEGRAL is carrying out the Austrian Internet Monitor. (so-called AIM) Due to the increase of internet usage, we started in 2000 to establish our own access panel, the „AUSTRIAN ONLINEPOOL".

SPECTRA Markt- und Meinungsforschung is a full-service market research company. In 1992 our company was founded by 11 already well seasoned market researchers in the third largest Austrian city. Spectra's home market is Austria. However, we are focusing strongly on international research as well.

Both institutes have always offered the entire spectrum of market research methods and can therefore make well-founded suggestions for data collection. Data can be collected exclusively online or in a hybrid way in connection with telephone and personal surveys.

As its name is telling, our „AUSTRIAN ONLINEPOOL" is a regional one, limited to Austria. It contains approximately 30.000 members with an e-mail address, who declared their willingness to take part in INTEGRAL's online surveys.

We offer our clients both mere sample providing and the full execution of a survey, including data processing, charting and the presentation of the results. With our pool we reach target groups between 16 and 75 years nationwide.

SAMPLE SOURCES AND RECRUITMENT

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

Initially we recruited mainly by pop-up test, as we did not get enough new participants through representative surveys. Increasing internet penetration changed the recruiting method: currently most pool participants are recruited in the course of telephone or face-to-face interviews, targeted online campaigns, also in pop-up tests (widely spread, on the most varied sites), and a small percentage (< 10%) was recruited by a friend or via our websites. All pool participants are saved in a data base, which is actively maintained. Contacts are only established between staff members and pool participants; we do not offer a community site for the establishment of contacts between pool members.

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

   Context: *The variation in data coming from different sources has been well documented. Overlap between different panel providers can be significant in some cases and de-duplication removes this source of error, and frustration for respondents.*

   In case we need additional sample from some other panel provider we set value on the elimination of duplicative interviews done by persons registered in both panels.

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

   We are focused only on market- and opinion research and do not offer any other services. Thus our pool members are only called on these purposes.

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

   If a target group is hard to reach it may happen that we will need support from another panel provider in order to get the aspired sample size or structure. We do a feasibility check for every preparation of an offer and disclose the need of external sample support to the client in our offer.

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

   If we need support from an external provider we disclose this to our client upfront and tell the possible co-operation partner's name. As we have been so long in the market now we already know other Austrian and international providers very well and are able to come back to grown co-operation structures.

SAMPLING AND PROJECT MANAGEMENT

7. **What steps do you take to achieve a representative sample of the target population?**

   We use a random selection to get participants representative for the population, considering age-specific and regional differences in the response rate. Drawing subsamples with the same demographic structure is easily possible. The sending of invitations is controlled by these parameters.

8. **Do you employ a survey router?**

   Context: *A survey router is a software system that allocates willing respondents to surveys for which they are likely to qualify. Respondents will have been directed to the router for different reasons, perhaps after not qualifying for another survey in which they had been directly invited to participate, or maybe as a result of a general invitation from the router itself. There is no consensus at present about whether and how the use of a router affects the responses that individuals give to survey questions.*

   No

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

   Context: *Biases of varying severity may arise from the prioritization in choices of surveys to present to respondents and the method of allocation.*

   Not applicable

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

    Context: *If Person A is allocated to Survey X on the basis of some characteristic then they may not be allowed to also do Survey Y. The sample for Survey Y is potentially biased by the absence of people like Person A.*

    Not applicable

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

    Context: *It may be necessary to try to replicate your project in the future with as many of the parameters as possible set to the same values. How difficult or easy will this be.*

    Not applicable

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

    Context: *The usefulness to your project of pre-profiled information will depend on the precise question asked and may also depend on when it was asked. If real time profiling is used, what control do you have over what question is actually asked.*

    The registration records a participant’s gender, age, highest level of education and address. The following basic data acquisitions by periodic mailings enrich the data with additional attributes, e.g.:
    - Profession
    - Household’s net income

- Size of the household (number of persons in a household)
- Children living in the household
- Internet usage
- driving license, …

The annually basic data acquisition is used for the check and enrichment of data.

13. **Please describe your survey invitation process. What is the proposition that people are offered to take part in individual surveys? What information about the project itself is given in the process? Apart from direct invitations to specific surveys (or to a router), what other means of invitation to surveys are respondents exposed to? You should note that not all invitations to participate take the form of emails.**

__Context__: The type of proposition (and associated rewards) could influence the type of people who agree to take part in specific projects and can therefore influence sample quality. The level of detail given about the project may also influence response.

We send an e-mail invitation with an individual link to the survey. The information given is length, incentives and deadline. We do not announce the survey's topic.

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

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

We use a scoring system with defined points per minute of the estimated length. After reaching a minimal sum payment is done in different ways: transfer to a bank account, postal or e-mail transmission of shopping vouchers or as a donation for a charity organization.

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

For checking a survey's feasibility within our own resources, we need the precise target group, incidence rate, length of the questionnaire and the desired sample size.

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

__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.

During an online project's pilot phase we add a feedback questionnaire to the survey in order to record the respondents' satisfaction and to be able to react to possible criticism. On request clients can get the results of the feedback questionnaire.

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

Context: One should expect a full sample provider debrief report, including gross sample, start rate, participation rate, drop-out rate, the invitation/contact text, a description of the field work process, and so on. Sample providers should be able to list the standard reports and metrics that they make available.

We indicate the length of fieldwork and the precise composition of the sample.
We are pleased to provide further information if requested.

DATA QUALITY AND VALIDATION

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

Context: *The use of such procedures may increase the reliability and validity of the survey data.*

Interviews that are suspicious regarding the time spent on filling out or the quality of answers (many refused answers, implausible response-pattern, absurd answers on open-ended questions and so on) are not processed.

19. How often can the same individual be contacted to take part in a survey within a specified period whether they respond to the contact or not? How does this vary across your sample sources?

Context: *Over solicitation may have an impact on respondent engagement or on self-selection and non-response bias.*

Basically contacting is done at least every third month, the upper limit for this is once a week. We record the history of participations/activities for future selections.

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

Context: *Frequency of survey participation may increase the risk of undesirable conditioning effects or other potential biases.*

Whether a pool member is allowed to participate repeatedly in a survey and the particular time frame for this is subject to an individual appointment with our client. Basically we do not invite pool members a second time to the same survey, provided there is no other appointment with our client.

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

Context: This type of data per respondent including how the total population is defined and how the sample was selected and drawn, may increase the possibilities for analysis of data quality.

Data can be provided on request.

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

    Context: Confirmation of identity can increase quality by decreasing multiple entries, fraudulent panelists etc.

    We do not ask for a proof of identity. The registration of foreign e-mail addresses is prohibited by the confirmation in the registry process (double-opt-in). New registrations are compared with the addresses in the pool in order to prevent multiple registrations. Apart from the registration process that ensures the correctness of the e-mail address, a continuous monitoring during the processing of data permits the controlling of participants per survey (length, non-response-, dropout-analyses, comparison of patterns) and over time (history per participant about number and kind of participations)

POLICIES AND COMPLIANCE

23. **Please describe the 'opt-in for market research' processes for all your online sample sources?**

    Context: The opt-in process indicates the respondents' relationship with the sample source provider. The market generally makes a distinction between single and double opt-in. Double opt-in refers to the process by which a check is made to confirm that the person joining a panel or database wishes to be a member and understands what to expect (in advance of participating in an actual survey for a paying client).

    After their declaration to be interested in online surveys, participants will get an e-mail to the address given. In this e-mail we explain the modalities again and send a link, with which the potential pool members can confirm and complete the registration process (double-opt-in).

24. **Please provide a link to your Privacy Policy. How is your Privacy Policy provided to your respondents?**

    Context: Not complying with local and international privacy laws might mean the sample provider is operating illegally. An example privacy policy is given in the ESOMAR Guideline for Online Research.

    During the registration process potential pool members are made aware of the warranty of data anonymity. Additionally our data privacy statement can be seen under https://www.austrian-onlinepool.at/Datenschutz/

    We use our participants' data according to the terms of the Austrian data protection law (GDPR) and the ESOMAR guidelines.

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

***Context**: The sample provider usually stores sensitive and confidential information on panelists and clients in databases. These data need to be properly secured and backed-up, as does any confidential information provided by the client. The sample provider should be able to provide you with the latest date at which their security has been evaluated by a credible third-party.*

The access to the survey server is SSL-encrypted. Participants data is stored in data base secured by a state-of-the-art firewall and cannot be called or downloaded directly. We back up recorded data and address data daily.

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

***Context**: There are no foolproof methods for protecting audio, video, still images or concept descriptions in online surveys. In today's social media world, clients should be aware that the combination of technology solutions and respondent confidentiality agreements are "speed bumps" that mitigate but cannot guarantee that a client's stimuli will not be shared or described in social media.*

At the request of the client a firm interdiction of information transfer (screenshots, survey contents, and so on) can be placed preliminary to the screening procedure, which is to be confirmed before a participant will start the main interview. But related to online surveys in fact there is no warranty for the compliance with this regulation. That is why we recommend our clients the usage of other interviewing techniques (e.g. face-to face interviews) for particularly sensitive contents or test materials, where the documentation of a possibly sensitive content is less easily feasible.

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

INTEGRAL is member of ESOMAR, VDMI, VMÖ
SPECTRA is member of ESOMAR, VDMI, VMÖ, EMPHRA

Furthermore there is no particular kind of certification.

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

We do not offer surveys with children or juveniles younger than 14 years.