



Global- GMG

Survey Quality  
Moderator Report

Sheila Robinson  
January 2013

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Global Radio  
YouGov  
Survey Moderator Statement

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1) Overview

The survey on which I am commenting here was commissioned by Slaughter and May on behalf of their client Global Radio.

As such my involvement is limited to post-hoc discussion and analysis, rather than on-going observation as would be the case with a survey commissioned by the Competition Commission.

Both YouGov and Indiefield are established suppliers of market research in the UK. Indiefield's fieldwork and recruitment quality administration systems is certified and registered under BS EN ISO 9001:2000.

However on this occasion it is my view that the research conducted is of poor quality and that the Competition Commission should be very cautious about the use of this research data in decision making.

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Whilst two surveys were conducted, 'Existing Customers' and 'Lost Opportunities', I did not listen to any interviewing for 'Lost Opportunities'. It seems probable, however, that fieldwork for both would have been similar, given that they were conducted by the same agency over a similar time period.

## 2) Technical Report

The technical report (dated 30 Oct 2012) provided a comprehensive summary of the research; sample source, method, questionnaire design and actions taken during interviewing as well along with copies of the questionnaires.

The research appeared sensible and well documented, and to have been conducted in line with normal practice within the industry.

The Media Consulting Director and Senior Research Executive from YouGov confirmed aspects of the research when I met with them at their offices. This included that YouGov are not Company Partners of the Market Research Society but ensure research work is carried out in accordance with the MRS Code of Conduct.

The technical report states

“ As agreed with Slaughter and May, the method used in this research was Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) and the interviews themselves were carried out by YouGov's field units”.

This has subsequently proved incorrect. I understand that the research was sub-contracted to Indiefield, a separate market research company, who did all the fieldwork and provided a clean datafile to YouGov.

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### 3) Project management

It is not possible for me to comment authoritatively on the project management skills of the YouGov team, as I had no experience of working with them as the study progressed.

Given that this was a 'fieldwork and tabulation' job for YouGov (they were not contracted to do any analysis or interpretation of the data), their role was administrative rather than interpretative. My impression was that the research was organized competently and that it had been quite a challenge to achieve the interviews (regular needs to go back to the client for better contact details were mentioned).

### 4) Interviewing

Indiefield appear to have an effective CATI system and are able to record all interviews conducted.

My experience of the fieldwork was that of a meeting with the fieldwork manager and three interviewers (along with the YouGov representative) and listening to recordings of five interviews (several different interviewers).

The field manager selected the interviews to which we listened.

One of the interviewers had specifically raised the fact that qn 11 (diversion; a key question) was rather 'tricky', was not always understood by respondents and that there were several ways in which it could be asked. Given its importance to the research, this was the question on which we concentrated.

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The quality was generally disappointing; with some interviewers appearing to rush through questions (not reading out the questions in full) and different interviewers asking the same question in different ways (different levels of prompting and low adherence to the interviewer instructions).

Inaccurate and inconsistent interviewing is of concern as it means that you cannot be sure precisely how questions are being administered and therefore how to interpret the answers. As a result of this I requested analysis of qn 11; whether the question was read in full and whether the responses were separately prompted (both of these should have been the case), and the analysis of qn 11 responses by sub-groups.

As a further check on quality I requested an analysis of how many people had done how many interviews each. This is a standard request; to give a general idea of interviewing spread.

#### 5) Results of quality checks (based on information received 4 Jan 2013)

I understand that Indiefield listened to the interviews and provided information as to the reading of the question and the responses and that RBB conducted the subsequent analysis of the data.

Initial results of the quality checks revealed that for qn 11:

- Only 3 in 10 interviews had been properly framed (asked in full)
- Only 2 in 10 interviews had responses read separately (correctly)

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Significantly, a large imbalance in interviewing spread was also revealed. One interviewer conducted nearly half of all the interviewing and two others each did a very significant number of interviews.

There is no formal 'MRS rule' about interviewing spread and it is common practice to use a core team of interviewers for business interviewing, but this level of imbalance is of concern.

As a result of these findings, subsequent analysis requests were made. These showed that:

- Only 1 in 10 interviews had been properly framed and responses read separately (i.e totally correctly)
- Two thirds of the interviews has been asked without either correct framing or the responses being read correctly

The interviewer who conducted nearly half the fieldwork appeared to have asked qn 11 in a different way to all of the other interviewers in that on that qn he/she coded one code significantly more (41% cf 7% - this is a statistical difference at 95% confidence level).

An analysis of interviewing by region showed that the interviewer who conducted nearly half the fieldwork had done significant amounts of interviewing in some regions and hardly any in other regions.

Length of interview was also analysed. The interviewers who had done most of the work had average interview lengths considerably shorter than others (some shortening would be expected with increasing familiarity). The average interview length for the main interviewer was 6.15 minutes compared to an average of 8.51 minutes for interviewers completing fewer than 70 interviews.

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Analysis of the responses to the questions was provided by RBB. In my view the fact that so few of the interviews appeared to have been asked in a consistent (and known) way, makes this information of low value. The number of variables in data collection style and the imbalance in interviewer loads (which may lead to anticipating specific answers) do not permit much confidence in responses. The answers given may be broadly the feeling of the respondent but I would not wish to conclude further than this.

#### 6) Implications for the survey data

From my observations and analysis, there are three factors which cause concern about the reliability of this survey as a decision making tool:

1. The low level of correct questioning at qn 11 (only 1 in 10 asked consistently correctly).
2. The disproportionate amount of interviewing accounted for by one person, and that this was unevenly spread across regions.
3. That person's interviewing style generated a significantly different response on qn 11 to that for the other interviewers

This suggests that the survey was inconsistently conducted and that the level of interviewer bias is high. The responses to questions are likely to be a function of who asked them and how they were asked rather than being able to rely on assuming the questionnaire was fielded as specified.

On a regional basis, where sample sizes are small anyway, this makes the survey data particularly unreliable.

#### 7) Survey Moderator Involvement

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The opinions in this report are based on a full day meeting, initially at YouGov offices (EC1 8RT) and then at Indiefield offices in Enfield, and subsequent analysis of information provided by YouGov / RBB.

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