



Schlesinger Associates

Online Solutions

ESOMAR'S 26 QUESTIONS

ESOMAR has asked 26 questions about the provision of online surveys. Schlesinger Online Solutions is delighted to provide straightforward answers to help researchers in their online survey buying decisions.

COMPANY PROFILE

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

Schlesinger Associates has provided data collection services that help companies understand their potential influences in the marketplace for over 45 years. Over this time, we have amassed the technical expertise and extensive market knowledge to provide our clients with a comprehensive range of quantitative and qualitative research services in desirable markets. Schlesinger Associates provides online sampling for many market sectors including consumers, healthcare (professionals and patients), business-to-business, financial services, insurance, IT and media. Our clients represent the full spectrum of full service market research firms to pharmaceutical companies and other big brand leaders.

SAMPLE SOURCE

- 2 Please describe and explain the types of source(s) for the online sample that you provide (are they databases, actively managed panels, direct marketing lists, web intercept sampling, river sampling or other)?**

Our sample sources come from actively managed panels and are constantly monitored by our dedicated panel management team.

Multiple methodologies are utilized by Schlesinger Associates to recruit a high quality panel, including opt-in email, co-registration, e.newsletter campaigns, traditional banner placements, and an internal and external affiliate network. In addition, across our 14 facilities throughout the US, we recruit via our call centers, in-person focus groups and other face-to-face encounters. Through this multi-sourced recruitment approach we remove the inherent bias that could result from using one or only few recruiting sources.

YOUR GLOBAL RESEARCH PARTNER, ANYWHERE, ANYTIME.



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

Our unique recruitment approach as well as our ability to offer our panelist both qualitative and quantitative opportunities, provides not only for a uniquely targeted and extremely well balanced sample but also a highly engaged and motivated panel.

Schlesinger Online uses the latest specialist platforms developed in line with our strategies to ensure we have the most engaged and deeply profiled members. Our quality and security measures, through our platform software and our panel management practices, ensure we are a trusted online partner in today's challenging online market.

Increasingly, researchers look to combine methodologies for solutions that stand up to scrutiny and meet the full demands of their research needs. Schlesinger Online is unique in being able to simultaneously provide samples using any additional methodologies requested by the client, be they online qualitative or traditional. Importantly, our multimethodology studies are conducted with one point of contact throughout.

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

Schlesinger Associates' online panels are solely developed and used for market research purposes and never for any direct marketing activities or other non-research related activities.

We believe that if panelists are exposed to brand or product-based direct marketing messages, their brand awareness and perception will be impacted. This may impact any subsequent research studies with our panelists and introduce potential bias about a category/product/service.

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

Schlesinger Associates works with and continually establishes partnerships with both broad reach portals and special interest sites, which in return allows for a very diverse set of respondents and provides the ability to target-recruit hard-to-reach groups. In addition, we utilize specific recruitment campaigns and techniques aligned with typical internet usage patterns of special population, such as young and older adults, minorities and certain ethnic groups.

6 What are people told when they are recruited?

Members that we recruit are told very clearly that they are joining a market research panel and that we will invite them periodically to participate in both quantitative and qualitative market research opportunities. We make it clear we seek honest, reliable members who wish to share opinions about products and services that interest them. We communicate that members' opinions and experiences are important to help in the future development of important products and services of companies.

Members must agree to our Terms & Conditions which are made clear to them during the registration process and which remain easily accessible at any time during membership. In particular, we communicate clearly that attempts at fraudulent membership or misleading information will result in permanent removal and blocking from our panel.

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

The exact rate of panel attrition is hard to pin-point as it varies greatly by demographic but on average our annual attrition rate is less than 2%. The rate is calculated by dividing the total number of active panelists by the number of actively opted-out panelists plus on-active members over a one-year period. We believe that our unique position to offer both online as well as offline market research opportunities via our 14 facilities across the US is a key differentiator in our low panel turnover rate. In addition, panel engagement and member reward schemes also ensure active membership and retention.

8 Please describe the opt-in process.

To opt-in to the Schlesinger Associates panels, panelists must provide a unique email address and password as well as some basic demographic information for their membership account on the online Registration Form. The email address along with basic demographic variables, IP address and Proxy Detection is then verified against our database to prevent multiple registrations.



After completion of the basic online registration form and agreeing to our website's Terms & Conditions seeing our Privacy Policy, potential panelists are sent an email to confirm their desire to participate in one of our panels. Once the panelist clicks on a link within the email (auto-responder), they become a member of the Schlesinger Associates panel. This ensures a double opt-in process confirming a member's desire to become a member.

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.

Schlesinger Associates employs a variety of methods to establish true identity of our panelists as well as prevent fraudulent behavior at the time of registration. We apply concepts such as:

- CAPTCHA – to prevent automatic bot registrations
- Duplicate Detection – established via unique combination of email and other demographic variables
- IP address verification to validate a respondent's country across a database of global IP's
- Proxy Server Detection, which identifies a panelist's true geographic location

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

We collect the following basic demographic variable from ALL our panel registrants:

Name / Email / Complete Mailing Address / Age / Gender / Ethnicity / Education / Employment Status / Industry / Household Income

In addition to this, we capture hundreds of variables through our special profile screener process on topics such as automotive, technology, health and consumer ailments.

We also can capture additional variables via our online surveys which are linked back to the unique panelists' record. From an update perspective, we ask our panelists to update their profiles at least once every 6 months.

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?

Because the Schlesinger Associates panels are still young and growing at a very fast pace, our panel size statistics change very frequently. Active membership is measured by most recent awarding of Opinion Rewards for member activity. High activity is obtained through engagement such as member newsletters, personal reminders, fun polls and prize draws. This, together with our extensive profiling process and our unique ability to offer quantitative and qualitative market research opportunities to our panel members, ensures a near 100% active panel size that we can draw from.

PANEL AND SAMPLE MANAGEMENT

12 Please describe your sampling process including exclusion procedures if applicable. Can samples be deployed as batches/replicates, by time zones, geography, etc.? If so, how is this controlled?

The technology platform that houses the Schlesinger Associates panel, allows us to sample our database by any demographic or geographic variable we collect on our panelists. We are able to deploy batches of sample based on volume, time period, exclusion factors, past participation or based on specific sample selection criteria our clients require. Furthermore, we can automatically schedule delivery of sample batches to be deployed within any time zone.

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

Panelists receive personalized branded HTML survey invites (text version is always available as an alternative option) to take part in online market research surveys.

These survey invites are not self-selecting but mention the length of the survey as well as the associated incentive for that particular study. All of our email invite templates include the option to unsubscribe from our panels as well as a link to our privacy policy.



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?

All of our panels run on a points-based rewards system, which allows respondents to collect points for tasks such as registration, profile completion, refer-a-friend and, of course, survey completion. The accumulated points then can be redeemed by the panelists for:

- Amazon Gift Cards, which never expire and can be used to shop at the online retailer from a huge selection of books, electronics, music, DVDs, software, apparel, toys, and much more.
- Virtual Visa Pre-Paid Cards, which can be used anywhere Visa Debit is accepted. Purchases can be made online or over the phone at millions of Visa merchants worldwide and there are no fees to use or redeem the card.
- We incentivize differently based on length of survey and target audience. Low incidence target populations as well as high-value respondents such as B2B and healthcare professionals will receive higher incentives than the general consumer.

15 How often are individual members contacted for online surveys within a given time period? Do you keep data on panelist participation history and limits placed on the frequency that members are contacted and asked to participate in a survey?

Our panel platform enables us to have complete control over how many times a panelist is contacted. Our standard rule is that no panelists can complete more than 4 surveys per month and contact is limited to 6 times on a monthly basis. Nevertheless, each of our clients can specify their requirements and easily adjust contact/completion rules to their desired specifications. This is primarily done, when clients wish to exclude respondents based on past participation as it relates to certain categories/type of studies our panelists have participated in as an active member of the Schlesinger Associates panels.

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 Harbor, 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.?

Our privacy policy can be viewed at: https://www.inspiredopinions.com/privacy_policy.php

The purpose of our privacy policy is to outline and communicate the nature of the data we collect from our panelists, ensure our members that we apply best practices principles to protect their personal information and guarantee that the information is never used for anything that they did not agree to.

Schlesinger Associates conforms with CASRO's (Council of American Survey Research Organizations) code of standards and ethics for survey research, as well as local, regional and national laws regarding privacy and data protection. In addition, we are active members of leading market research governing bodies such as MRA, CMOR, PMRG, PBIRG and ESOMAR.

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

Security and data protection is a top priority at Schlesinger Associates. Our internal control system is designed for the security of the client's data during all stages, including processes for creating, changing, and deleting. Our data protection controls include:

- Regular checking of access authorizations to the IT system and data media
- User and administration accounts and according authorization rights to the systems (both operating and applications)
- Log analyses and the tracking of unauthorized access or access attempts
- Compliance with persona data processing and deletion procedures
- Only encrypted protocols (SSH or similar), internal and external authentication and IP address restrictions are used to allow users to gain administrative rights to our system



- Collected data is backed up securely:
 - Data being fully backed up over night on a dedicated hard drive on the server. We can use this backup copy to restore data immediately in an emergency.
 - The data is copied to a central server in a separate fire area over night. The data is encrypted and transferred securely.
 - All back-ups are transferred weekly from a central server to a data vault.
 - Back-ups can be restored to the day for the last seven days.
 - Back-ups for the previous four weeks is available, accurate to the week.

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

Quality of our products and services is a core value at Schlesinger Online. We are committed to quality at all phases of the study process and apply panel rules and guidelines that ensure we continue to have the most active, unbiased and balanced panel. Some examples of these guidelines include:

- Limitations on survey invites and contact rules to eliminate professional survey respondents. Non-active panelist (non-responders over a nine month period) are flagged and separated from the sample pool.
- Survey invites with non-leading content to eliminate self-selection by the panelists to ensure that a survey participant cannot take part in a survey more than once, access is blocked as soon as the first survey has been completed. This occurs via digital fingerprinting, which is embedded across all of your panel platforms.

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

We avoid conducting surveys with children or young people under the age of 18. In the cases when this is key to the research demands of a particular study, we are in full compliance with COPPA (Children's Online Privacy Protection Act) laws and as a result will never interview a child without the explicit parental consent. Our process requires that the parent gives consent prior to the child taking the survey, without this consent the respondent would be automatically terminated from the survey.

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?

As meeting client exact target audiences is our priority, Schlesinger Associates may, from time to time, need to supplement its panel with outside sample partners. Most often, this is necessary when targeting hard-to-reach audiences. We always inform the client prior to utilizing supplemental sample. The partners we use for outside sample go through an extensive screening process in order to meet our high standards for data quality and integrity. We will always de-duplicate outside sample using cookies and other existing processes, varied by the type of respondent.

21 Do you have a policy regarding multi-panel membership? What efforts do you undertake to ensure that survey results are unbiased given some individuals belong to multiple panels?

While multi-panel membership cannot be prevented, Schlesinger Associates takes an active stand to determine and understand if their respondents are members of other panels, and if so, which ones. Recent industry led studies have now shown however, that multi-panel membership alone is not cause for bias or error. We are however, careful in the sample selection process of panelists who belong to too many panels in order to avoid professional survey respondents.



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?

Our response rate is calculated as the number of respondents actively responding to a survey link sent to them via an email survey invitation divided by the total sample sent.

Typical or “likely” response rates vary drastically according to survey length, topic, incentive offered, target audience as well as our ability to pre-screen likely respondents. Our average response rates range from 15 % to 75%. Drop-out and participation rates correlate mostly with survey length and complexity. Our expert panel management practices as well as best-in-class survey design techniques ensures that our panels show some of the lowest abandon rates while at the same time ensuring the highest possible participation from our active panel members.

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?

Schlesinger Online maintains a high level of data, current and historical, on all of our panelists. We can provide detailed information on individual panelist registration, participation history, recruitment source and many others as specified by our clients.

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 the applied?

We understand our clients need reliable, authentic survey results and that the integrity of online research as an industry depends on this. Schlesinger Associates uses a variety of methods to track our panel members’ activity and with that possible fraudulent behavior. Multiple techniques are employed at various touch points we have with our panelists as well as over the lifecycle of an active respondent. At the registration level, we employ duplication checks, CAPTCHA, IP address verification and Proxy Server detection to identify and remove duplicate as well as fraudulent respondents. At the survey level, we have controls in place to monitor speedster, straight lining and other fraudulent behavior in line with professional survey respondents. We recognize that the security of online panels is a moving target and continuous monitoring and challenging of our systems by our own teams to look at ways members may have sought or may seek to get around our security systems, provides the best on-going defense against fraudulent activity.

25 Do you measure respondent satisfaction?

We continually monitor our panelist satisfaction with quarterly satisfaction surveys. This helps us improve our offering to the respondents. In addition, we have a dedicated Panel Care/Helpdesk team that addresses panelists’ questions or feedback within 24 hours regarding survey related concerns and within 48 hours for other matters. This also ensures a low complaint rate from our members as well as long-term satisfaction and participation.

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

Schlesinger Associates provides clients with project specific data and statistics such as incidence rate, survey length, completion rates and will provide daily reports of the projects progress while in field. At project completion we will provide a data file and additional information as specified by the client.

FURTHER INFORMATION

We hope that you have found these answers helpful. If you require any further information about our online Services please do not hesitate to contact Lori Young at LYoung@SchlesingerAssociates.com.