Asking for LinkedIn Accounts Over Answering Survey Questions

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Data Collection Quality Improvement

Center for Behavioral Science Methods

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Background

- Interested in reducing respondent burden

- Looking for alternative data sources to replace survey data

- Federal surveys have several topics/questions that appear on multiple surveys
  - E.g., jobs and employment

  Could we get some of that information from another source?

Overview of Experiment

- Focus on job information

- 4 options to provide current job information
  - Upload resume
  - Copy/paste resume
  - Provide LinkedIn account
  - Answer survey questions

- Do people prefer to provide auxiliary data rather than answer survey questions?

- Unique: Test will involve *respondent-provided* auxiliary data, rather than linkage or scraping from an external source

Focus of Analysis

- Focused only on LinkedIn responses
  - Needed to capture LinkedIn pages in a timely manner
  - While doing so, recorded information about info provided

Research Questions

Behavioral

1. Will people choose to provide a LinkedIn account if given the option?

2. When they opt to provide a LinkedIn account, do they?

Practical

3. Is the account information accurate?

4. If account is not accurate, how many search results are shown?

5. Once a page is identified, how much job information is available?

Data

Data Collection

- Questions on Census Household Panel survey (now HTOPS)

- Collected November 2024 (19 Nov – 3 Dec)

- Only people who replied that they were working were eligible
  - But some homeowners were filtered to a different alternate auxiliary data experiment
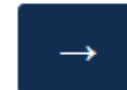
Data for analysis

- HH Panel response: 9,500

- Pathed to Job experiment: 7,000

- Working: 4,000

- Received the question asking them to provide auxiliary info: **4,000**

Main job

JOB. What is your job? If you have more than one job, choose your main job.

Examples: fourth-grade teacher, entry-level plumber, web developer, etc.

Job:

→

Auxiliary information or survey questions – v1

JOB1_FILTER. You can provide a LinkedIn account or résumé, or answer questions about your main job. Which of these would you like to do?

○ Provide a link to your LinkedIn account

○ Upload your résumé

○ Copy and paste information from your résumé

○ Answer questions

←

→

Provide LinkedIn account

JOB_LNK. Provide a link to your LinkedIn page. The url should look something like: linkedin.com/in/first-last-####/

[   ]

→

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LinkedIn Page Elements

12

Analysis

Data file

Data from the survey

- Short job description (JOB)
- LinkedIn page (JOB_LNK)

Other data from the panel

- First and last name
- City and state
- Education

Log

- Coded data from likely LinkedIn page

Coding data in the log-1

Assessing the LinkedIn info

JOB_LNK	Junk/ Missing	Full web address	Unique	How many pages?
https://www.linkedin.com/in/*name###*	0	1	1	1
https://www.linkedin.com/in/*name###*	0	1	1	1
name###	0	0	1	1
LinkedIn.com/in/*name*	0	1	1	2
name	0	0	0	6
Check out name's profile on LinkedIn	0	0	0	9
https://www.linkedin.com/in/*name##*?utm_source=share &utm_campaign=share_via&utm_content=profile&utmm edium=ios_app	0	1	1	1
No	1			

Find the correct profile page using JOB_LNK

Put full web address in web browser's search bar

linkedin.com/in/crystalhernandez-2000/

or ID name in LinkedIn's search box

Crystal-Hernandez2000
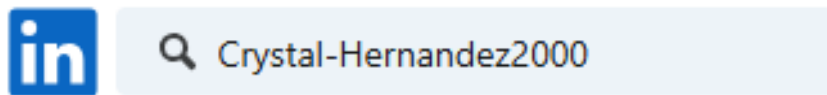
No results found

Try shortening or rephrasing your search.

Edit search

Find the correct profile page

- If page error, search name

- Record the number of results

Find the correct profile page

- If there are too many search results, use state or other survey info
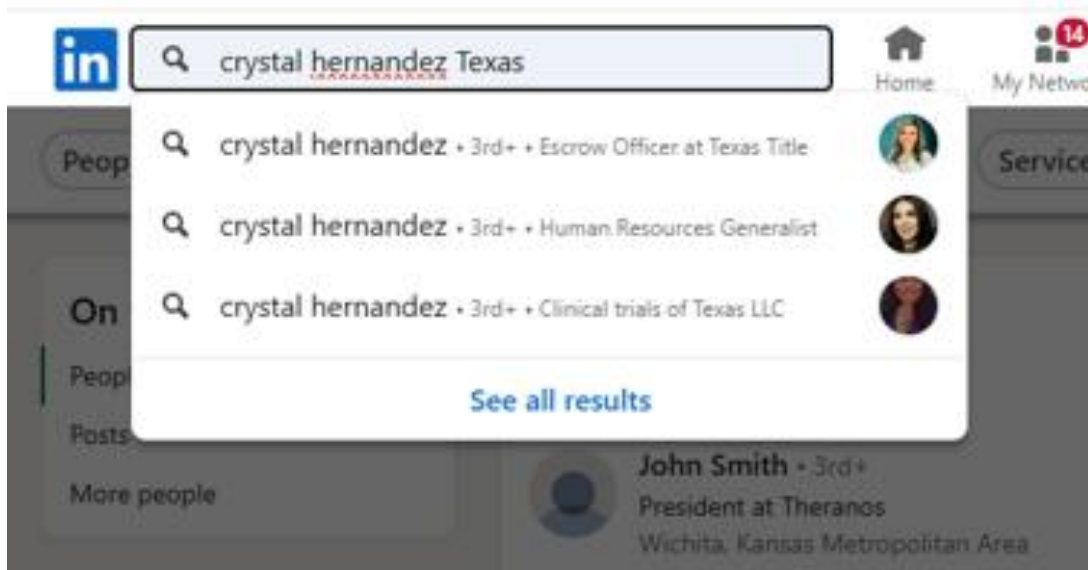
- Once page if found, view full profile

Coding data in the log-2

Once the most likely page is identified

Certainty	Matched Info	Most Likely page	Job Matches	Available Info	Alternate page1
3	3	https://www.linkedin.com/in/*name###*	1	3	
3	3	https://www.linkedin.com/in/*name###*	1	2	
3	4	https://www.linkedin.com/in/*name###*	1	3	
3	4	https://www.linkedin.com/in/*name###*	1	3	
3	5	https://www.linkedin.com/in/*name###*	1	2	
3	4	https://www.linkedin.com/in/*name###*	1	2	
1	1	https://www.linkedin.com/in/*name###*	0	2	https://www.linkedin.com/in/*name###*

Take the screenshot and code data

Crystal Hernandez ✓ She/Her · 1st
Customer Insights Analyst at NRG Energy

Houston, Texas, United States · Contact info

500+ connections

Renee Stepler and Aaron Maitland are mutual connections

🖅 Message   More

nrg⁺   NRG Energy

Experience

nrg. **Customer Insights Analyst**
NRG Energy · Full-time
Jun 2025 - Present · 4 mos
Houston, Texas, United States

Jennifer Sinibaldi
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113 followers · 107 connections

See your mutual connections

Connect   🖅 Message

US Census Bureau

University of Michigan

Experience

Research Survey Statistician
US Census Bureau
Feb 2024 - Present · 1 year 6 months

Center for Behavioral Science Methods
Data Collection Quality Improvement Initiative
I support the modernization of our flagship interviewer-administered surveys, including
integration of web-based data collection and qualitative and quantitative research.

We need to see, for current job:
- Current job title
- Date started job
- Description of job

Results

1. Will people choose to provide a LinkedIn account?

Distribution of the 4,000 cases

	Preferred	Total
LinkedIn	11%	450
Resume upload	5%	
Resume copy	1%	
Survey Q	82%	
Missing	1%	

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2. Do they provide their LinkedIn account?

- 450 chose LinkedIn
  - <15 broke off and 20 were missing
  - <15 cases provided nonsense page information (refusal assumed)
- **400** in analysis
  - 93% tried to provide their account

(2b) What did they provide?

400 in analysis

- 97% provided a web address, as requested in the question text (e.g., www.linkedin.com/in/Jennifer-Sinibaldi-4534)

- <15 provided ID or name only (e.g., Jennifer-Sinibaldi-4534)

- They followed the instructions!

3. Is the LinkedIn information accurate?

- Distribution of account information provided

n=400

Response	
Unique web address	88.7%
Unique ID name	0.5%
Incorrect ID name- not unique	1.4%
Page not found error:	
Copied irrelevant web address	3.6%
Small mistake in web address	5.0%
Incorrect ID name	0.7%

4. How many search results are shown?

- First and last name only

    Note: LinkedIn lists profile pages with irrelevant names

n=50

Number of search results	Percent of cases
1	4.4%
2-10	24.4%
11-100	28.9%
101-1,000	22.2%
1,001+	20.0%
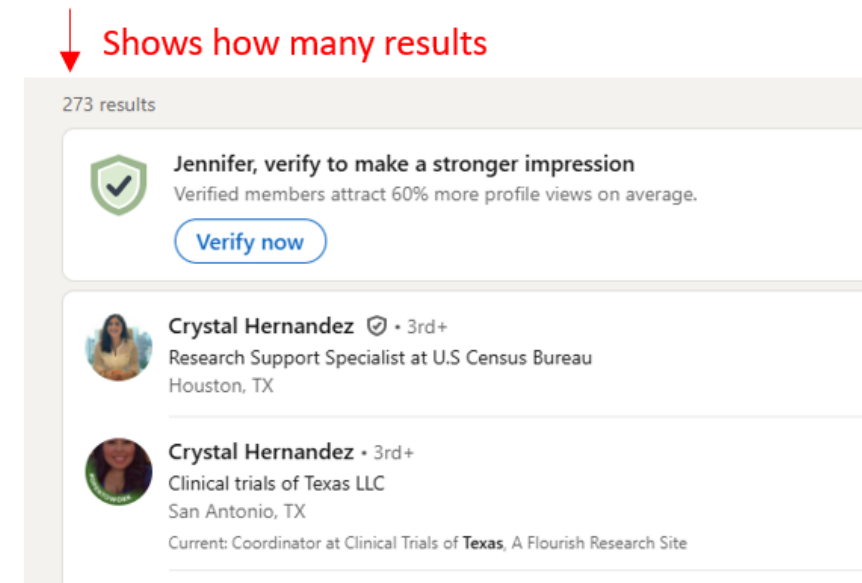
(4b) Certainty that we found correct page?

- Majority of ratings are Very certain (3): 77%

n=50

Number of search results	1-Not very certain	2- Mostly certain	3- Very certain
1	2%	0	2%
2-10	0	2%	22%
11-100	4%	2%	22%
101-1,000	2%	0	20%
1,001+	2%	7%	11%

5. How much job information is available?

- Need 3 pieces of info: job title, start date, description
- Only looked at current job (not "About" or previous job)

(n=400)

Available info	
0	0.5%
1	0.5%
2	56.8%
3	42.2%

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(5b) Does job match?

- Very lenient on counting the job as a match
- 95% had a matching current job
  - LinkedIn job is more detailed than what was provided in the survey

- However, with roughly half the cases missing descriptions, the LinkedIn profile is not providing complete enough information to replace the survey questions (and classify in SOC)

Conclusions

Summary

Behavioral

1. Will people choose to provide a LinkedIn account if given the option? Yes, but not many

2. When they opt to provide a LinkedIn account, do they? Yes

Practical

1. Is the account information accurate? Yes

2. If account is not accurate, how many search results are shown? Wide range but for majority, very confident that found correct page

3. Once a page is identified, how much job information is available? Description of current job missing about half the time

Conclusions

- Not a popular choice but worth offering
- People followed instructions
- → Behavioral outcome good!

- Not sure how automated this could be
  - There were a lot of decisions to make
- Missing information for job description is problematic for coding job
- → Practically, not so promising

Thank you

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