Innovations in General Population Web Panel Surveys of Households to Improve Sample Coverage and the Response Rate

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What are we going to discuss today?

- Introducing the AmeriSpeak Panel
- Cover innovations in leveraging area probability sampling in recruiting households for web surveys
- Examine advances in contacting, registering, and retention in of panel members.
- Address boosting probability-based panel survey response rates via non-response follow-up.
- Present NORC’s standard sample quality report that will accompany NORC’s web surveys
- Questions
What is AmeriSpeak?

- AmeriSpeak is a household, multi-client panel to support NORC’s mission to serve the public interest and improve lives through objective social science research that supports informed decision making.

- Selected households are invited to join the panel by web and telephone and then participate in research studies approximately two to three times a month.
What are we going to discuss today?

- AmeriSpeak probability-based panel
  - Nationally representative panel of U.S. teens and adults.
  - Its initial offering will be a general population adult panel of 10,000 households across the country
- Development of custom online panels that can include specific population samples including military veterans and low-income households.
Leveraging area probability sampling for web surveys

• Stage 1: National Sample Frame
  • Area probability sample frame constructed by NORC to cover over 99 percent of U.S. households
  • Sample frame for General Social Survey, Survey of Consumer Finances, etc.
  • Sampling unit—is a National Frame Area (NFA), which is either an entire metropolitan area (made up of one or more counties) or a county (some counties were combined so that each NFA contains a population of at least 10,000)
Leveraging area probability sampling for web surveys

- The largest NFAs contain 56 percent of the population within 8 percent of the geographic area of the United States.
- Remaining areas are stratified into areas where street-style addresses and not (mostly rural areas)
Within the selected NFAs, the second stage sampling unit is a segment, defined either in terms of Census tracts or block groups, containing at least 300 housing units according to the 2010 Census.

A stratified probability sample of 1,514 segments was selected with probability proportional to size.

For most of the 1,514 segments, the USPS DSF provided over 90 percent coverage of the segment in terms of city-style addresses that are geo-codeable.
• For the 123 segments where the DSF provided insufficient coverage, we enhanced the DSF address list with in-person listing.
• The National Sample Frame contains almost 3 million households, including over 80,000 rural households added through the in-person listing.
The 2015 AmeriSpeak panel sample consists of nationally representative housing units drawn from the 2010 NORC National Sample Frame.

- National Frame updated annually with latest USPS DSF

The panel sample of households includes an oversample of housing units in segments (Census tracts or block groups) higher in young adults and/or Hispanics and non-Hispanic African-Americans.
• Two-stage recruitment process
  • Initial recruitment
  • Nonresponse follow-up recruitment (NRFUR)
• Initial Recruitment used to register by online or phone
  • Pre-notification 6”x11” pre-notification postcard alerting the household of their selection
  • USPS recruitment package in a large 9”x12” envelope with a cover letter, a summary of the privacy policy and FAQs, and a study brochure
• Two follow-up post cards
• Email contacts and telephone for matched sample units
• Nonresponse Follow-up (after 10-weeks)
  • Randomly subsampled for the second stage (NRFUR)
  • Express mail a new recruitment package with an enhanced incentive offer
• NORC field interviewers then make personal visits to the respondents’ homes to encourage participation in AmeriSpeak.
  – during their personal visits, answer any questions about study participation and provide assistance as needed
    – (e.g., provide log-in instructions to the AmeriSpeak panel web portal, the toll-free AmeriSpeak phone number, etc.).
• Registering Households
  • NORC obtains and documents informed consent and agreement to the study’s Privacy Policy and Terms and Conditions during the registration process.
  • After registration is completed, AmeriSpeak panel members first complete an introduction survey of about 15 minutes by web or telephone
  • Survey provides a profile of the panelist household
  • Subsequent surveys collect other background such as public affairs, health services, health conditions, financial services, and computer and internet usage
AmeriSpeak Recruitment Methodology

NORC National Frame

Invited Sample

Initial Recruitment
- Postcards
- Recruitment Package
- Email
- Telephone

Non-Responders

Random Selection

Not Selected

Responders

Active for Client Studies

Nonresponse Followup
- Face to Face Interviewing
AmeriSpeak Supports Multiple Modes and Contact Points for Client Studies

**Web Mode**
Access survey via log-into AmeriSpeak.org or emailed study invitation

**Phone Mode**
Addressing “web reluctant,” non-web and low-literacy households

- PCs
- Laptops
- Tablets
- Smartphone
  - An alternative to phone mode for non-web households
- In-bound CATI
- Out-bound CATI
As a supporter of the American Association for Public Opinion Research (AAPOR), NORC follows AAPOR standards for response rate reporting as published by AAPOR in its *Standard Definitions*. NORC will report the AAPOR response rate in its NORC Card deliverable provided to AmeriSpeak clients.
• The AmeriSpeak response rate is properly calculated to take into account each stage of the respondent participation process (recruiting, retaining, and surveying AmeriSpeak panelists).

• NORC calculates the response rate consistent with the weighted response rate methodology used in the American Community Survey conducted by the U.S. Bureau of the Census.
• Responses rates are a very narrow (and not particularly good) summary of impact of non-response on survey error.

• Objective of NORC Card is to present a fuller snapshot of survey response and potential bias

• Will supplement response rate reports with:
  • Comparison of HH characteristics of responders and non-responders based on commercial vendor assigned characteristics
  • Comparison of individual-level distribution of key characteristic versus expectations from Census or other Benchmarks
  • Data on breakoffs during the survey
  • Geographic summaries potential bias in respondents
## Summary: AmeriSpeak Panel Features

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<tr>
<th>Key Features</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sample Frame</strong></td>
<td>Area probability sample using the NORC National Frame (same as General Social Survey)</td>
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<td><strong>Target Population</strong></td>
<td>U.S. households, age 13 and older, English speakers, with Spanish language coverage added in 2016</td>
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<td><strong>Recruitment Methodology</strong></td>
<td>Contact HHs by US. mail, email, and phone, with nonresponse follow-up by phone and in-person field recruitment by NORC field interviewers</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Response Rates</strong></td>
<td>25%+ panel recruitment AAPOR response rate; 70%+ study cooperation rate</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Panel Sample Size</strong></td>
<td>10K HHs in mid-2015; 20K HHs in 2016, 30K in 2017</td>
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## Summary: AmeriSpeak Panel Features (continued)

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<td>Study Mode of Data Collection</td>
<td>Web for approx. 85% of panel; phone mode for remainder to cover non-net, low literacy, low tech population, and HHs not having conventional web access allowed to participate by smartphone web</td>
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<td>Panel Burden</td>
<td>Active panel management: Approximately 2-3 surveys or 45 minutes of survey participation per month</td>
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<td>Profile / Background Data</td>
<td>AmeriSpeak collects in-depth HH and person-level background data for sample targeting, weighting and analysis: demographics, health conditions, health services access and utilization, social media usage, public affairs, etc.</td>
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<td>NORC Card: Sample Quality Report Card</td>
<td>NORC Card deliverable provides quantitative assessment of non-response bias, sample representativeness analysis, AAPOR response rate, analysis of interview break-offs, etc.</td>
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Please Contact AmeriSpeak-BD@Norc.org for more information

Thank You!