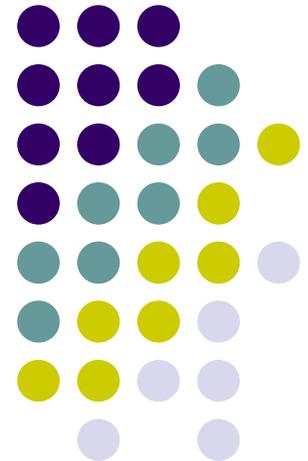


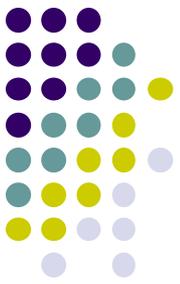
Who is this survey designed for, the “agency” or the respondent?

Don A. Dillman*
Washington State University
For
Federal Committee on Statistical Methodology
Washington DC
January 10, 2012

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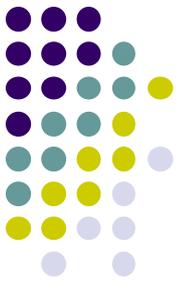


This is a difficult time for survey methodology



- Respondent cooperation is lower for most survey modes than any time in the past.
- Coverage is a significant problem (<70% of households) for telephone landlines and the Internet
- We may be losing the telephone as an effective mode of surveying some populations (brevity, number access, cooperation)
- The hoped for smooth transition from telephone to web for household surveys has not yet been realized
- Computers used by some people are morphing into survey unfriendly devices (smart phones)
- Our best household address sample is Delivery Sequence File from the U.S. Postal Service, which is about to offer slower delivery.

These are also interesting times.



- **Tailored Design**, the need to use different survey approaches for different populations and situations, makes standard recommendations less tenable.
- **Mixed-mode solutions** for survey problems also make standard recommendations less tenable.
- **Visual survey modes** are bidding to replace aural modes, thus changing who is control of the survey process.
- **Computer devices are increasingly varied**; desk tops to laptops to net books to Pads and now smart phones.
- **Implementation systems** are mixed-mode—e,g, address-based sampling with mail contact is avenue for responses over the web.

My Purpose



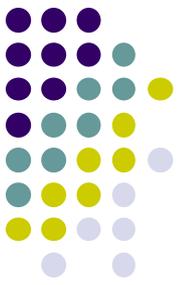
- Discuss some of the challenges survey designers face as we seem caught between:
 - The declining effectiveness of telephone interviews, and
 - Internet-only surveys being not quite ready to replace them.
- What if, we are really moving into a survey world with more emphasis on surveys being:
 - visual (instead of aural)
 - Self-administered
 - Mixed-mode

Why use of the telephone seems likely to decrease



- < 70% RDD coverage and poor response rates.
- A cultural shift has occurred that leads to telephone being seen as inappropriate device for responding to a survey.
- “Intermediaries” no longer needed for buying food, making reservations, paying bills, making appointments or leaving messages. Why should taking a survey be an exception?

It's useful to recall that all effects of telephone interviewing were not positive



- No visual support
- Shorter utterances used to achieve comprehension
- These utterances had to include query + answer choices
- Extreme branching used to shorten utterances
- These changes placed more emphasis on good interviewer support
- Biased answers from interviewer effects
 - social desirability
 - satisficing and recency effects
 - acquiescence

Why is it so difficult to transition away from the telephone?



- Interviewer considered essential for making sure questions were understood.
- Interviewer could probe and cajole people to give an answer
- Nearly everyone (98%) uses telephones either cell or landline or both.
- Cell phones seem to offer a “repair” capability
- The hoped for “seamless” transition from telephone to internet-only has not happened.

Barriers to transitioning to internet-only surveys



- Household access and regular use (> every two weeks) of the internet is <70%.
- Internet use positively correlated with education, income, and age; population segments most focused on by government policy are less accessible by the Internet.
- Email contact cannot be used without “prior relationship”
- Even if email could be used we have no sample frame.

Other barriers to internet-only surveys



- Computers used by some people are morphing into survey unfriendly devices (smart-phones, pockets and purses).
- The web is self-administered; there is no interviewer to cajole, interpret and encourage.
- The web is visual, requiring a different survey communication process and different question construction

Is a mail-assist strategy to overcome “no email” viable?

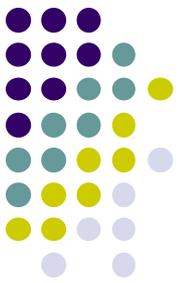


- Maybe.
- The U.S. Postal Service Delivery Sequence File (DSF) of all residential addresses is now our best household sampling frame.
- However, if households are contact by mail and given a choice of web or mail, they mostly respond by mail.
- Perhaps we can use mail request without a questionnaire to obtain responses over the web.

Some research suggests web+mail is possible



- Three studies (Smyth et al. ABS 2010; Messer and Dillman, POQ, 2011) found that a “web+mail” approach, i.e. \$5 in first of three postal contacts requesting web response, and fourth requesting mail response resulted in:
 - 46-55% total response rates for general public (ABS)
 - 2/3 of responses being submitted over the web
 - Follow-up offer of mail obtained answers from respondents quite different than the web respondents (older, less education, lower incomes)
 - Mail-only treatment response rates higher; 57% to 71%.



Is the glass half-full?

- Web+mail produces significant improvement over telephone in coverage and response.
- Web and Mail are both visual and self-administered and modes mix well in many respects.
- We may be able to improve performance further in government surveys.

Or, is the glass half-empty?



- Web and mail lose interview assistance to “reinterpret, correct, redirect and probe”
- The use of mail contact and incentives to obtain web responses tends to negate many of the cost advantages associated with an “email only web collection strategy”.
- Mail does not handle well the extent of branching that characterizes much of today’s telephone research and which may be feasible on the web?
- Would we be better off to focus on trying to “repair” the telephone?

The use of web+mail data collection is a difficult adjustment because...



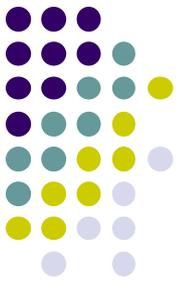
- It means adding new skills and capabilities on top of the interviewing capabilities that now exist in survey organizations.
- Visual, self-administration requires quite different question and instrument construction.
- The challenge is as much organizational as it is on innovating new ways of doing things.

A brief digression: “The Double Helix” by James Watson (1968)



- Watson and Francis Crick published 900 word article in Nature (1953) proposing a structure for Deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA)
- His 1968 book described a delay between discovery and submission of the article; they needed to check it out with other scientists .
- Implications for this survey methodologist at the time. My discipline is much simpler!
- Today I’m not so sure.

Survey Methodology has become extremely complex with a huge division of labor



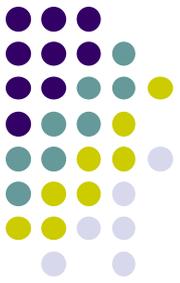
- The leader of a methodology group in one of our statistical organizations: “I don’t understand what some of the people in our group do or why. I hired them, but they have different training and I’m not sure what it is.”
- In survey organizations more people and groups have influence on how surveys are designed and implemented
 - Organizations have divisions
 - Divisions have specialists
 - Specialists have peer groups
 - Peer groups are reinforced by professional associations.

More specialists are involved in deciding survey requirements, both inside and outside of agencies

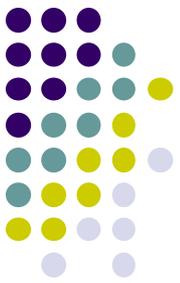


- Subject matter
- Mode
 - Web design
 - Forms (paper) design
 - Telephone design
 - In-person design
- Burden
- IRB--Human subject protection
- Sampling
- Measurement
- Forms processing
- Cognitive interviewing
- Computer usability
- Focus group
- Data security
- Correspondence
- Contracting
- Forms Design

Specialists compete for the final word in survey design



- A few examples, based upon experiences of the last several years:
 1. Subject matter
 2. Data security
 3. Optical imaging of paper
 4. Institutional Review Board requirements
 5. Mode Requirements
 6. Correspondence



1. Subject matter specialists

- Good science requires more and more precision; our models and critics demand it.
- A few examples.
 - How many square feet of floor space is in your residence?
 - How much did you spend on gasoline for your vehicle in the last six months?
 - How much did your family have in savings on March 31st one year ago, and how much did you have in savings this March 31st?
 - How much did you spend for fast food on your last out-of-town trip?
- Methodological techniques for getting answers to such questions (e.g. additional questions and event histories can improve data quality, but make questionnaires more burdensome.)
- When people can't answer questions in self-administered surveys or provide needed precision, their willingness to keep responding declines.



2. Data security protection

- Security concerns sometimes leads to requiring :
 - Lengthy passwords that include:
 - CAPITAL LETTERS,
 - small case letters,
 - numbers and
 - symbols.
 - An example, “?ryoY*1k4k3>”
- People (including good touch typists) are not able to transfer such passwords from correspondence to keyboards accurately.
- Breaking into visual segments will help, but letters to computer remain a big burden:
?rvo Y*1 k4k3
- The reason some web+mail household studies fail.

3. Forms design: optical imaging of paper questionnaires



- Example from as American Community Survey several years ago.
- A new form designed for optical imaging produced a higher item non-response rate

Form B



13191028

13191036

List of Residents

1 What is this person's sex? **2** What is this person's age and what is this person's date of birth? **3** How is this person related to Person 1?

READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS FIRST

Please fill out this form as soon as possible after receiving it in the mail.

- **LIST** everyone who is living or staying here for more than 2 months.
- **LIST** anyone else staying here who does not have another usual place to stay.
- **DO NOT LIST** anyone who is living somewhere else for more than 2 months, such as a college student living away.

If this place is a vacation home or a temporary residence where no one in this household stays for more than 2 months, do not list any names in the List of Residents. Complete only pages 4, 5, and 6 and return the form.

IF YOU ARE NOT SURE WHOM TO LIST, CALL 1-800-354-7271.

After you've created the List of Residents, answer the questions across the top of the page for the first five people on the list.

Person 1
Last Name (Please print) _____
First Name _____ MI _____
Sex: Male Female
Age (in years) _____
Month Day Year of birth _____

Person 2
Last Name (Please print) _____
First Name _____ MI _____
Sex: Male Female
Age (in years) _____
Month Day Year of birth _____

Person 3
Last Name (Please print) _____
First Name _____ MI _____
Sex: Male Female
Age (in years) _____
Month Day Year of birth _____

Person 4
Last Name (Please print) _____
First Name _____ MI _____
Sex: Male Female
Age (in years) _____
Month Day Year of birth _____

Person 5
Last Name (Please print) _____
First Name _____ MI _____
Sex: Male Female
Age (in years) _____
Month Day Year of birth _____

Person 6
Last Name (Please print) _____
First Name _____ MI _____

Person 7
Last Name (Please print) _____
First Name _____ MI _____

Person 8
Last Name (Please print) _____
First Name _____ MI _____

Relationship of Person 2 to Person 1:
 Person 1
 Husband or wife
 Roomer, boarder
 Son or daughter
 Housemate, roommate
 Brother or sister
 Father or mother
 Grandchild
 In-law
 Other relative
 Unmarried partner
 Foster child
 Other nonrelative

Relationship of Person 3 to Person 1:
 Husband or wife
 Roomer, boarder
 Son or daughter
 Housemate, roommate
 Brother or sister
 Father or mother
 Grandchild
 In-law
 Other relative
 Unmarried partner
 Foster child
 Other nonrelative

Relationship of Person 4 to Person 1:
 Husband or wife
 Roomer, boarder
 Son or daughter
 Housemate, roommate
 Brother or sister
 Father or mother
 Grandchild
 In-law
 Other relative
 Unmarried partner
 Foster child
 Other nonrelative

Relationship of Person 5 to Person 1:
 Husband or wife
 Roomer, boarder
 Son or daughter
 Housemate, roommate
 Brother or sister
 Father or mother
 Grandchild
 In-law
 Other relative
 Unmarried partner
 Foster child
 Other nonrelative

2



4 What is this person's marital status? **5** Is this person Spanish/Hispanic/Latino? **6** What is this person's race? Mark (X) one or more races to indicate what this person considers himself/herself to be.

NOTE: Please answer BOTH Questions 5 and 6. Mark (X) the "No" box if not Spanish/Hispanic/Latino.

Person 1
Marital status: Now married, Widowed, Divorced, Separated, Never married
Race: No, not Spanish/Hispanic/Latino, Yes, Mexican, Mexican Am., Chicano, Yes, Puerto Rican, Yes, Cuban, Yes, other Spanish/Hispanic/Latino - Print group: _____
Race: White, Black or African American, American Indian or Alaska Native - Print name of enrolled or principal tribe: _____, Asian Indian, Chinese, Filipino, Japanese, Korean, Vietnamese, Other Asian - Print race: _____, Native Hawaiian, Guamanian or Chamorro, Samoan, Other Pacific Islander - Print race below: _____, Some other race - Print race below: _____

Person 2
Marital status: Now married, Widowed, Divorced, Separated, Never married
Race: No, not Spanish/Hispanic/Latino, Yes, Mexican, Mexican Am., Chicano, Yes, Puerto Rican, Yes, Cuban, Yes, other Spanish/Hispanic/Latino - Print group: _____
Race: White, Black or African American, American Indian or Alaska Native - Print name of enrolled or principal tribe: _____, Asian Indian, Chinese, Filipino, Japanese, Korean, Vietnamese, Other Asian - Print race: _____, Native Hawaiian, Guamanian or Chamorro, Samoan, Other Pacific Islander - Print race below: _____, Some other race - Print race below: _____

Person 3
Marital status: Now married, Widowed, Divorced, Separated, Never married
Race: No, not Spanish/Hispanic/Latino, Yes, Mexican, Mexican Am., Chicano, Yes, Puerto Rican, Yes, Cuban, Yes, other Spanish/Hispanic/Latino - Print group: _____
Race: White, Black or African American, American Indian or Alaska Native - Print name of enrolled or principal tribe: _____, Asian Indian, Chinese, Filipino, Japanese, Korean, Vietnamese, Other Asian - Print race: _____, Native Hawaiian, Guamanian or Chamorro, Samoan, Other Pacific Islander - Print race below: _____, Some other race - Print race below: _____

Person 4
Marital status: Now married, Widowed, Divorced, Separated, Never married
Race: No, not Spanish/Hispanic/Latino, Yes, Mexican, Mexican Am., Chicano, Yes, Puerto Rican, Yes, Cuban, Yes, other Spanish/Hispanic/Latino - Print group: _____
Race: White, Black or African American, American Indian or Alaska Native - Print name of enrolled or principal tribe: _____, Asian Indian, Chinese, Filipino, Japanese, Korean, Vietnamese, Other Asian - Print race: _____, Native Hawaiian, Guamanian or Chamorro, Samoan, Other Pacific Islander - Print race below: _____, Some other race - Print race below: _____

Person 5
Marital status: Now married, Widowed, Divorced, Separated, Never married
Race: No, not Spanish/Hispanic/Latino, Yes, Mexican, Mexican Am., Chicano, Yes, Puerto Rican, Yes, Cuban, Yes, other Spanish/Hispanic/Latino - Print group: _____
Race: White, Black or African American, American Indian or Alaska Native - Print name of enrolled or principal tribe: _____, Asian Indian, Chinese, Filipino, Japanese, Korean, Vietnamese, Other Asian - Print race: _____, Native Hawaiian, Guamanian or Chamorro, Samoan, Other Pacific Islander - Print race below: _____, Some other race - Print race below: _____

Person 6
Marital status: Now married, Widowed, Divorced, Separated, Never married
Race: No, not Spanish/Hispanic/Latino, Yes, Mexican, Mexican Am., Chicano, Yes, Puerto Rican, Yes, Cuban, Yes, other Spanish/Hispanic/Latino - Print group: _____
Race: White, Black or African American, American Indian or Alaska Native - Print name of enrolled or principal tribe: _____, Asian Indian, Chinese, Filipino, Japanese, Korean, Vietnamese, Other Asian - Print race: _____, Native Hawaiian, Guamanian or Chamorro, Samoan, Other Pacific Islander - Print race below: _____, Some other race - Print race below: _____

Person 7
Last Name (Please print) _____
First Name _____ MI _____

Person 8
Last Name (Please print) _____
First Name _____ MI _____

Person 9
Last Name (Please print) _____
First Name _____ MI _____

Person 10
Last Name (Please print) _____
First Name _____ MI _____

Person 11
Last Name (Please print) _____
First Name _____ MI _____

Person 12
Last Name (Please print) _____
First Name _____ MI _____

3



When you are finished, turn the page and continue with the Housing section.

The New Form B increased the item non response rate.



Item	Form B (New)	Form A (Old)
Sex	6.2%	4.0%
Age	3.4%	2.4%
Relationship	3.0%	2.5%
Marital Status	9.6%	5.1%
Hispanic Origin	13.2%	7.6%
Race	10.8%	6.3%

Form C: The problem was resolved through re-design.



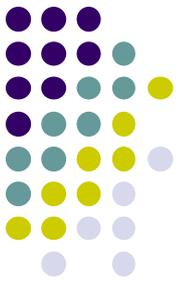
13197025

13197033

List of Residents		1 What is this person's sex?	2 What is this person's age and what is this person's date of birth? Print numbers in boxes.	3 How is this person related to Person 1?	4 What is this person's marital status?	5 Is this person Spanish/Hispanic/Latino? Mark (X) the "No" box if not Spanish/Hispanic/Latino.	6 What is this person's race? Mark (X) one or more races to indicate what this person considers himself/herself to be.					
<p>READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS FIRST</p> <p>This survey collects information about the people who are living or staying here for more than 2 months.</p> <p>On the List of Residents -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include everyone living or staying here for more than 2 months. In the Person 1 space, list one of the people living here who owns or rents this house or apartment. Remember to include yourself on the list if you are staying here for more than 2 months. • Include anyone staying here who does not have another place to stay, even if they are here for 2 months or less. • Do not include anyone who is living somewhere else for more than 2 months, such as a college student living away. <p>If no one is staying here for more than 2 months, do not list any names in the List of Residents. Complete only pages 4, 5, and 6 and return the form.</p> <p>If you are not sure whom to list, call 1-800-354-7271.</p> <p>If there are more than five people living or staying here, print their names in the spaces for Person 6 through Person 12. We may call you for more information about them.</p> <p>After you complete the List of Residents, answer the questions asked at the top of pages 2 and 3 for the first five people on the list.</p>	<p>Person 1</p> <p>Last Name (Please print) _____</p> <p>First Name _____ MI _____</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female</p> <p>Age (in years) _____</p> <p>Month Day Year of birth _____</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Person 1</p> <p><i>(Person 1 is the person living or staying here in whose name this house or apartment is owned, being bought, or rented. If there is no such person, start with the name of any adult living or staying here.)</i></p>	<p>Person 2</p> <p>Last Name (Please print) _____</p> <p>First Name _____ MI _____</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female</p> <p>Age (in years) _____</p> <p>Month Day Year of birth _____</p> <p>Relationship of Person 2 to Person 1.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Husband or wife <input type="checkbox"/> Son or daughter <input type="checkbox"/> Brother or sister <input type="checkbox"/> Father or mother <input type="checkbox"/> Grandchild <input type="checkbox"/> In-law <input type="checkbox"/> Other relative</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Roomer, boarder <input type="checkbox"/> Housemate, roommate <input type="checkbox"/> Unmarried partner <input type="checkbox"/> Foster child <input type="checkbox"/> Other nonrelative</p>	<p>Person 3</p> <p>Last Name (Please print) _____</p> <p>First Name _____ MI _____</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female</p> <p>Age (in years) _____</p> <p>Month Day Year of birth _____</p> <p>Relationship of Person 3 to Person 1.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Husband or wife <input type="checkbox"/> Son or daughter <input type="checkbox"/> Brother or sister <input type="checkbox"/> Father or mother <input type="checkbox"/> Grandchild <input type="checkbox"/> In-law <input type="checkbox"/> Other relative</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Roomer, boarder <input type="checkbox"/> Housemate, roommate <input type="checkbox"/> Unmarried partner <input type="checkbox"/> Foster child <input type="checkbox"/> Other nonrelative</p>	<p>Person 4</p> <p>Last Name (Please print) _____</p> <p>First Name _____ MI _____</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female</p> <p>Age (in years) _____</p> <p>Month Day Year of birth _____</p> <p>Relationship of Person 4 to Person 1.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Husband or wife <input type="checkbox"/> Son or daughter <input type="checkbox"/> Brother or sister <input type="checkbox"/> Father or mother <input type="checkbox"/> Grandchild <input type="checkbox"/> In-law <input type="checkbox"/> Other relative</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Roomer, boarder <input type="checkbox"/> Housemate, roommate <input type="checkbox"/> Unmarried partner <input type="checkbox"/> Foster child <input type="checkbox"/> Other nonrelative</p>	<p>Person 5</p> <p>Last Name (Please print) _____</p> <p>First Name _____ MI _____</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female</p> <p>Age (in years) _____</p> <p>Month Day Year of birth _____</p> <p>Relationship of Person 5 to Person 1.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Husband or wife <input type="checkbox"/> Son or daughter <input type="checkbox"/> Brother or sister <input type="checkbox"/> Father or mother <input type="checkbox"/> Grandchild <input type="checkbox"/> In-law <input type="checkbox"/> Other relative</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Roomer, boarder <input type="checkbox"/> Housemate, roommate <input type="checkbox"/> Unmarried partner <input type="checkbox"/> Foster child <input type="checkbox"/> Other nonrelative</p>	<p>Person 6</p> <p>Last Name (Please print) _____</p> <p>First Name _____ MI _____</p>	<p>Person 7</p> <p>Last Name (Please print) _____</p> <p>First Name _____ MI _____</p>	<p>Person 8</p> <p>Last Name (Please print) _____</p> <p>First Name _____ MI _____</p>	<p>Person 9</p> <p>Last Name (Please print) _____</p> <p>First Name _____ MI _____</p>	<p>Person 10</p> <p>Last Name (Please print) _____</p> <p>First Name _____ MI _____</p>	<p>Person 11</p> <p>Last Name (Please print) _____</p> <p>First Name _____ MI _____</p>	<p>Person 12</p> <p>Last Name (Please print) _____</p> <p>First Name _____ MI _____</p>

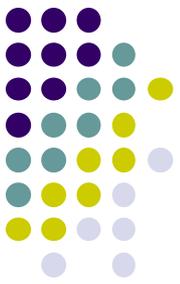


Observation



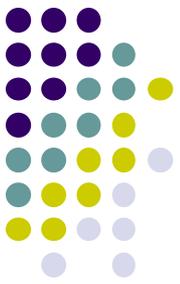
- Further research suggested a one column per person approach was even better.
- The explanation for why certain forms worked better involved visual design concepts (e.g. Gestalt Laws of Continuation, Proximity and Continuation).
- Less resource intensive surveys usually cannot afford the experimentation required to show what works and what does not

4 Institutional Review Board (IRB) Requirements



- Four views on token cash incentives with survey request encountered during last year.
 - Are acceptable (University A)
 - Cannot be sent with the request, but can be given to those who respond (University B)
 - Cannot send to some potential respondents but withheld from others (University C)
 - Can be sent to some/not others but all study participants must be sent a letter afterwards explaining the “experiment” in which they participated (University D).

5. Standard Mode Requirements that may complicate mixed-mode designs



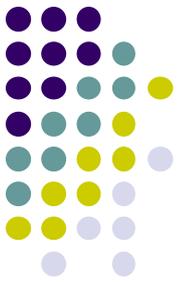
- No numbering of items (web).
- Dynamic number of items (web).
- Making questions fit the page (mail questionnaires).
- Grid questions (mail) vs. individual items (smartphones and web).
- Hidden categories (telephone) vs. explicit categories (web and mail).



6. Approved Correspondence

- Communication/persuasion occurs in multiple places—initial contact (letter or email), questionnaire cover or initial web page, within and between questions, and follow-up letters/emails.
- Instead, communications get thought of as:
 - Does it include the IRB/ OMB approval and contact information.
 - An IRB approved “you don’t have to respond”
 - Administrator approval of agency information
 - Web master approval of multiple logos for web page
 - Sending the same communications over and over to reduce approval requirements and printing requirements.
- Communications often leave out any compelling reason for why the recipient should respond and to simplify things the same communications get sent over and over.

I have only discussed a few of the specialist challenges—there are others



- **Subject matter**
- **Mode**
 - Web design
 - Forms (paper) design
 - Telephone design
 - In-person design
- Burden
- **IRB--Human subject protection**
- Sampling
- Measurement
- **Forms processing**
- Cognitive interviewing
- Computer usability
- Focus group
- **Data security**
- **Correspondence**
- Contracting
- **Forms Design**

“Is this survey designed for the agency or the respondent?”



- I chose this title for today’s talk because I think we do a better job of designing the former than the latter.
- I use agency (with a small “a”) to refer to our specialists, rather than the organization.
- In this past we were able to get by designing mostly for the agency and leaving conflicts unresolved because:
 - The times were simpler with fewer “agencies” involved, and
 - The “interviewer” was our representative to clarify, motivate, and be persistent with respondents.
- If we are going to shift to greater use of self-administration, more use of mixed-modes, and reliance on visual communication, we need to become more respondent centered rather agency centered.

Caught between a rock and a hard spot...



- Specialists want more from respondents and sponsors but if we also want greater use of self-administered voluntary surveys I doubt we will be successful.
- I believe we have to do more of what the respondent wants.
 - Explain what our surveys are about.
 - Encourage interest in the topics and responding
 - Develop contact and encouragement strategies that evolve through multiple contacts and make sense to respondents.
 - Create simplicity and connectivity that the telephone era did not allow.

Should we should create a “Division of the Respondent” with a specialist who advocates designing for the respondent?



- I don't think that is a good answer.
 - We have many defenders of the respondent:
OMB (burden), IRB (rights), cognitive testers (more meaningful questions), usability testers (connection of survey questions to computers), subject matter reviewers (do questions measure the concepts), mode specialists (what question works best for my mode), contract officers (reduce survey costs), etc.
- Nearly every specialist in the survey process sees their role as fairly critical to defending the respondent's needs and concerns in one way or another.

We specialists are responsible for adding burden



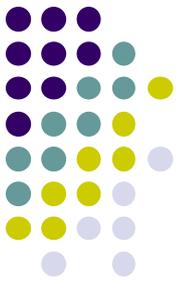
- Cognitive evaluations suggest adding questions to improve accuracy
- IRB's require "protective" actions that decrease likelihood of responding
- Subject matter reviewers "protect" value of respondent's answers by requiring information that may be impossible for respondents to provide.
- Security officers make logons to web surveys so difficult that respondents give up.
- Mode specialists insist on doing "what's best for my mode" but these requirements applied to other modes are off-putting.
- Conclusion. Many specialists already see themselves as protecting the respondent but also make it more difficult to get surveys responses.

We need to refocus on the respondent!



- We need survey designs that are respondent centered rather than agency centered.
- We need designs that build interest and motivation into the sequence of materials respondents receive, so that respondents have the opportunity to better understand why a survey is being done, and we hope they will answer it.
- It also probably means asking fewer questions in surveys, especially one's that most people know they can't answer, thwarting even further their motivation for responding.
- And, we need to optimize question formats across modes, rather than maximizing for the mode itself.

Optimal Design ?



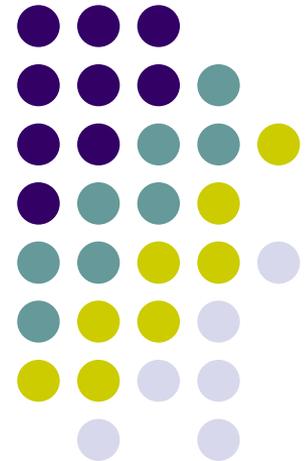
- When I began doing surveys we tended to ask what is the right way of doing surveys and we tended to generalize that across all survey populations and situations.
- Now, I'm much less inclined to think about finding the "right" solution than I am an "optimal" solution for the interaction between survey and respondent.
- In a tailored design era, using self-administered mixed-mode designs, our best chance of providing quality survey data is to put less emphasis on specialist needs as being absolute, and more on finding optimal solutions that take into account respondent needs.

Thank you!

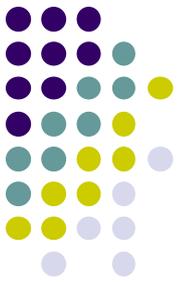
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