

Device agnostic survey design

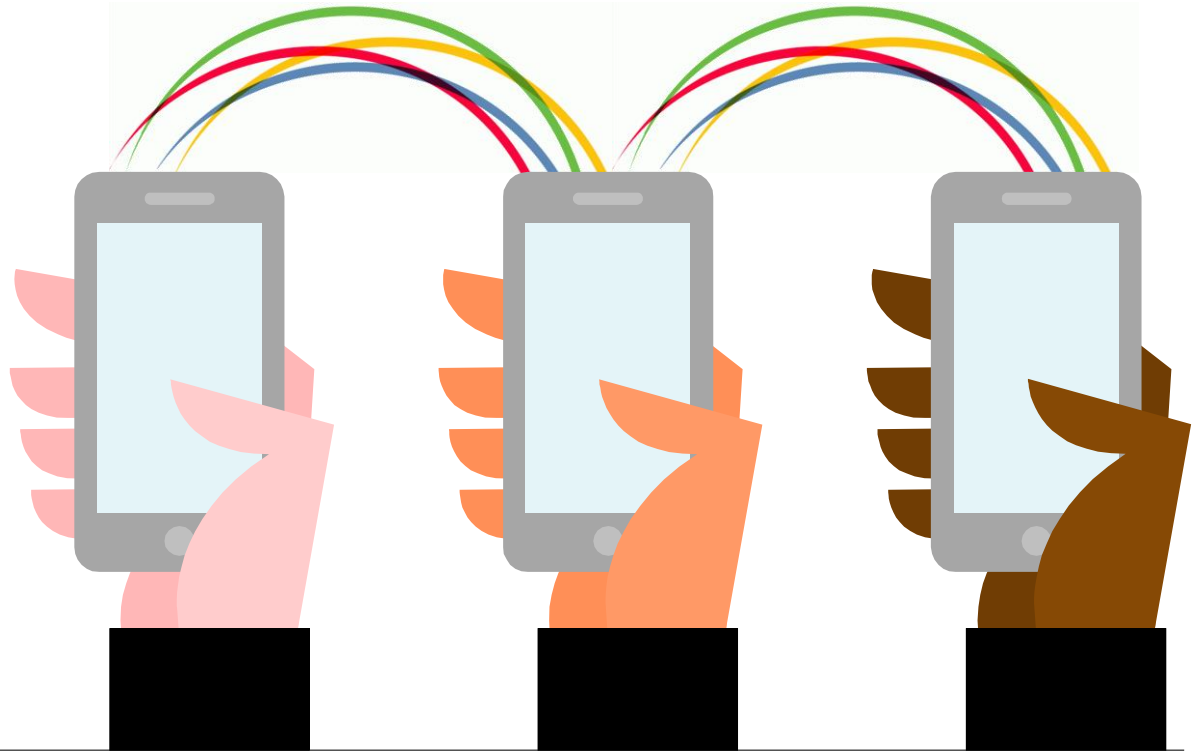
Challenges and opportunities for Social Research

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What do we mean when we talk about 'device agnostic survey design'



Ensuring that online surveys are accessible on and compatible with all devices



Ensuring that questionnaires are device-agnostic



Empowering respondents to self-select how they complete surveys

Growth in ownership and use of smartphones and tablets for accessing internet

Two thirds of adults (66%) owned a smartphone in Q1 of 2015 – up from 39% in 2012

Household take-up of tablet computers more than doubled between 2013 and 2015 – from 24% to 54%

Average UK household now owns four different types of internet-enabled device

Smartphones now most important device for accessing internet - up from 23% in 2014 to 33% in 2015; reverse trend for laptops (40% to 30%)

2014 study showed UK adults spent an average of 82 minutes per day on their smartphones



Expectation that surveys should be accessible by smartphones

Data from Ofcom's Communications Market Report, 2015

Smartphones especially important for younger people

16-24 year olds spent an average of 216 minutes per day on their smartphones

60% of 16-24 year olds said smartphones were the most important device for accessing the internet (46% for 25-34 year olds)

Survey response rates usually lowest among 16-24 year olds

Young adults especially important for longitudinal studies



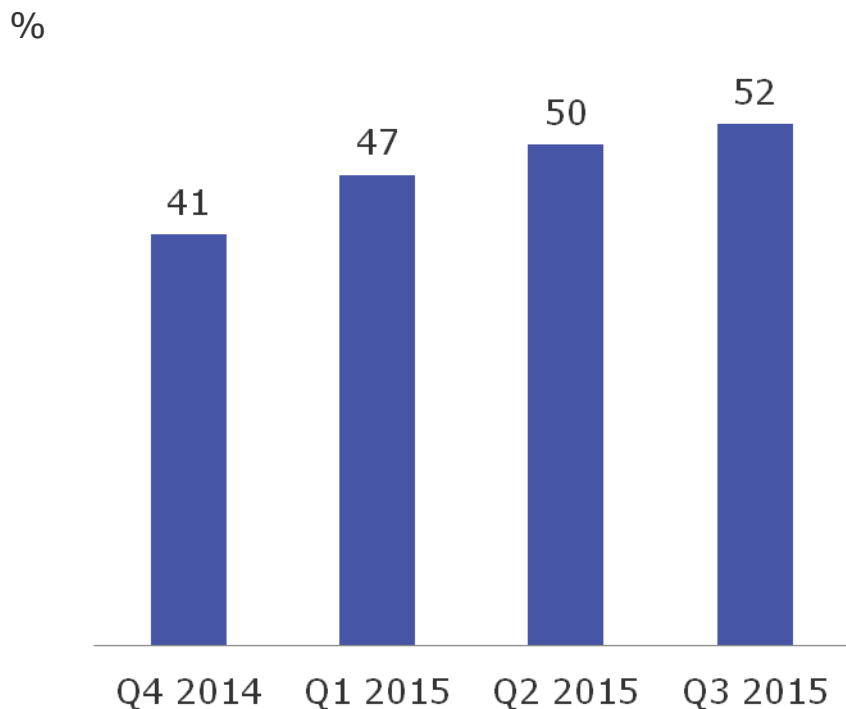
Ongoing challenge of representing young people in surveys – important to remove barriers to participation

Data from Ofcom's Communications Market Report, 2015

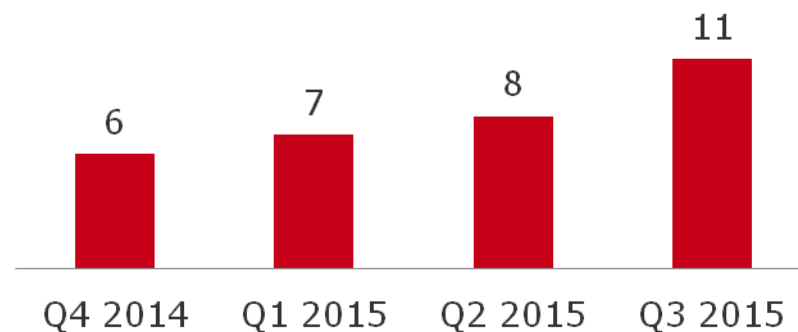
Learning from commercial research

Half of Lightspeed panellists sign up on a tablet or phone; proportion who complete surveys on these devices small but growing

Sign-up by tablet/phone

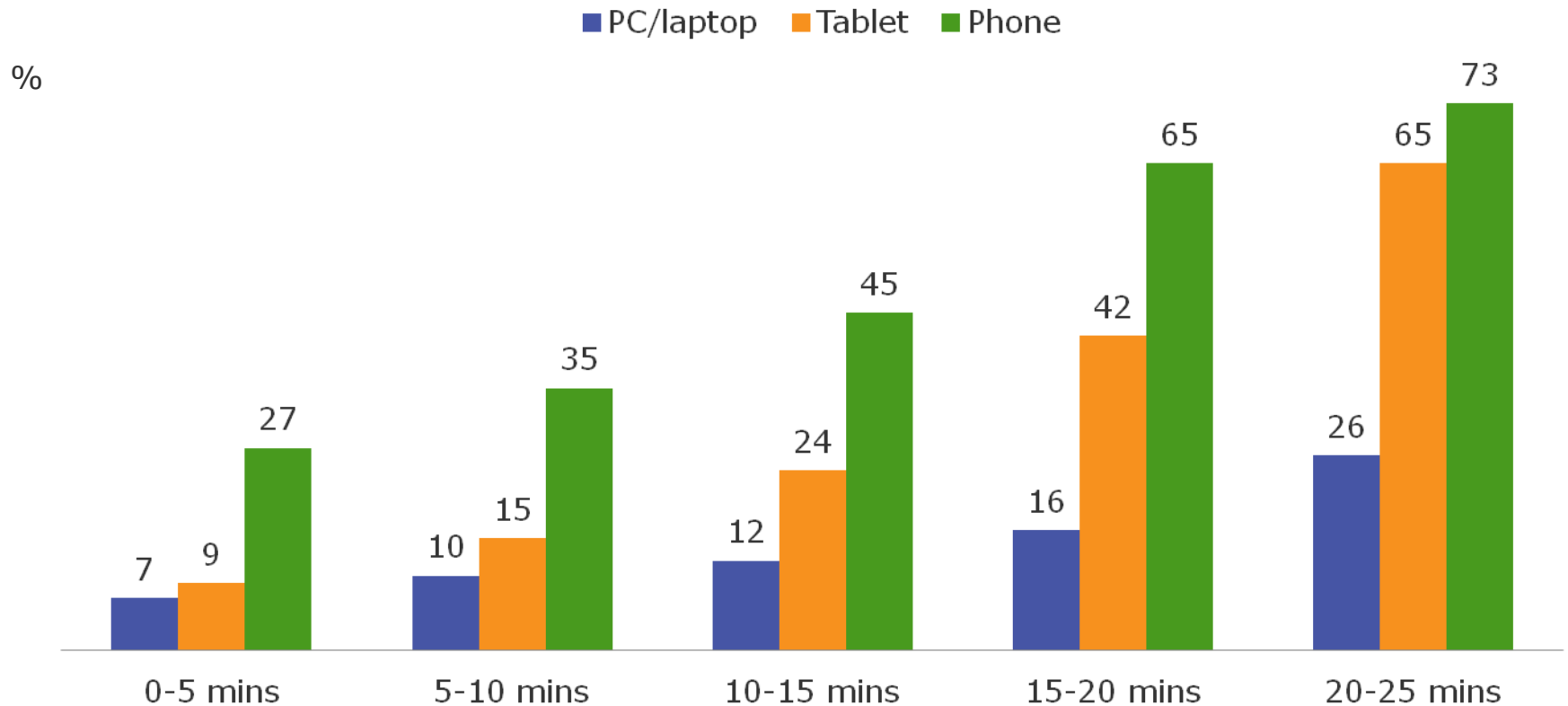


Survey completion by tablet/phone



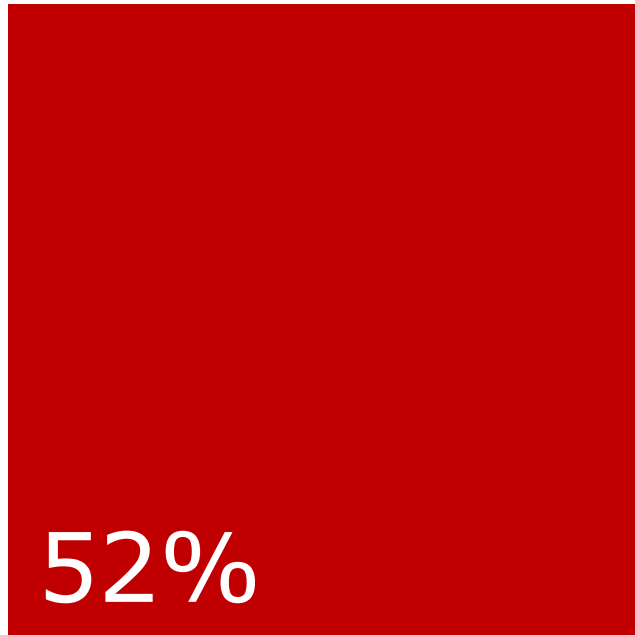
Source: Lightspeed GMI UK

Dropout rates for phone and tablet increase rapidly beyond 15 minutes

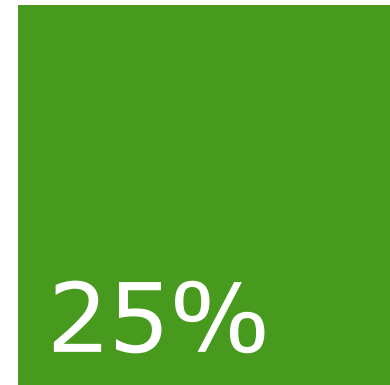


Source: Lightspeed GMI analysis of 31,000 surveys Dec 2013 / Text box: Lightspeed GMI Oct-Nov 2014

Where surveys were optimised for mobile completion,
the tablet/smartphone dropout rate halved



Non-optimised



Mobile optimised

Source: Lightspeed GMI Oct-Nov 2014

What is happening in commercial research?

Many differences between commercial panel research and large social research studies – but also opportunities for shared learning

- Device neutral surveys
- Shorter surveys – aim to limit to 15 minutes; use of existing data to identify question redundancies
- Reducing length of questions
- More engaging surveys – e.g. avoiding lengthy batteries of agreement statements
- Splitting longer surveys into 'chunks'
- Use of non-survey data (social media, behavioural data)

Analysis of data from three social surveys

Analysis of device use and impact on survey quality for three surveys conducted by TNS BMRB

Community Life Survey

- Conducted for the Cabinet Office
- Face-to-face and web approaches
- Recruitment for web survey by advance letter
- c. 30 minute interview
- Data taken from 2013-14 survey, sample size = 4,685

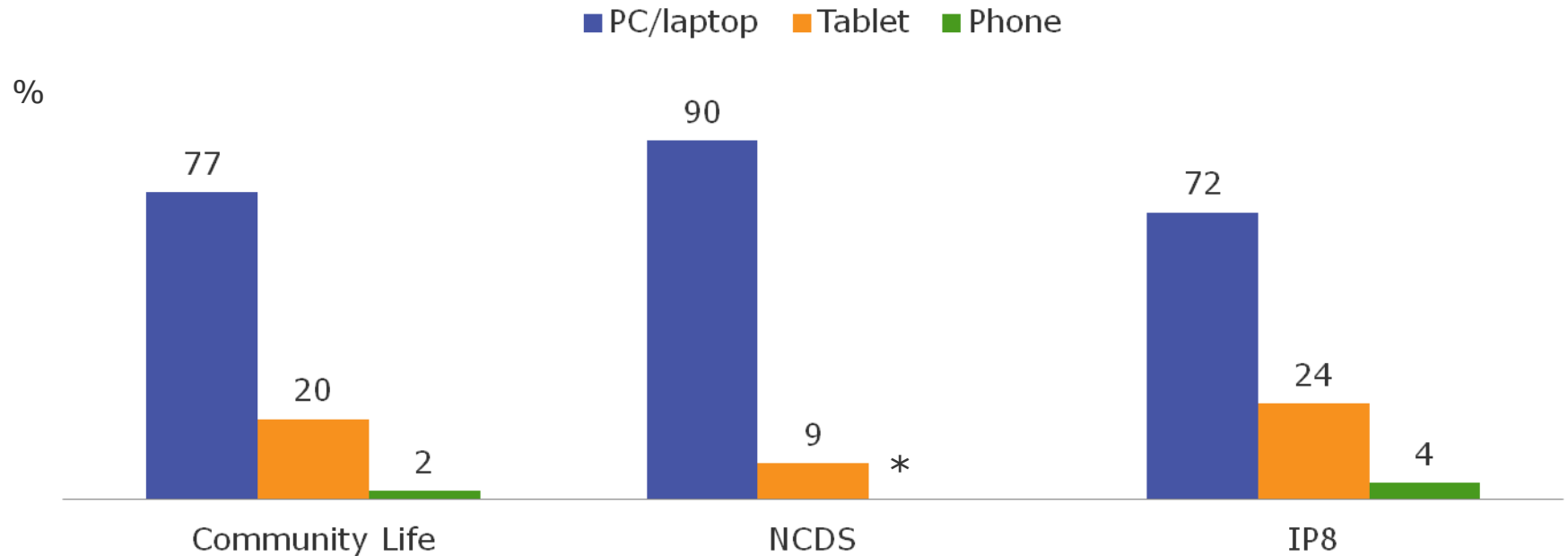
1958 National Child Development Survey

- Conducted for the Centre for Longitudinal Studies
- Age 55 follow-up
- Sequential mixed-mode CAWI/CATI data collection
- Letter/email invitations
- c. 40 minute interview
- Conducted 2012-14, sample size = 9,133

Understanding Society Innovation Panel W8

- Conducted for ISER
- Mixed-mode design (CAWI / CAPI / CATI)
- Letter/email invitations
- Allocation to mode two waves previously – all had been invited to take part online before
- c. 45 minute interview
- Conducted in 2015, sample size = 776
- Data yet to be finalised

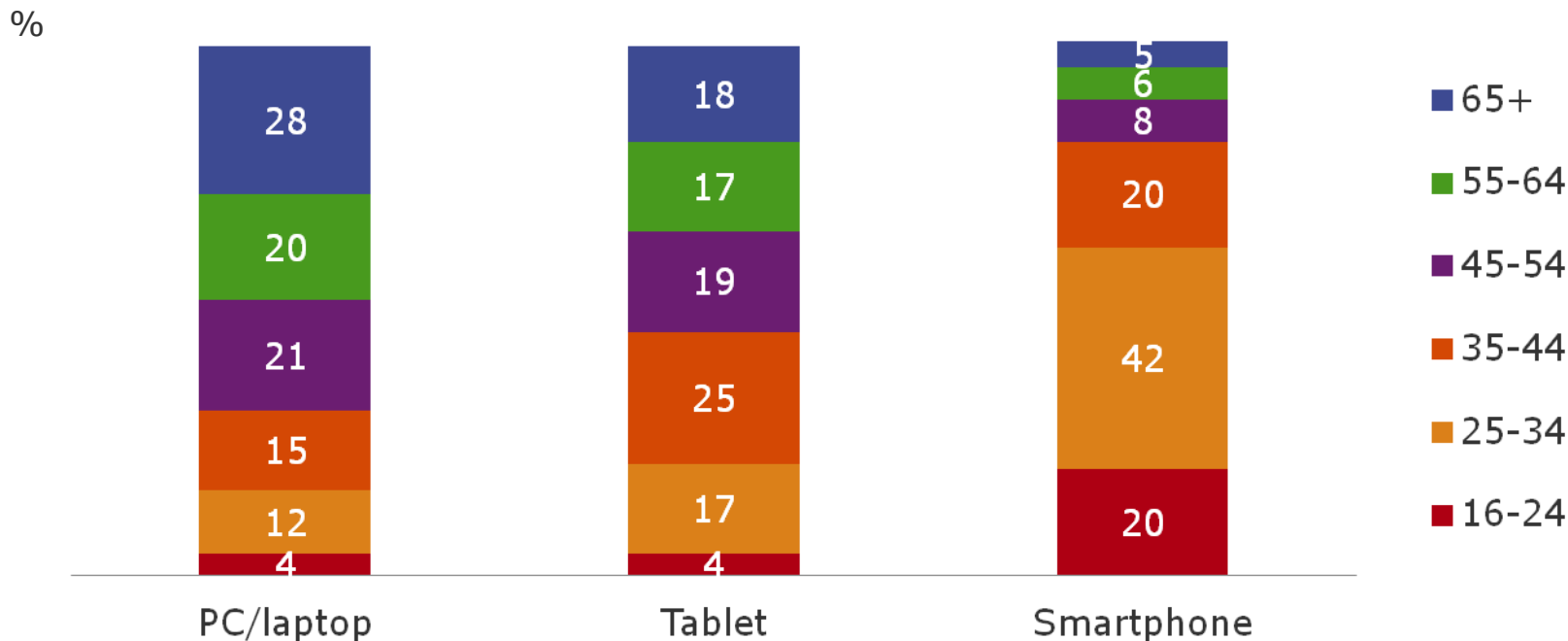
Up to a quarter completed the surveys on tablets; smartphone use rare but until now either blocked or advised not to use



Most common mobile devices were iPad (60-80%) of all mobile devices used) and Samsung Galaxy (10-25%)

* smartphones blocked
Bases: Community Life: 4,685; NCDS: 9,133; IP8: 776

Community Life: smartphones most commonly used by younger respondents (and rarely by those aged 45+); tablets used across a range of age groups



Women more likely to use mobile devices (26% versus 19% men)



Those living in shared households more likely to use tablets (22% versus 17% of those living alone)

Bases: PC/laptop: 3,625; Tablet: 951; Smartphone: 109

Smartphone users more likely to drop-out and provide shorter responses to open questions

Smartphone users significantly more likely to drop-out of the surveys (25% Community Life, 33% NCDS).

Some evidence that surveys take longer to complete on mobile devices.

Smartphone users provided far less detailed responses to open questions.

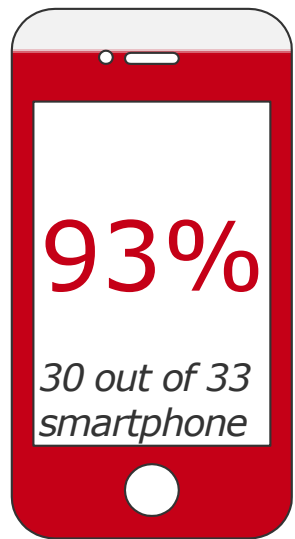
But - other data quality indicators (straight-lining, number of items selected, rates of non-substantive response) show mixed results. Further evidence/investigation required.



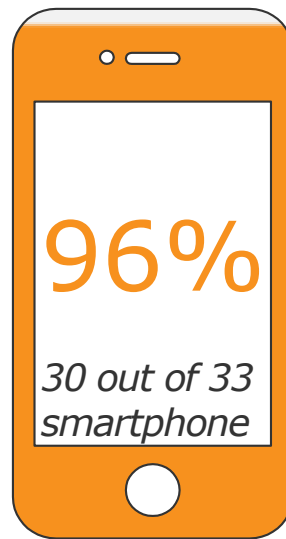
Key findings from IP8 online experience questions

Online experience questions included at end of IP8 - no work to optimise survey; wanted to assess how easily 'standard' survey could be completed by smartphone.

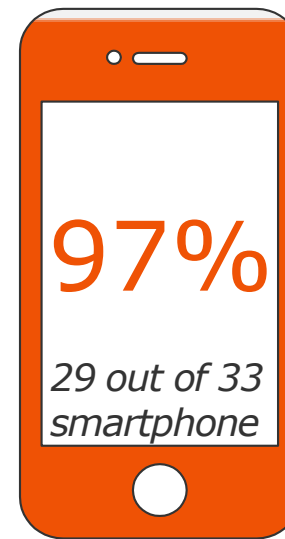
Of the 216 respondents who completed by tablet or smartphone:



...found the survey 'easy' or 'very easy'



...would use the same device again



...completed the survey at home

58% of tablet or smartphone users said they were doing something else at the same time as completing the survey (23 out of 33 smartphone users).

Usability testing

Approach to usability testing

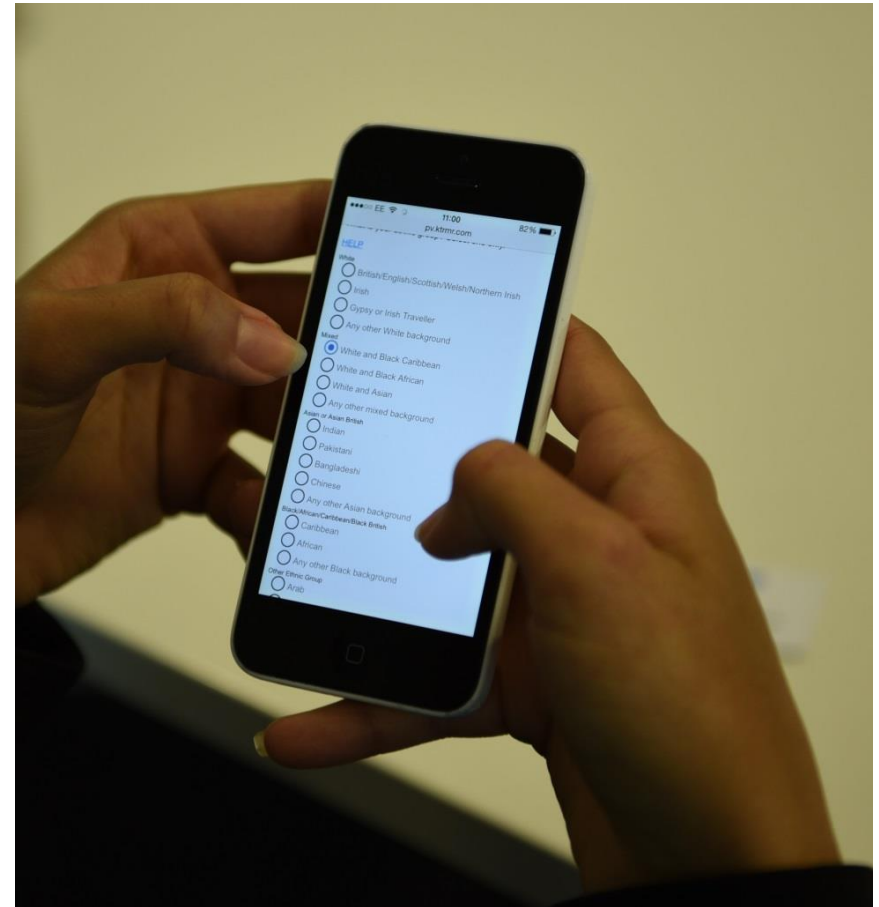
Slightly cut-down version of IP8 individual questionnaire (25-30 mins)

Eight respondents recruited to complete the survey on their smartphones; all used the internet daily on mobile devices

Interviews observed by TNS BMRB researchers

6 respondents completed the survey on iPhone, 2 used Samsung phones

Short interviews with respondents filmed following completion of survey



How did you find the experience of completing the survey on your smartphone?

Key issues emerging from usability testing and IP8 experience questions

- Survey mostly fine to complete on smartphones – few major problems flagged
- Text quite small – often need to zoom in / out
- Reduce any unnecessary scrolling (or lengthy response lists)
- Responses quite close together and also quite close to 'Help' button – review spacing
- Not always immediately clear how to move on to next question
- Bigger text boxes would be better – makes it easier to review responses
- Issues with drop-down style questions
- Important to make visible distinction between questions clearer – sometimes looks like you are getting the same thing twice
- Hard to provide detailed information when completing on a smartphone / away from home
- Decision of which device to use based on survey length, tasks required and circumstances
- Most would prefer to complete survey in one go but some would like option of completing in chunks
- Some demand for progress bars – or an explicit option to save data

Conclusion:
Lessons and opportunities for Social Research

Device agnostic design important – but further investigation needed

Expectation

Rapid increase in importance of mobile devices for online activity.

Needs to be reflected by increased focus on device agnostic survey design.

Choice

People used to using a range of internet devices for different activities.

Give people information and allow them to make an informed choice about device use.

Usability

Evidence that some surveys can be completed on smartphones without major difficulties.

But more can be done to improve the experience.

Investigation

Mobile completion still an emerging area of investigation.

Important to review data quality of responses as more people use mobile devices.

Opportunities presented for Social Research

Improved response rates

Supports inclusion of under-represented groups

Increased communication options

Short between wave surveys
(or app based data collection)

Future opportunities for new
measurement methods



Next steps – further development, testing and collaboration

More usability testing – and continuous improvement towards device agnostic design

More analysis of impact of device on data quality

Investigating across a range of surveys (longitudinal and cross-sectional) and comparing choice of device by method of contact

Conducting experiments?

- Removing recommended device guidance?
- Comparing survey in one go versus chunks?
- Shorter versus longer questions?
- Impact of question presentation on data quality?

Importance of collaboration across industry

Thank you



Questions

