



Does Survey invite Technology Impact Respondent Demographics?

The dominant methodology in use today to accurately measure online advertising campaigns uses a survey design that separates users into two groups: Control and Exposed. This design allows researchers to isolate the impact of advertising exposure on consumer attitudes on the target market by sampling portions of the audience where the ads are running. As the only difference between the groups is the presence of the advertising, any attitudinal differences between the two groups can be attributed to the exposure to the ad campaign.

Recruitment Process:

Both samples of respondents are recruited via an online survey invitation; and this survey invite can vary technologically. While the majority of the live survey sampling performed by Safecount utilizes floating layer, occasionally interstitials (Links) and, infrequently, popup is used, among several other emerging techniques.

Research Question:

As individual publisher adoption of these techniques has varied, we felt it was important to test whether a publisher with one invite technology, say floating layer, might be recruiting a different demographic profile versus a publisher employing a different invite technology, say interstitial. We set out to better understand if there is a response bias introduced by employing these various technologies.

Specifically, some have hypothesized that the pop-up invitation technology may introduce a response bias skewed to older, less educated and less affluent audiences. The logic behind this hypothesis maintains that a pop-up respondent base inherently excludes those with pop-up blocking software installed on their computers, users who tend to be younger, more affluent and more highly educated than the average web visitor. Proving or disproving this hypothesis became an important goal of this research.

Research Design:

In late 2008 we designed an experiment with the cooperation of one of the largest US portal websites comparing the respondent base of three groups – one recruited by Floating Layer, one by Link (Interstitial) and one by Pop-up. This experiment was performed within the context of a live ad effectiveness study for a campaign running on the Entertainment section of that site. This means that all respondents clicked through to the same exact five minute branding survey. The client, and survey subject, was a CPG healthy food advertiser.

There was an assumption of initial equivalence between the three groups with the exception of A) the survey invitation technology and B) one week differential between fieldwork of each of the three groups. It's important to note that no significant news events occurred across the three weeks which should have impacted the volume or demographics of visitors to the Entertainment page of this large portal. We compared the

exposed groups (those who saw the campaign being measured) among the three respondent groups.

Comparisons were made across the three groups on Age, Gender, Income, US Residency and the brand metrics Aided Brand Awareness and Purchase Intent. There were a total of 14 different profile points used in the comparison. Below are examples of the invitation for illustration purposes only.



Layer – DHTML

N = 150



Interstitial

N = 142



Pop-Up

N = 158

Findings:

Using a Chi Square test to compare the differences among the demographic profiles of each group and a two tailed T test to compare those of the brand metrics, there was only one significant difference observed among the respondent groups recruited via the three different recruitment technologies. Age, Gender, US Residency and key Brand Metrics all displayed no significant differences. There was a dependent variable detected within Household Income, however the data table below shows the primary difference being within a middle income break for the Link/Interstitial invite method – a possible anomaly.

		Link N = 142	Layer N = 150	Pop N = 158
AGE	<18	N/A	N/A	N/A
	18 - 34	11%	17%	9%
	35 - 49	30%	30%	40%
	50+	59%	53%	51%
GENDER	M	34%	38%	41%
	F	66%	62%	59%
HHI	<\$40k	32%	23%	29%
	\$40k - \$75k	18%	35%	34%
	\$75k+	28%	23%	22%
	Not Say	23%	19%	15%
US RESIDENT	US	89%	91%	93%
	Non US	11%	9%	7%
BRAND METRIC	Aided Brand Awareness	52%	43%	48%
	Purchase Intent	51%	43%	42%



Conclusion:

We recommend further invite technology testing on other websites. However, there is currently no evidence to support the hypothesis that there is a demographic bias associated with varying invitation methods, or that that the pop-up invitation technology may introduce a response bias skewed to older, less educated and less affluent audiences.