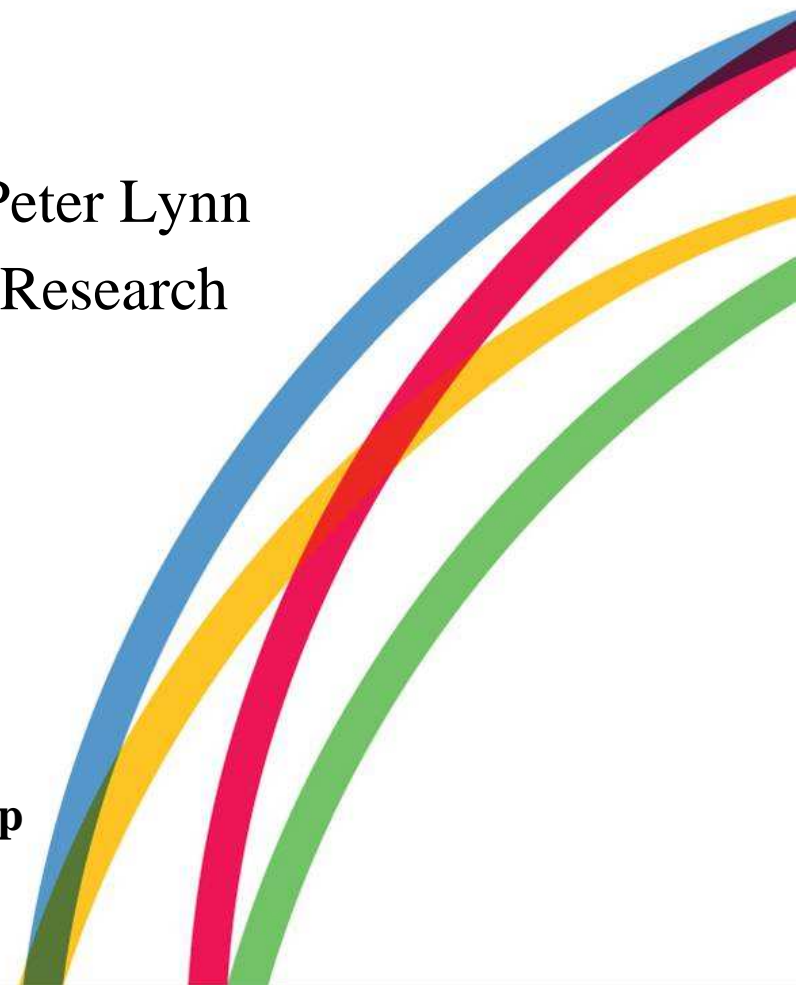


Experiments with Methods to Reduce the Costs and Increase the Effectiveness of Between-Wave Attrition Reduction Efforts

Laura Fumagalli, Heather Laurie, Peter Lynn
Institute for Social and Economic Research
University of Essex, UK

**Panel Survey Methods Workshop
Mannheim, 2010**



1.

Tracking / Tracing

Variety of possible actions to maintain or re-establish contact

Each has effects on a) costs, b) outcomes

Little is known about relative effectiveness (Couper and Ofstedal 2009)

Some are scenario-specific, some more generalisable

Need for experimental evidence

Our experiments relate to between-wave mailings

2.

Experiment 1: Updating Contact Details

Primary: Three randomised treatments:

AC: Address confirmation card (everyone should return it)

COA: Change-of-address card (only movers should return it)

N: Neither (movers should report moves by letter or phone)

Secondary: experiment with incentives:

AC: Unconditional £5

Unconditional £2

Conditional £5

Conditional £2

COA: Conditional £5

Conditional £2

3.

Return rates:

- AC, unconditional: 40.0%
 - AC, conditional: 33.4%
 - COA, conditional: 14.1%
 - N: 6.7%
-

4.

Return rates:

- AC, unconditional: 40.0%
- AC, conditional: 33.4%
- COA, conditional: 14.1%
- N: 6.7%

Wave 18 'untraced' rates:

- AC, unconditional: 0.19%
 - AC, conditional: 0.39%
 - COA, conditional: 0.07%
 - N: 0.20%
-

5.

Mean interviewer visits:

- AC, unconditional: 1.92
 - AC, conditional: 1.88
 - COA, conditional: 1.83
 - N: 1.88
-

6.

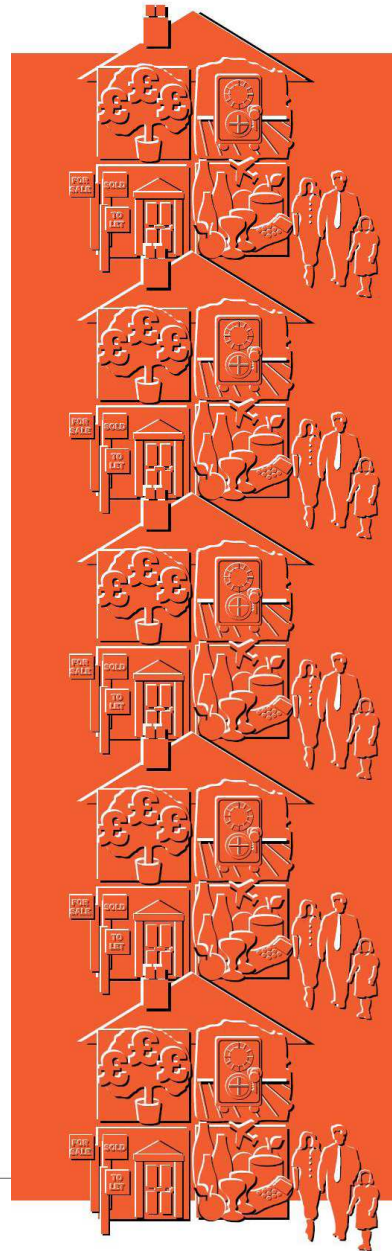
Experiment 2: Respondent Report

A report of findings is mailed to sample members between waves in the hope of emphasising the saliency and interest of the survey and hence providing motivation to co-operate at the next wave

Two randomised treatments:

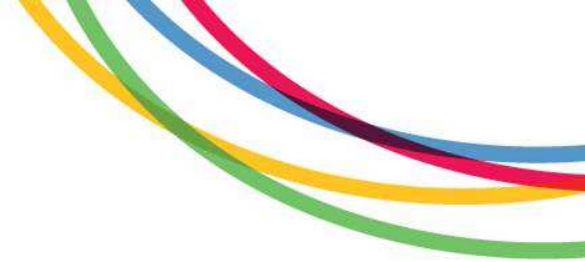
- “Standard” report of findings to all sample members;
 - Tailored report: Version 1 (“Young”) if aged < 25
Version 2 (“Busy”) if self-employed, long work hours or long commute
Version 3 (“Standard”) otherwise
-

Standard Report



Changing attitudes and behaviours

Report to Respondents - 2008




Tailored Report (young)

2008


it's all about

FEEDBACK U

respondents report 2008



I can't imagine life without a mobile phone? I just couldn't live without mine.

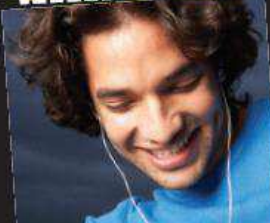


University? - Definitely. I want to go into medicine so I've got to work hard...


Are you happy with your life overall?

A large majority feel satisfied with life.

On a scale where '1' = not at all satisfied with life overall and '7' = completely satisfied with life 78% of you rated your lives as scoring 5 or higher and over 13% of you said you were completely satisfied with your lives overall.



I still live at home. Mum's great but I would like to be able to afford a place of my own




Yes, I hope to have children. But I wouldn't want more than two. Maybe only one

The changing use of technology

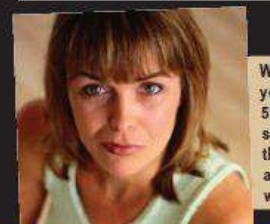
Technology is evolving fast and regular use of computers and mobile phones is becoming the norm. Almost all - 97% - of people aged 16-24 had a mobile phone in 2007, compared with 88% in 2002. Home computer use has seen a massive increase over the last decade.

Your overall satisfaction with life in 2007

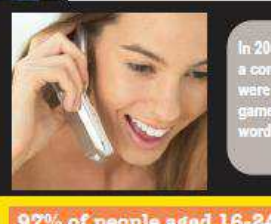
Degree of life satisfaction	Percentage
1 (Not satisfied at all)	0.8
2	2.1
3	6.8
4	13.2
5	31.7
6	32.8
7 (Completely satisfied)	13.4



Device	2002 (%)	2007 (%)
Mobile phone	88	97
Home computer	37	88



When we asked you about how satisfied you were with life compared to last year 51% of you said that you were more satisfied than last year, 13% said that they were less satisfied than last year and 36% said their level of satisfaction with life overall was about the same.



In 2007, the most common reasons for using a computer at home among 16-24 year olds were to connect to the internet (90%), to play games (57%), for educational work (66%) for word processing (54%) and hobbies (49%).

13% said they were less satisfied than last year

97% of people aged 16-24 had a mobile phone in 2007

the under 25s - what you think

9.

Tailored Report (busy)

respondent report 2008

BURNING THE CANDLE

STRESS AT WORK

- 13% of work-pressured people say they worry about job problems or find it difficult to unwind at the end of the day most or all of the time. And 50% say they do this sometimes.
- Around 6 in 10 sometimes feel exhausted or 'used up' after work, with another 2 in 10 saying they feel this way most or all of the time
- Those who are self-employed or employees who work long hours are more likely to feel stress with work than those who work shorter hours

Work is draining: 60% are 'used-up' after work

respondent report 2008

Financially optimistic...

Busy people tend to be optimistic when it comes to their own future prospects. More than three-quarters said that they were living comfortably or doing alright. Over 1 in 3 (35%) said that in one year's time they expected to be doing better than now. Busy people were also more likely to own shares, ISAs and other investments.

... but over-stretched?

Busy people were more likely to have debts, other than mortgages. Almost half had some sort of debt, compared to just 4 in 10 of other adults. People who work longer hours were more likely than others to have personal loans, credit card debts, hire purchase agreements and an overdraft, but were less likely to owe money to catalogues or other mail order companies. The average amount of money owed by the job-busy who had debts was around £10,250, compared to £6,000 for other adults. However, job-busy people are likely to be able to afford to service their debts. If we split monthly earnings into five equal groups, the job-busy are over 2 times as likely to be in the highest earning group than other workers.

Thank-you for taking part

Many thanks for giving up some of your time to help us with the survey. Your help is vital to ensure that all types of people and experiences are represented in the survey – including those who live busy lives and have work and family commitments to juggle. Remember, if you need to contact us for any reason please call our Freephone number 0800 252853

respondent report 2008

BURNING THE CANDLE

THE JOB BUSY

ARE YOU WORK-PRESSURED?

25% of workers spend about 43 hours a week at work

Outcomes: Young People

	Tailored (%)	Standard (%)
Full face-to-face interview	93.2	91.6*
Full face-to-face interview <i>or</i> shorter phone interview	94.1	94.2
No interview	5.9	5.8
n	843	856

11.

Outcomes: Busy People

	Tailored (%)	Standard (%)
Full face-to-face interview	90.3	90.1
Full face-to-face interview <i>or</i> shorter phone interview	97.5	96.5*
No interview	2.5	3.5*
n	1205	1157

Outcomes: Whole Sample

	Tailored (%)	Standard (%)
Full face-to-face interview	91.4	91.1
Full face-to-face interview <i>or</i> shorter phone interview	96.8	96.8
No interview	3.2	3.2
n	5942	5857

Summary of Findings

COA (with conditional incentive) more effective than either AC or N:

- lowest unit cost (incentive + field effort)
- lowest untraced rate at subsequent wave

Tailored report promising

- Young people more likely to do full rather than telephone interview
- Busy people more likely to do telephone interview rather than none

But

- No effect on full sample response rate, as only 25% of sample members (young or busy) received a tailored report
-

Some Discussion Questions

Key features of COA that make it more effective than AC or N?

Timing of mailing / number of mailings?

Should we attempt to tailor the report to all/most groups? Or only to low-response groups?

If all, how best to categorise the sample?

Could we tailor the address-change protocol based on predicted propensity to move?

What other aspects of design seem most promising for tailoring? (e.g. advance letters, timing of interviewer calls, change of interviewer...)
