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In this month's features: Cover: Susan Abbott
(L to R) Susan Abbott, Keith Neuman, Layla Shea, Shaili Bhatt, Colm Carey

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Editor's Vue

It's easy to become so focused on the method of research you use every single day that you forget about every other method out there. If you're a survey researcher, it seems as if there is nothing outside of surveys. If you're a social media researcher, there is no world outside of Twitter and Facebook.

But it's not good to work in a world of siloes: It stunts our growth, it's boring, and it keeps us from discovering that innovative techniques can be transferred back into our preferred methodology.

I wish every researcher had formal training in qualitative methods. Oh yes, focus groups may be based on terribly small sample sizes of six people times four groups. Sure, in-depth, in-person interviews can easily invite evaluation apprehension and observer bias. And really, how can playing with pretty pink and purple pipe cleaners really help a brand manager better understand consumer opinions?

If you've raised these objections yourself, then you've just reinforced the reason for my wish. Surveys struggle more and more with decreasing response rates and increasing data quality issues.

Fortunately, there is no better or easier way to add more creativity and fun to a survey than by taking a page from the qualitative researcher's handbook. Great questions posed in unexpected ways, combined with interesting and seemingly irrelevant props, force people to cast aside their inhibitions and their predispositions and think about their opinions in a new way. Imagine how much better your surveys would be!

This issue of *Vue* is the perfect opportunity to introduce, recall and celebrate all the great things that qualitative research has to offer. Perhaps you'll even be inspired to sign up for MRIA's QRD Day on November 27, to learn a whole lot more. I'll see you there!

Souvent, on se fie tellement à la méthode de recherche utilisée quotidiennement qu'on oublie qu'il existe plusieurs autres méthodes possibles. Si vous êtes un chercheur dans le domaine de la recherche-sondage, seuls les sondages comptent pour vous. Si vous êtes un chercheur dans le domaine des médias sociaux, rien n'existe à l'extérieur de Twitter et Facebook.

Mais cette façon de travailler en cloisonnement est néfaste. Cette approche ralentit la croissance de notre industrie, est ennuyante et nous empêche de trouver des moyens d'appliquer des techniques novatrices à notre méthodologie préférée.

J'aimerais bien que tous les chercheurs reçoivent une formation sur les méthodes qualitatives. Bien sûr, les groupes de discussion n'offrent que de très petits échantillons basés sur les données obtenues auprès de quatre groupes de six personnes. Évidemment, les entrevues approfondies en personne peuvent facilement entraîner une appréhension de l'évaluation et la partialité de l'observateur. Pouvez-vous m'expliquer comment un chef de marque peut mieux comprendre les opinions des consommateurs en jouant avec des nettoie-pipes de couleurs rose et mauve?

Si cela vous préoccupe également, vous renforcez mon désir de mettre en place une telle formation. Les taux de réponse aux sondages sont de plus en plus faibles ce qui soulève des préoccupations concernant la qualité des données collectées.

Heureusement, il est facile d'être plus créatif et de rendre un sondage plus amusant en consultant une des pages du guide de recherche qualitative. Ce guide présente des façons inusitées de posées d'excellentes questions en combinaison avec l'utilisation d'accessoires intéressants et apparemment sans rapport au sondage pour amener les gens à mettre de côté leurs inhibitions et leurs prédispositions pour qu'ils en viennent à considérer leurs opinions sur de nouveaux angles. Imaginez-vous à quel point ceci améliorerait la qualité de vos sondages!

Nous en profitons dans ce numéro du magazine *Vue* pour présenter, rappeler et célébrer tous les avantages de la recherche qualitative. Vous serez peut-être même inspiré à vous inscrire à la Journée de la Division de la recherche qualitative de l'ARIM qui aura lieu le 27 novembre pour en apprendre beaucoup plus à ce sujet. J'y serai et je vous attends!

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Letter **from the President**

Anastasia Arabia

In August, the Americas Research Industry Alliance (ARIA) held a meeting at which I had the honour of representing MRIA. With ten countries represented, we were able to discuss all kinds of topics that affect each of our countries.

Not surprisingly, the greatest challenges we all are facing are much more the same than different. How do we continue to provide value to members? How do we attract that next generation of thought leaders? What courses, conferences, workshops or webinars are appropriate to offer? How do we create more awareness with non-members? What is the best way to go about driving membership? How do we develop standards in a way that can keep up with our changing industry methodologies?

Having an alliance of MR organizations is an invaluable way to connect, to share ideas and knowledge with one another.

This year, I was asked to speak about how MRIA organizes and runs its four-year strategic plan, as well as to share a presentation on our courses and CMRP designation. ARIA is seriously considering doing its first strategic planning session, so sharing our experiences here was very valuable.

Secondly, promoting our courses and our CMRP designation with members of ARIA is a very good thing for MRIA. We have already had MR professionals in South America take our courses and, if we can continue to develop similar new markets to align with, it is very positive for MRIA. The main points of my talk can be viewed at http://bit.ly/1d0k2Qn

In a shrinking, fiercely competitive environment, MRIA is trying to ensure that you, the members, have the very best information, partners and standards at your fingertips. I believe that developing and honouring relationships with other industry associations is a big part of this process.

What are your thoughts? Are there other organizations you belong to that you think MRIA would benefit from knowing better? Please share your thoughts with me.

J'ai eu le privilège de représenter l'ARIM lors d'une réunion tenue par l'Americas Research Industry Alliance (ARIA) au mois d'août dernier. Les représentants de dix pays participants à cette réunion ont pu discuter de toutes sortes de sujets affectant nos pays respectifs.

Sans surprise, il y a de moins en moins de différences et de plus en plus de similitudes dans les grands défis auxquels nous faisons tous face. Comment maintenir notre pertinence par rapport à nos membres? Comment inciter la prochaine génération de grands penseurs à se joindre à nous? Quels cours, conférences, ateliers et webinaires devrions-nous offrir? Comment sensibiliser davantage les non membres? Quel est le meilleur moyen d'attirer de nouveaux membres? Comment élaborer nos normes de manière à ce qu'elles demeurent pertinentes malgré les changements de méthodologies utilisées dans notre industrie?

Maintenir une alliance avec les organisations de recherche-marketing est un moyen irremplaçable de communiquer et de partager des idées et des connaissances avec d'autres.

Cette année, j'ai été invité à expliquer comment l'ARIM organise et met en œuvre son plan stratégique de quatre ans ainsi qu'à faire une présentation sur les cours que nous offrons et la désignation PARM. L'ARIA considère sérieusement la tenue de sa première séance de planification stratégique et le partage de nos expériences a été très apprécié.

De plus, l'ARIM tire un grand avantage à promouvoir nos cours et notre désignation PARM auprès des membres de l'ARIA. Des professionnels en recherche marketing d'Amérique du Sud ont déjà suivi nos cours, ce qui représente d'excellentes nouvelles pour l'ARIM, si nous poursuivons la pénétration de ce type de nouveaux marchés. Mes principaux points de discussions sont affichés à l'adresse Web http://bit.ly/1d0k2Qn

Travaillant dans un environnement de plus en plus petit et compétitif, l'ARIM fait tout pour s'assurer que vous, les membres, ayez à votre disposition les meilleurs renseignements, partenaires et normes possibles. Je crois que la création et le maintien de relations avec les autres associations industrielles sont essentiels dans ce processus.

Qu'en pensez-vous? Êtes-vous membres d'autres organisations que l'ARIM aurait intérêt à mieux connaître? Faites-moi part de vos commentaires et vos idées.

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MRIA 2014 CONFERENCE

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We are proud to announce that the MRIA 2014 National Conference, "Dig Deeper and Discover" will be held from **June 8–10, 2014** in the beautiful city of **Saskatoon, Saskatchewan** – a true "destination" in Prairie Canada, and affectionately called "The Land of Living Skies."

Scores of members and other industry professionals have already blocked off next year's dates, and are eagerly anticipating a 2014 MRIA National Conference that equals or surpasses the wow factor experienced at this year's "Bridging the Gap" Conference in Niagara Falls.

Follow us on Facebook, LinkedIn and the conference website http://conference2014.mria-arim.ca/news for updates on the many opportunities that are being developed – for exhibitors, sponsors, speakers and delegates!

Saskatoon shines!

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June 8-10, 2014
SASKATOON

Message from the Interim Executive Director

John Ball, CMRP

Summer in the MRIA House

Location, Location, Location

The MRIA office is moving downtown and we are in the midst, as of this writing, of submitting offers for potential new office space to be able to make the move by year's end, if at all possible. The short-listed properties are more conveniently located and, for our members, will provide a more professional suite of resources for their use when in Toronto.

The considered spaces have been purposefully selected to provide professional meeting space and, possibly, even training space for our use (enabling us to partially offset anticipated space cost increases by bringing more of our meetings in-house). We anticipate, as well, that this move will increase the efficiency of engagement between our office staff and our partner hospitality venues for other meetings and events, and, importantly, facilitate interactions with our corporate member firms and individual members, many of whom are located in Toronto's downtown business districts.

Robo Update

Many of our members have been following with interest the focus of the media and the CRTC on the use of ADADs (automatic dialing-announcing devices) and the sanctions recently imposed against political parties using this technology in support of some recent electoral campaigns.

Several members have since made inquiries at the office as to what our industry position is on this matter and how our exempt status for live calls might apply to our use of this technology in engaging the general public in marketing research. With considerable advice from Brian Bowman, MRIA's general counsel with Pitblado Law, and Greg Jodouin, PACE Public Affairs, we have been reviewing the specifics of the ADAD rules in an attempt to come to a conclusion.

L'été dans les bureaux de l'ARIM

Tout est dans l'emplacement!

L'ARIM déménage ses bureaux au centre-ville et, alors que j'écris ces mots, nous présentons des offres pour de nouveaux locaux de bureau dans lesquels nous pourrions aménager nos bureaux dès la fin de cette année, autant que faire se peut. Nous avons établi une courte liste des emplacements les mieux situés offrant à nos membres un ensemble de ressources professionnelles améliorées auquel ils ont accès lorsqu'ils sont à Toronto.

Les locaux à bureau qui ont été retenus ont été spécifiquement sélectionnés pour offrir un espace permettant de tenir des réunions professionnelles et, autant que possible, un espace de formation mis à notre disposition (et nous permettant de compenser l'augmentation des coûts prévus pour les locaux à bureau en tenant davantage de nos réunions dans nos propres locaux). De plus, nous prévoyons que ce déménagement nous permettra d'améliorer l'efficacité de notre personnel et des événements d'accueil organisés par nos partenaires pour d'autres réunions et événements, et, plus important encore, pour faciliter l'interaction avec les entreprises membres et les membres individuels, dont la plupart sont situés dans les centres d'affaires du centre-ville de Toronto.

Mise à jour sur les appels automatisés

Plusieurs de nos membres suivent avec grand intérêt les débats médiatiques et du CRTC au sujet de l'utilisation des DCAA (dispositifs de composition et d'annonce automatique) et des sanctions imposées récemment aux parties politiques qui ont fait usage de cette technologie durant certaines des récentes campagnes électorales.

Nos bureaux ont reçu depuis des demandes de renseignements de plusieurs membres concernant la position de notre industrie par rapport à ce débat, et pour savoir si nous pouvons utiliser cette technologie en raison de notre exemption s'appliquant aux appels téléphoniques en direct à des membres du grand public dans le cadre de la recherche marketing. À l'aide des précieux conseils dispensés par Brian Bowman, avocat général de l'ARIM de la firme Pitblado Law, et Greg Jodouin, de PACE Public Affairs, nous avons examiné les éléments spécifiques des règles

The first important difference to alert you to is the position that the CRTC has taken with respect to this technology vis-*à*-vis other telephony technology, which is to label it a "nuisance." Although it doesn't sound too technical, this term is a legal descriptor that provides legislators with considerable latitude to treat violations of their ADAD rules more aggressively and to take any complaints received from the public very seriously. At the very least, this aggressive stance opens the door for those in our industry currently making use of ADADs to attract some scrutiny, notwithstanding significant work on their part to safeguard the integrity of their interactions with the public.

Back in 2005, with the introduction of Bill C-37, whose purpose was to amend the *Telecommunications Act* and establish the Do Not Call List, we asked for and received a legal opinion to promote and advance the main exemption we now enjoy with respect to live calls.

At that time, in a written position provided by Richard Mahoney, then with the law firm Fraser Milner Casgrain LLP, we were also provided with some specific information with respect to our practice and the then-current rules and regulations governing the use of ADAD technology. Here is a portion of that opinion:

"Under the CRTC's existing rules, it is only with respect to calls made with the use of automatic dialing and announcing devices ('ADADs') that market and survey research firms are required to provide identification information. However, even in those instances, market and survey research firms have the option of identifying either the person on whose behalf they are calling ***or themselves****."*

Further on in this letter, the following position was also put forward with respect to the identity of the sponsor of marketing research and its effect on introducing bias:

"As discussed in Attachment 2 to this letter, the CRTC specifically stated in the Telecom Order CRTC 94-1073, that it considered it reasonable that 'survey research firms not be required to reveal the identity of the client on whose behalf the survey is being conducted in light of the possible prejudice to the survey results which might ensue.'"

However, in 2007, the ADAD rules were updated (Telecom Decision CRTC 2007-48). One of the new elements to be introduced in the updated rules was the requirement of all users of ADAD or IVR (interactive voice response) technology to identify the *actual* sponsor of the call, early on in the communication.

Specifically, paragraph 4(e) of these rules states that "such telecommunications shall begin with a clear message identifying the person on whose behalf the

s'appliquant aux DCAA pour en venir à une conclusion, si possible.

La grande différence qui devrait vous alarmer dans ce cas est que le CRTC a pris position en faveur de cette technologie par rapport aux autres moyens de communication téléphonique, qui ont été étiquetés comme étant une « nuisance ». Même si ce terme ne semble pas particulièrement technique, légalement, ce descripteur offre aux législateurs un plus grand pouvoir pour sanctionner les violations de leurs règles en matière de DCAA et les incite à prendre les plaintes du grand public très sérieusement. Tout au moins, cette position stricte ouvre la porte aux membres de notre industrie utilisant déjà les DCAA pour effectuer des examens approfondis, en faisant tous les efforts pour assurer l'intégrité de leurs interactions avec le public.

En 2005, lors de l'introduction du projet de loi C-37, qui visait à modifier la Loi sur les télécommunications et établir une liste d'interdiction d'appel, nous avons demandé et reçu un avis juridique pour maintenir et améliorer la principale exemption dont nous bénéficions en ce qui a trait aux appels téléphoniques en direct.

À cette époque, Richard Mahoney a rédigé une déclaration de principe et le bureau d'avocats Fraser Milner Casgrain LLP nous a fourni des renseignements spécifiques concernant notre pratique et les règles et règlements régissant l'utilisation de la technologie des DCAA à l'époque. Voici un extrait de l'opinion exprimée à cette époque :

« En vertu de la réglementation actuelle du CRTC, les firmes de recherche marketing et de sondage sont tenues de s'identifier seulement dans le cas des appels effectués à l'aide de dispositifs de composition et d'annonce automatique (DCAA). Toutefois, même dans ces cas, les firmes de recherche marketing et de sondage ont l'option de l'identifier soit personnellement ou au nom de l'entreprise pour laquelle elles effectuent l'appel ou d'elles-mêmes. »

En plus de cette lettre, la déclaration de principe suivante a été présentée concernant l'identité du commanditaire de la recherche marketing et son effet sur la possibilité de partialité :

« Tel que discuté à l'annexe 2 de cette lettre, le CRTC a stipulé spécifiquement dans l'ordre Telecom CRTC 94-1073, qu'il considère raisonnable que les entreprises de recherche marketing et de sondage n'aient pas à révéler leur identité du client au nom duquel elles effectuent le sondage à la lumière de la compromission possible des résultats du sondage qui pourrait s'en suivre. »

Cependant, en 2007, les règles régissant l'utilisation des DCAA ont été mises à jour (décision de Telecom CRTC 2007-48). Un des nouveaux éléments introduits dans les règles mises à jour est l'obligation pour tous les utilisateurs de DCAA ou de SRV (systèmes de réponse vocale) d'identifier le commanditaire réel de l'appel, dès le début de la communication.

Spécifiquement, le paragraphe 4(e) de ces règles stipule que *« que de telles télécommunications doivent débuter par un message identifiant clairement la personne au nom de*

telecommunication is made. This identification message shall include a mailing address and a local or toll-free telecommunications number at which a representative of the originator of the message can be reached."

While the original legal opinion was, on the face of it, very encouraging, the current legal opinion is that we are treading on dangerous ground if we are prepared to work around the issue of upfront identification of the sponsor of research in any way.

Just before I submitted this article to *Vue*, Greg Jodouin was able to re-engage with the CRTC on this issue. The commission indicated that it does not take any issue with survey research, nor with the use of IVR, for legitimate research purposes. In November, the CRTC is expected to issue revisions to the ADAD rules and, with the public backlash against the use of the technology, we can expect these to continue the trend and include even stricter provisions for the use of the technology.

MRIA is exploring its options and may, on behalf of its members, present arguments to have the CRTC reconsider the specific use of ADAD technology for the purposes of legitimate marketing research. However, in the meantime, MRIA strongly suggests that you obtain your own independent legal advice if you're using the technology in order to ensure you are onside with the current law.

MRIA Goes to the Polls

Look to us also for furthering the efforts to address the focus that our industry has attracted regarding the effective use of our methods and our standards in their application to polling.

Following our successful and well-attended polling panel at the national conference in Niagara Falls in June, we are now in the planning stages of producing two events: a follow-up to a popular local chapter event on polling, to be held in late November in Ottawa, and another MRIA event in Toronto shortly thereafter. Details will follow.

laquelle la télécommunication est effectuée. Ce message d'identification doit comporter une adresse postale ainsi qu'un numéro de téléphone local ou sans frais permettant de communiquer avec un représentant de l'auteur du message. »

Malgré qu'au vu de l'avis juridique original celui-ci semblait très encourageant, l'avis juridique actuel prétend que nous nous aventurons dans une voie dangereuse si nous avons l'intention d'attaquer de quelque façon que ce soit la question de l'identification systématique du commanditaire de la recherche.

Tout juste avant que je soumette cet article au magazine *Vue*, Greg Jodouin est parvenu à reprendre les discussions avec le CRTC à ce sujet. La commission a indiqué qu'elle n'a aucune préoccupation par rapport à la recherche-sondage ou l'utilisation de SRV à des fins de recherche légitime. En novembre, le CRTC devrait déposer ses révisions des règles en matière d'utilisation des DCAA et, en raison de la réaction défavorable du grand public au sujet de l'utilisation de la technologie, nous prévoyons que cette tendance se poursuivra et que des conditions encore plus strictes soient imposées sur l'utilisation de la technologie.

L'ARIM considère ses options et pourrait, au nom de ses membres, présenter des arguments à l'effet que le CRTC devrait reconsidérer l'utilisation des DCAA spécifiquement aux fins de la recherche marketing. Entre temps, l'ARIM vous suggère fortement d'obtenir votre propre avis juridique indépendant si vous utilisez la technologie pour vous assurer de ne pas être en violation du droit actuel.

L'ARIM se prépare aux sondages

Soyez assurés que nous poursuivrons nos efforts pour mettre en évidence l'intérêt de notre industrie envers l'utilisation efficace de nos méthodes et nos normes s'appliquant au sondage.

À la suite du succès fulgurant et en raison du nombre exceptionnel de participants aux discussions du panel sur les sondages lors de notre conférence nationale qui a eu lieu en juin à Niagara Falls, nous planifions actuellement la tenue de deux événements : un suivi d'un événement populaire sur le sondage tenu par un chapitre local qui aura lieu à Ottawa en novembre, et un autre événement de l'ARIM qui aura lieu à Toronto peu après. Plus de détails suivront concernant ces événements.

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MAKE IT FUN AND STOP CALLING IT GAMIFICATION

Susan Abbott, CMRP

Good qualitative researchers try to make the research process fun for the participants. This strategy is used, not just because we enjoy playing with coloured markers, stickers and fuzzy pipe cleaners. There are very solid reasons, to do with research quality as well as business.

It's not always easy to make qualitative research fun and engaging. At the end of a recent project, I was pleased when the hostess said, "I could tell they all had fun." She looked at the pile of oral care products sitting on the tables and said, "This isn't a fun product. But they were all smiling and laughing when they came out of the room." I replied, "We **try** to make it fun." And here's why.

While we don't want professional participants, we do want people to be willing to participate a few times within the confines of professional standards. And we want them to speak positively about the experience to others. As an industry, we need to care about word of mouth.

Learn to listen at right angles. The most important reason to make the research experience fun for participants is that asking direct questions is not the best way to find insights. We are relatively poor analysts of our own behaviour, as modern psychological research has shown many times.

We need to engage System 1 (automatic "fast thinking"), not System 2 (effortful "slow thinking"), as much as possible. I think of this approach as listening "at right angles" to the topic of interest.

The right kind of research activity is one in which the participants forget to edit their words and forget to manage their public persona too much. Once this forgetfulness sets in, you can feel it. It starts to feel like friends talking over a beer and nachos. We reveal ourselves a little more. We reveal our foibles and fears, and we laugh. The result is a rich source of data to mine during the analysis phase of the project.

The best research activities are like games – insight games.

Game shows on television are another rich source of inspiration. One of my finest moments in qualitative was getting a group of commissioned salespeople to play a version of *Survivor* to eliminate brands and products from the lineup of things they could make money selling.

Why Fun and Engaging

Leveraging the reciprocity principle. When people are having fun, when they see you have made an effort to engage them in a positive and meaningful way, they respond. They make an effort to stay focused and to contribute. It's the reciprocity principle, and we rely on it to get our work done. The incentive may get people into the room, but it will not make them share.

Fun does not always mean laughing and being light-hearted. Sometimes, it is about listening in a different way, helping people engage their curiosity, and valuing their insights and creativity. For human beings, anything that engages our curiosity and our creativity is usually fun.

Recruiting success relies on positive word of mouth. If we want our recruiters to have a reasonable shot at finding great participants for us to engage, we need to make the research event rewarding in its own right. One method used by qualitative recruiters to build their database is to call up participants after the research event and ask if they enjoyed themselves. If the participants did enjoy themselves, then they are asked to refer others who might like to have a similar experience.

Some types of projects rely on "snowball recruiting" methods: asking one participant to recommend the next one. If participants did not find the experience valuable, why would they refer a friend or colleague?

Games for Professionals and Executives

For brainy, naturally analytical target groups, such as professionals and executives, listening at right angles is both more important and harder to do. Without careful management, they will turn any question into a survey question ("Are you looking for a list of attributes?") and provide a conventional and predictable laundry list response.

In one project, we wanted to understand what attributes were most important in redesigned enterprise software. Asking the question directly would have elicited the laundry list. Instead, we asked which legendary executive the participants would rather have leading the software development project: Steve Jobs, Bill Gates, Jeff Bezos or

Jim Balsillie? And what other leaders should be added to the team, and why? These questions generated a good discussion about whether the issue was really about design and usability (Jobs), business functionality (Gates), complete category reinvention (Bezos), or a secure and reliable back end (Balsillie). No laundry list in sight.

Executives are willing to engage in games if they see a thoughtful purpose. They like to take their brains down new pathways that give them new insights (at the same time as they give us new insights). Fun for them tends to sound like "I get something out of this, too."

Where to Get Game Inspiration

Despite having lots of games in my tool kit, I find that I need to invent new ones all the time to meet the needs of the project.

The games we have all seen in a game store are a rich source of inspiration. I have used Snakes and Ladders to identify the positives (ladders) and negatives (snakes) about service experiences. Targets and imaginary dartboards are a staple for many qualitative researchers – for example, in identifying which brand is closest to the centre, which brand is farthest away, and how this brand could get closer in. In such an exercise, the attributes for placement are implicit, not explicit. Discussion will reveal the implicit attributes and the performance of the attributes.

Stick-figure drawings with thought bubbles can be used to capture the subjective experience of interactions with others, asking, for example, "What are you saying to the doctor? What are you really thinking and feeling? What is the doctor saying to you? What is the doctor really thinking?"

Game shows on television are another rich source of inspiration. One of my finest moments in qualitative was getting a group of commissioned salespeople to play a version of *Survivor* to eliminate brands and products from the lineup of things they could make money selling. They engaged in a lot of verbal sparring with each other and completely stopped wondering what I was up to.

Bigger, more complex games are possible. You can actually put features or new products "up for sale" and give a group a small amount of play money to use to "purchase" these features for the product.

Even simple inquiries work better when they invite us to step away from our rational, analytical selves. Rather than ask, "What three product features or attributes would you most want changed?" you might instead ask, "If I gave you three wishes to make this product better, and you could wish for anything at all, what would your three wishes be?" Wishes can be illogical and irrational, so we have permission to edit less and indulge in *wishful thinking.* Attributes and features questions must be grounded in reality, but wishes can take flight.

Gamification is surely a hot buzzword today, with connotations of "fun." In practice, however, a lot of gamification involves point systems and badges rather than actual fun. Don't be fooled: We all know what real games are. Games are things that entertain (lawn bowling and Settlers of Catan), stretch our brains in fun ways (card games and Words with Friends), let us be creative (charades and Pictionary), have safe adventures (Halo and World of Warcraft), and let us laugh, tell stories and connect. Points are not the point: they are just a way of keeping the fun going.

If you want to add more fun to your research, forget downloading gamification white papers and go instead to some of the following sources for creative thinking and actual examples. There are dozens of good resources: here are a few that I turn to again and again.

Moderating to the Max: A Full-tilt Guide to Creative, Insightful Focus Groups and Depth Interviews (2003), by Jean Bystedt, Siri Lynn, and Deborah Potts. This is a go-to resource that never gets old, with dozens of creative activities for a variety of situations.

Stir It Up!: Recipes for Robust Insights & Red Hot Ideas (2011), by Laurie Tema-Lyn. Dozens of creative activities are presented in a recipe format.

Innovation Games: Creating Breakthrough Products Through Collaborative Play (2006), by Luke Hohmann. The book provides clear instructions for running insight-oriented games such as Product Box and Buy a Feature.

Thinkertoys: A Handbook of Creative-Thinking Techniques (2006), by Michael Michalko. The author has a number of books, all containing almost too many ideas.

The Creative Education Foundation, sponsor of the annual CPSI (Creative Problem Solving Institute) conference, offers training in facilitating creative problem-solving, which many qualitative researchers find works well in research settings.

Susan Abbott, CMRP, specializes in bringing insight and innovation to customer experience. She is president of Abbott Research + Consulting and co-founder of Think Global Qualitative, a global alliance of senior qualitative practitioners.

AAPOR 68TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE: REPORT TO THE MRIA EXECUTIVE

Keith Neuman, CMRP

The American Association of Public Opinion Research (AAPOR) held its 68th annual conference in Boston this past May (the 17th AAPOR conference I've attended, dating back to 1988, when it was held in Toronto). As is the case every two or three years, the AAPOR conference overlapped with the 66th annual conference of the World Association of Public Opinion Research (WAPOR), held at a nearby location (I did not attend this second conference).

AAPOR is an organization for public opinion researchers and survey professionals, and has occupied itself with professional matters, including publication of its official journal, *Public Opinion Quarterly*, and advancing research theory and methodology. It is an association of individuals (not organizations) and encompasses an eclectic mix of academic researchers (roughly 40% of the membership), commercial practitioners (about one-third), and individuals in governments, foundations and other organizations. Membership has been rising over the past decade and is now at a record high 2,439 (up 23% from 2005 membership).

AAPOR relies on volunteers for much of its substantive activity and is governed by an active council headed by a president. Administrative support is provided through an association management company (Sherwood), which includes a full-time executive director and several part-time staff (totalling the equivalent of four full-time positions).

Conference Overview

The 68th annual conference was the largest ever in terms of attendance – 1,131 paid registrations, including 236 first-time attendees. The session program included several hundred presentations, organized within 65 paper sessions, sixteen panels, seven sessions with short methodological "briefs," as well as poster sessions, a tradeshow, a book exhibit, and short courses. The conference received a record number of paper submissions (750, or 21 per cent more than the 2012 number) and was able to accommodate just over half of these submissions.

Most of the presentations focused on methodological issues, the central themes being non-probability sampling, multi-mode research, response rates, new technologies (e.g., smartphones, tablets), as well as data quality, questionnaire design, incentives, and transparency. More unusual topics included blogging about survey research, the use of Google surveys, and the history of survey research. Among the substantive sessions, the primary theme was political polling in the aftermath of the 2012 U.S. national election.

As in past conferences, participants were overwhelmingly American, although there were attendees from a dozen other countries. There were about ten Canadians in attendance, mostly from academia and government (Statistics Canada).

With so much content provided in concurrent sessions, it is not possible to provide a substantive overview of what was covered; however, one attendee has already published a notable commentary, which nicely touches on the highlights (see Jeffrey Henning's "On Trust, Truth and Transparency," at http://tinyurl.com/learr9k).

The unique dimension of this research association and its conferences can best be summed up by the opening sentences from Jeffrey Henning's blog post:

Where most research conferences giddily chase hype, the annual conference of AAPOR doggedly pursues truth. The American Association for Public Opinion Research is focused on methodological rigour, research on research, and relentless improvement.

In my view, this focus is of particular relevance to MRIA and its members in three areas.

First, the thoughtful and balanced investigation into the use of new technological platforms (e.g., tablets, smartphones) for survey research is critical to determining how best to move forward in this changing technological environment. Key to this value is that the research is being conducted and presented by user organizations or independent researchers rather than by product vendors or others who are promoting a business. Research on these types of methodology issues is not the most interesting material, but it is ultimately essential for a successful transition to new survey platforms.

Second, the association has just issued a major task force report on the use of non-probability sampling in survey research, which is now available (see "The Report of the AAPOR Task Force on Non-Probability Sampling" at http://www.aapor.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Reports1&Template=/CM/ContentDisplay.cfm&ContentID=5963). A blog overview by Jeffrey Henning is also available at (http://www.researchscape.com/blog/non-probability-sampling).

The report looks at convenience samples, sample matching, network sampling, estimation and weight adjustment methods, as well as measures of quality and fit for purpose. It draws a number of significant conclusions about the quality, limitations and uses of non-probability samples. All of this has direct relevance for Canadian research and should be actively disseminated, discussed and used by this country's research community. MRIA could play a lead role in ensuring that this process takes place.

Finally, AAPOR researchers and conferences have long maintained a keen focus on evaluating and improving the accuracy of political polling, and they may be an invaluable resource as the Canadian industry (hopefully) takes a long, hard look at its current approach, in the aftermath of the recent BC election fiasco. Leadership is needed for this type of self-examination to happen, and it is my hope that MRIA will play such a role, given the potential impact on all sectors of the research business in this country.

AAPOR Activities

Research standards and task forces. Standards have been a primary area of focus for AAPOR, and the association has become increasingly active in this area over the past several years in response to what is widely seen to be a serious decline in the value placed on sound methodology and reporting in media and other published surveys and polls.

AAPOR makes active use of task forces to address major issues facing survey research, largely relating to methodology. Each task force is composed of volunteers who are mostly senior leaders in the U.S. field (from government, academia and the non-profit sector). There are currently five active (or soon to be active) AAPOR task forces:

- on non-probability sampling
- on response rates (now under way)
- on dual frame surveys
- on address-based sampling for non-specific, named persons
- on response rates for establishment (organizational) surveys.

New task forces likely to launch in the coming year will address social media and the use of smartphones for data collection.

These task forces are substantive, and they generally produce comprehensive and useful reports, with recommendations for best practices. They warrant attention by MRIA.

AAPOR also runs a process for addressing complaints about unethical research practices. Over the past year, it has received four complaints, and one of them proceeded to an evaluation committee. This case involved the apparent incidence of "sugging," but it was not resolved because the offender could not be located.

Transparency initiative. In 2010, AAPOR launched a major new initiative intended to address the declining credibility of published polls in the heated and polarized U.S. media environment. The "transparency initiative" is based on the assumption that disclosure is the key first step in improving and demonstrating survey data quality, and it leverages AAPOR's credibility and profile to the granting of its good seal of approval as well as the censuring of bad practices. Disclosure will be voluntary.

The initiative is intended to apply to research that is released to the public, and it entails AAPOR's taking four steps:

1. offering its good name to endorse research projects that meet certain standards for public disclosure of methodology
2. building a system to archive the disclosure information, in cooperation with active researchers and research organizations
3. working with researchers and organizations that need assistance in learning how to properly document and disclose methodological information

4. educating the public, clients and the media about the value of transparency.

Since 2010, progress has been slow. A sizeable number of leading survey organizations in all sectors have signed on to participate, but the process of developing standards and protocols is still under way. A foundational documentation has now gone through eleven iterations and is apparently close to being finalized. The current draft contains 22 specific types of information that survey organizations should release (or make available on request) in order to fully disclose the details of the research (e.g., on sponsor, questions, sampling, field dates, mode).

An initial pilot test took place in the past year, and a second is planned for later this year. AAPOR is now providing monthly updates on the progress of this initiative on its website (http://www.aapor.org/Transparency_Initiative/6240.htm).

The credibility challenge is also one facing the Canadian industry, and MRIA may want to follow this initiative closely, to determine what can be learned, if not consider emulating it.

Education. AAPOR runs a number of educational activities and has been expanding these over the past several years.

AAPOR continues publication of its signature academic journal, *Public Opinion Quarterly*, and has launched a new journal, the *Journal of Survey Research Methodology.*

Survey Practice, the association's online-only journal, provides an alternative avenue for publishing research and commentary. This journal is published monthly and is now housed on the AAPOR website.

The association has expanded its online (webinar) educational offerings. Eight webinars were offered in the past year, some in collaboration with the American Statistical Association. This year, "institutional pricing" was introduced so that an organization can sign up several employees.

AAPOR continues its successful short courses, held in conjunction with the annual conference. This year, eight short courses were held on weighting sample survey data, Twitter and public opinion, mail and telephone data collection techniques, advanced focus group moderator techniques, publishing survey research, issues related to recruiting and screening, and cell telephone methodology.

Professional development is a new area, with several initiatives launched in the past year. One involved a pilot program to provide mentors to young researchers (I myself participated in this initiative as a mentor). The pilot was judged a success and will be rolled out as a full program in 2014. A second initiative focused on women's leadership in the field and included a special session at the conference.

In media outreach, AAPOR continues to be active in reaching out to the journalist community in the U.S., to educate journalists about good survey research practices. In the past year, there have been several presentations (at association meetings and at the National Press Club) and the promotion of a self-directed educational module for journalists.

President's remarks. At the association's annual meeting, incoming president Rob Santos made a few notable remarks.

- He believes that public opinion research is in the midst of a renaissance, despite the current challenges of globalization, population trends, and new technologies.
- He envisions a new focus in emerging areas such as big data and non-probability sampling.
- He will be looking for new ways to increase the value of membership, through educational and career development opportunities.
- He believes more active collaboration with other research organizations will be necessary to effectively address the pressing challenges facing the field (mentioned were the American Statistical Association, ESOMAR, WAPOR, and COSSA).

Apropos this last point, several efforts have been made in the past to establish some formal connection between AAPOR and MRIA, but with little effect to date. In large part, this outcome is due to Americans' seeing little relevance in what takes place in Canada. But AAPOR's renewed focus on collaboration may provide a new opportunity to make progress in this area. I was unable to have a discussion with Rob Santos following his remarks (which came near the end of the conference), but I can follow up on MRIA's behalf – I am personally acquainted with Rob and about half of the current AAPOR council members.

Keith Neuman, PhD, is executive director of the Environics Institute for Survey Research. The institute was established by Michael Adams in 2006 to promote relevant public opinion and social research on important issues of public policy and social change. It is through such research that organizations and individuals can better understand Canada today, how it has been changing, and where it may be heading. For more information see www.environicsinstitute.org or contact Keith at keith.neuman@environics.ca

DEBUNKING THE MYTHS OF ONLINE QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

Layla Shea

When you think about online qualitative research, what are the first things that come to mind? For some, who have not yet taken the plunge with this "not so new anymore" qualitative research tool, there are a number of negative associations. Discussions with research buyers, marketers and moderators have revealed the following misconceptions about online qualitative research:

1. We won't really know who we're talking to.
2. Respondents won't be as engaged without a personal connection to a moderator.
3. We can't see participants' expressions, so we won't understand their emotions.
4. We just can't get deep enough online.
5. Our team can't be involved without a backroom.

Myth 1: We won't really know who we're talking to.

The research is done online, but the recruiting is not. There was a recent LinkedIn discussion about moderators' show rates. Online qualitative rates were deemed to be terrible. However, a few moderators were surprised because their show rates were great. What was the difference?

Those who were getting great show rates and highly engaged participants were working with traditional recruiters' panels and with a personal (telephone) connection, as would be the case in traditional qual.

Mask your screener. Masking the screener is a good practice for *any* study, as doing so ensures that the potential participant will have no way of knowing how to answer the questions in order to qualify. This practice helps ensure that only those who truly qualify are invited to participate.

Rescreen when the research starts. Whether conducting asynchronous (not live) online qual or synchronous qual, most platforms enable simple rescreening, even if it is in the form of having participants introduce themselves and include a few details that tie back to the screener.

Myth Busted: Through proper recruiting and screening, we can be confident that we know who we're talking to.

Myth 2: Respondents won't be as engaged without a personal connection to a moderator.

There are so many opportunities to engage with a participant in online qualitative research, especially in asynchronous, because of the longer nature of the engagement.

*Engage **before** the research starts.* By engaging early, the moderator is able to get all the participants excited and feeling that they are a very important part of the project – before it even begins.

Ensure that participants have had a person to talk to live (recruiter or moderator) before the research starts.

Have a detailed invitation in the screener that explains what is expected and what the time commitment is. Also let participants know that their feedback is valuable and will have an impact.

Send an introductory email from the moderator with a very warm welcome, clear invitation details, reassurance around what is expected, as well as moderator and tech

support contact details. Figure 1 provides an example of an introductory message.

Figure 1: A Warm and Welcoming Introductory Message

Hi Erin, I'm so excited that you'll be joining the discussion tomorrow! You have been very carefully selected to provide your unique perspective. Your feedback is incredibly important to me and it could actually shape the way you shop for athletic clothing in the future! Now that's cool! ☺

*Engage **during** the research.* Once the research has begun, it is important to build rapport and continue to communicate regularly with participants. This is not the time to let your research run on autopilot!

Start with a very warm welcome message. Use a conversational tone to set the stage for what you expect of the participants. Include an introductory video from the moderator to ensure participants that they are dealing with a real person. Start with easy tasks to help build participants' confidence. Send them positive reinforcement.

Stick to time constraints. If you have told participants it would take thirty minutes, make sure that's what it will take. Not sticking to time constraints is one of the biggest mistakes of new online moderators.

Add visual appeal to your questions so that participants view something more than just long blocks of text (boring).

Ensure that your questions are interesting and engaging.

Include teasers to encourage participants to return to an asynchronous discussion.

Gamify where possible, to keep the experience fun.

Where possible turn questions into activities. The lack of engagement myth tends to be more predominant with asynchronous methods, due to the fact that the moderator is not there in real time to respond. Giving participants tasks or activities instead of questions is *far* more engaging and results in much deeper insights (although it means more analysis for the moderator).

The kinds of activities that engage include storytelling, projectives, special assignments (e.g., go shopping for me), co-creation exercises, contests and debates.

The sky is the limit. The more creative and engaging you make things for participants, the more likely they will forget they are research subjects, and the better your insights will be.

With direct questions, it can be very difficult to engage participants online. An example of a low-engagement question is *What kinds of things is brand X not doing well? Give examples.* This type of question will result in answers that are short and simple; they lack depth and are often not well thought out.

An example of what would elicit high engagement is an activity such this one: *Imagine that brand X is a person with whom you have been in a relationship. You have decided it's time to break up. Write the breakup letter, detailing your reasons.* An activity like this will result in paragraphs that are highly emotional and well thought out. This type of activity on an asynchronous discussion board makes it possible to easily slip past the conscious response of participants.

Check out the engaged response in figure 2, taken from an actual participant in an online discussion.

Figure 2: A High-Engagement Activity – The Breakup Letter

"Dear Brand X*... I want to tell you with a heavy heavy heart that I'm going to have to break-up with you! I don't want to give you the line that it's not you, it's me... because it certainly is not ME!! Sure tastes change, but **I feel you have let me down** as my favourite brand of xxxxx*. **I am no longer able to show you off as a cool friend**, because you always remain the same. **You have not changed your appearance in over 10 years** that I've been seeing you and frankly I am getting annoyed. **You also don't have the same draw you once did**... as I age gracefully **my pallet has changed and matured as well, and your taste just isn't doing it for me anymore**. You seem stale and flat... I hate change as much as the next guy but feel I am forced to move forward with my new beau Brand Y*" (Actual participant's response to breakup letter activity)

Myth Busted: The moderator's job is to ensure that participants are engaged at every touchpoint.

Myth 3: We can't see participants' expressions, so we won't understand their emotions.

People compensate when body language is removed. Have you ever heard someone say, "The movie was good, but not as good as the book"? Books, diaries and letters have been used for centuries to convey emotion. Many online moderators, as well as anyone who monitors social media, will tell you that when people know that their expressions and emotions cannot be read they are *much* more likely to compensate by expressing themselves more clearly in the written word. The use of all caps, bold, italics, acronyms, etcetera enable us to read between the lines and, when we are unsure, it's easy to probe and ask.

Moderators set the example by using emotional, conversational language. Participants tend to mimic the style of the moderator. When moderators are very professional and brief, so are participants. When moderators use bullets, so do participants. And when moderators write in a conversational style using lots of emotion, participants follow suit.

Myth Busted: Written words have been used for centuries to express feelings.

Myth 4: We just can't get deep enough online.

On the flip side of this myth, a number of clients have started to select online qual, in particular when they need to go really deep. Here are some of their reasons.

Online qual can provide context and can provide reactions in the moment. While it may seem counterintuitive, asynchronous qual enables "in the moment reactions," something that live (synchronous) qual does not as easily permit. Having participants upload videos and/or pictures and thoughts in the moment, especially using mobile tools, enables us to observe more than we would from what participants tell us in words alone.

For example, in one home-use test for a baby wash, done outside North America, designers were confused when some participants said the wash was hard to pump. Participant videos revealed that many had infant tubs on the floor inside a standup shower. There were no shelves around, and therefore many were trying to pump the wash while it was on the slippery shower floor. The videos were totally the context that the research team needed in order to understand the complaint.

Online qual provides anonymity. The cool guys and the artsy guys can talk in an online discussion about what they want to see in beer commercials, without either feeling judged. Seniors can talk about diversity and why it scares them. Teen girls can talk about their experiences with their first period and not be mortified. Anonymity provides a comfort zone in which participants can reveal their true feelings without fear of being judged. See figure 3.

Figure 3: Feelings Safely Revealed in the Anonymity of Online Qual

"I've really enjoyed this whole experience. **Somehow I found typing all these things made it easier to discuss than I ever found it to be to discuss**. It was great to hear what other people's experiences have been like as well. I think the topics were good, and really allowed me to express as much or as little as I wanted to." (Actual participant feedback)

Online is great for indirect questions. Indirect questions, as discussed in myth 2, enable us to get beyond people's rational responses. Asynchronous qualitative methods are perfectly suited to indirect questions, because the participant has the luxury of time to complete them. It is also very easy to include pictures/images and videos as part of the response, adding an additional level of depth.

Myth Busted: Studies that take advantage of online qual's unique benefits allow us to get great depth.

Myth 5: Our team can't be involved without a backroom.

The easy response is that every online qualitative research platform has a "virtual backroom." Clients have access to the discussion 24/7. They can post comments related to the discussion and even attach comments to participants' posts. The virtual backroom enables even junior team members to observe and collaborate, whereas doing a national or international project using traditional methods might not afford them this opportunity.

However, merely having a virtual backroom does not mean that clients will show up or engage in the research. Moderators do need to plan in order to optimize the client experience by doing some of the following:

- Ensure that participants have clear navigation instructions and/or a walk-through prior to starting.
- Book observation time in the clients' calendars.
- Plan "touch base" calls as the project progresses, to discuss learnings and, potentially, to tweak the guide.

Client engagement is highly dependent upon individual clients. They have to actively go to a focus group facility, where they can be more passive in their participation in the online backroom. Online qual can be more work for clients because of the amount of reading involved (it's a lot), but they can get so much out of it when they actually do take the time to get involved.

Myth Busted: Detailed preplanning and utilization of virtual backroom tools provide potential for high engagement among client observers.

Online qualitative is not right for every situation, nor is online necessarily better than other qualitative methods. However, given the unique benefits that online qual can provide (beyond the obvious erasing of geographic lines), it is a research technique that should certainly be considered for every researcher's tool box.

Layla Shea founded Upwords Marketing Solutions in 2008, leveraging over fifteen years of CPG marketing, innovation and insights consulting experience. Upwords specializes in designing "activity-based" online qualitative research, which gets below the surface to reveal deep emotional insights. Layla has completed projects for some of North America's largest brands. In 2012, she received QRCA's Qually Award for research excellence and an MRIA Award of Excellence. Layla can be reached at laylashea@upwords.ca or www.upwords.ca

AMPLIFYING PROJECTIVE ACTIVITIES **FOR NEW DIGITAL QUALITATIVE**

Shaili Bhatt

Thinner, backlit Retina Displays and other digital features have quickly become a part of our cultural and technological repertoire. Yet even with the emergence of 3-D display technology sans glasses, the screens on our laptops and phones are literally and figuratively "flat." As a medium for qualitative research, these flat screens are only as engaging as the questions and activities that we build and feature on them.

Adapting and elevating *traditional* in-person research techniques for *digital* qualitative techniques has become a valuable trick. Over the years, this trick has evolved on a parallel track with technology, and it has a capability that distinguishes basic or DIY research from more advanced qualitative research.

Creative projective activities are an important distraction in successful research; such activities provide a transition in which participants can shift gears or refocus to capture a new level of thematic detail in the research process.

In particular, detailed cognitive and perceptual activities with visual cues work very well in digital qualitative. What follows are some of my favourite ways to ask clients the most pressing questions in a more engaging and delightful way.

Caption contest. One of the best open-ended activities, with a pinch of imagination and very little set-up, is the caption contest.

After a series of in-depth, written or verbal, questions about a given topic, consider showing a picture and asking participants to share a caption to fit the scenario. Typically, it is useful to show a picture of something that directly or indirectly relates to the clients' products or services. However, the picture can be of any scenario connected to the product or service life cycle – from manufacturing, growth/awareness and distribution to use, disposal or rejection.

If possible, show a short video and invite participants to caption the scene/footage. Consider leaving the exercise open-ended and provide a brief set of rules: to be honest, creative and not too literal.

If the project warrants discussion, I also encourage participants to interact with other community members' ideas after they have posted their own thoughts. For projects that are longer than a few days, it can be helpful to implement a feature of *up-voting* across other members' ideas to (respectfully) pick a few honourable "winners" of the caption contest. It can be surprising to hear the new mash-up ideas and conversations that stem from these added efforts.

This activity is useful for unearthing relevant themes from pictures and video, and for revealing the specific language participants use to communicate the message of this medium among peers.

Sentence completion: cartoon. Internet comic strips are quite prolific and popular, with impressive readerships. Taking a page from this trend, we can cultivate a simple yet effective qualitative research activity in which characters

(usually two) interact in a scenario that, once again, reflects a key phase in the life cycle of clients' products or services.

This activity is useful for new-product exploration as well as qualitative research into positioning or communications, where we want to capture particular key words that are meaningful and motivating to customers.

For example, we could show two customers talking with one another at a grocery store shelf, the interactions of a customer and cashier at a retail store, mechanics in an auto body shop, a patient and specialist in a doctor's office, guests at a theme park – the possibilities are endless.

Above these characters, hang a couple of empty thought clouds and speech bubbles, where participants can write (based on their actual or projected experiences) what they imagine the characters are saying or thinking, and share their ideas as their responses.

Meme storyboard. By definition, Internet memes are omnipresent in our digital space, so it makes sense to embrace them in digital qualitative research. While the idea of storyboards is not new, there is a viral Internet meme called "What I Think/What They Think," which allows us to elevate the storyboard to a more powerful, self-aware canvas.

I have identified two versions of this meme that can be adapted for research purposes. First, the original version of this meme shares a *six-frame* storyboard, in which each frame projects the various perspectives of other people, each of whom plays a significant role in the participants' world.

For example, the six-frame "What I Think" meme presented in the figure on page 23 conveys the various perspectives of people who might know a fellow writer.

Projective interpretations of each frame of the topic-related responses can help to reveal participants' innermost delights, hesitations and fears, in a *social context.*

When time is more limited, I have also used a shorter, more introspective meme to foster storytelling in *three frames*, capturing the thoughts and feelings of participants' broader social circle (i.e., "they") along with the participants' own introspection. This three-frame set is also more useful for audiences that are less adept with their computers.

This activity is useful in exploratory digital qualitative research, as it provides a variety of interesting details about the images that are being selected as illustrations for each frame, along with a variety of perspectives ranging from that of the author to those of different people in his or her social circle. The activity also provides a better understanding of the author's different identities or personas in that world.

Olympic medallists activity. Usability testing can be incredibly detailed and tedious; however, it can be useful for stepping back and looking at a project or service from the broader perspective of a category or channel.

In this scenario, I recommend an activity in which a set of competitive products or services are put through the hoops in an Olympic-style competition where participants act as judges.

The prizes are in the form of the three familiar medals – bronze, silver and gold. To begin this activity, the judges jump right in by creating or selecting the precise names of the competitive events (the more creative, the better) as well as the qualifying performance criteria on which competitors can be awarded these medals in a given event.

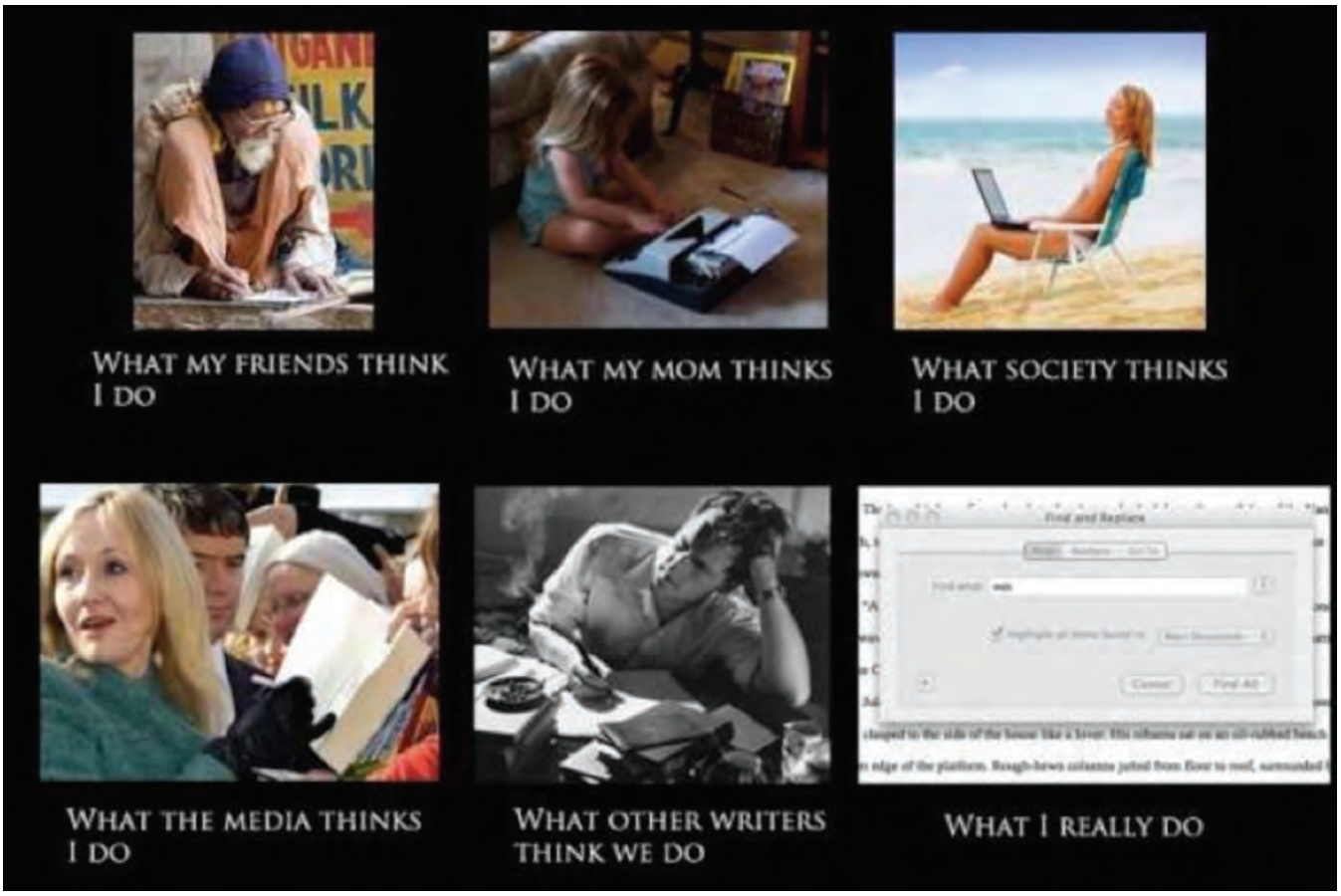
All of this set-up helps to provide a meaningful context for the resulting medals and for the foundation of this competition.

In the end, participants are asked to describe each competitor in detail, capturing the strengths and weaknesses of each performance, based on participants' *actual* or *projected* experiences with each product or service. The strongest competitor across the various events wins the gold medal – followed by the next best, winning a silver medal, and the third best, the bronze.

Spatial solar system activity. Last but not least, to gain a better understanding of the relative importance among a range of values or factors in a given process, clients can benefit from an activity featuring *spatial association*, plotting variables and measuring the variation among these values. Variables could include, for example, brands or attributes of products and services that are familiar to the participant.

Within a symbolic environment – like a dartboard or a solar system or simply a line labelled with divergent endpoints (i.e., positive and negative extremes) – such an activity allows us to measure the variation of each value.

Figure: Example of a Six-Frame 'What I Think' Meme



For example, when using the solar system as a backdrop or spatial environment for studying the relative importance of each variable, it is vital to provide a meaningful context for the various rings describing the planetary orbits around the sun and representing degrees of variation.

Consider beginning the activity with relatively finite values and end with an opportunity for participants to add on relevant variables, discovering even more combinations and insights in this process.

Digital Disruption

The bottom line is that there is room for disrupting the typical line of in-depth, text-based questioning by instead amplifying the creativity in digital qualitative research. Engaging projective activities that are amplified aspects of gamification and visual freedom can result in a refreshing new perspective that might not be shared by participants elsewhere in a digital qualitative study.

I also encourage the use of "fun questions" – simple word associations and other word game exercises, or even trivia – to create a more engaging environment in every project.

It is important to be aware of participants' expectations and available time. When writing a discussion guide, be cautious not to skimp on or over-structure activities in terms of instructions or follow-up actions, as doing so can result in less than thoughtful responses, or attrition.

Combinations of these projective activities can be beneficial in longer digital qualitative studies, where a short three-day exploration can utilize a caption contest and spatial association activities; or a longer deep-dive project could utilize the "What I Think" meme activity, along with some video journaling activities for added visual context.

I hope you will find that the out-of-the-box nature of these creative activities makes it more fun to interact with participants and that a change in pace can result in candid, insightful replies.

Shaili Bhatt, research director at C+R Research (Chicago), has, since 2004, conducted qualitative for clients in CPG, travel and entertainment; she is considered one of the industry leaders in digital qualitative research. Shaili currently serves on the QRCA board of directors (2012–2014). C+R Research takes a more comprehensive approach to qualitative and quantitative research, combining traditional and non-traditional methodologies to discover the essentials of brands and consumer behaviour. Shaili can be reached at shailib@crresearch.com

EVOLVING **FOCUS GROUPS**

Colm Carey

Despite the growth of online, mobile and other new generation, research-friendly technologies, marketers still find that one of the best ways to get the insight they need to build and manage successful brands is to sit around a table and go on a voyage of exploration with their customers and target consumers.

When qualitative research started out, we used to run most of our groups in family homes. The idea was that a group of local people meet in familiar, homely surroundings to chat about their lives. In most cases, the researcher travelled alone or with a single client representative.

As the business became more established and more people got involved, we lost this cosy ethnographic approach and moved into hotels where audiovisual equipment, cameras and other technical paraphernalia could be installed. In doing so, we facilitated the process but lost some of its authenticity.

The in-home model had its drawbacks: The homeowner's TV and video equipment was sometimes not up to the job. There was also the problem of resistance to shifting furniture around, which might expose junk behind the couch and bare patches in the carpet. Add to this the reluctant family members who had been exiled to the kitchen or garden shed to wait out the group, and the potential for stress becomes evident. Marching half a dozen suited and booted clients into a family home was just not on, so we were evicted and hotels became the norm.

As more people became interested in observing focus groups, based on the *seeing is believing* approach, the need for closed-circuit TV and observation facilities increased, leading to the opening of viewing facilities. The move from consumer as subject to consumer as object was complete.

As researchers, some of us liked the facilities; on the basis that the technology worked, the rooms could be rearranged to suit our way of doing things, and the facility staff treated us pretty well. It also gave us a chance to showboat our moderating skills – or, on occasion, to crash and burn spectacularly.

The downside of viewing facilities was that the consumer was now in a very artificial environment, observed via the mirror, being videotaped and audio-recorded – in a way that sometimes felt part of a circus, with the moderator as ringmaster.

From the researcher's point of view, the luxury of having time to go back through recordings and turn things over in the mind before reaching conclusions largely disappeared. Instant debriefs in the backroom became common and, as many eyewitness studies have proven, everyone sees things from a different and subjective perspective in the immediate aftermath of an incident. It is only when content has been properly analysed that the real picture emerges.

Researchers have begun to rethink the way viewing facilities are set up. Facilities typically used a boardroom table layout, with bright lights and hard chairs, modelling a conventional corporate meeting room. Now, they are looking to recreate a more domestic environment designed to put the consumer's comfort back at the centre of the process, on the basis that a better physical environment

elicits richer insight. The move is not motivated simply by concern for the consumer; it is a response to a pendulum swing that has seen researchers and clients looking for ways to get back into the consumer's world rather than have the consumer come to their world.

The redesign of viewing facilities is helped by developments in large, high-quality flat-screen TVs and discrete cameras that can record in low light. The installation of expensive two-way mirrors is no longer essential, allowing for more flexibility in layout and design. In consequence, a building used for other purposes during the day can easily morph into a viewing facility at night. As we strive to get closer to the real lives of consumers, it seems that the time is right for enterprising, hard-pressed homeowners to generate some cash from their asset by bringing qualitative research back to where it all began.

Group Dynamics

No matter what venue you decide on for your focus groups, you will find that all groups go through the same stages. If a group is going badly, it can be because it is stuck at an unresolved stage. By knowing the stages of group development and spotting where the obstacle lies, you can overcome it so that the group can move on and generate the insight you need.

Forming. This stage occurs early in the session or as soon as people meet in the reception area. People look for things they have in common and chat superficially. If you have people wait in a sterile waiting room environment where nobody speaks, the forming that takes place can be awkward, meaning that it will have to be undone and redone when the group comes into the discussion room.

It's a good idea to have in the waiting area a host who can introduce the group members to each other and act like a TV show warm-up act so that the group has formed before the discussion time begins. It also helps if the moderator drops by to say hello, welcome participants, and let them know proceedings will soon begin.

In the more formal environment of the discussion room, the moderator might ask non-judgmental behavioural questions at this stage, to help proceedings get under way. I never begin by asking people to tell about themselves, because I find doing so makes for an uncomfortable atmosphere. You will find out where people work, how many kids they have, and other personal details as you go through the discussion. Starting what should be a non-directive, exploratory process with round-table introductions always seems to me to be a bad idea. You wouldn't do it at a dinner party and yet, by the time coffee is served, all the guests know everything about their fellow diners.

Storming. This is the stage at which the participants start to figure out who is who in the group. It also allows the moderator to see who is dominant, who is wise, who is funny, and who is quiet. This is gold for moderators, as it allows them to use the different personalities around the table to manage the discussion process.

At this stage, it is important to allow group members to resolve minor disagreements themselves, as doing so avoids creating dependence on the moderator's authority. It is good to show people that it is safe to disagree and that all points of view are valued.

Norming. When the group reaches this stage, it is settling down. Individuals take on specific roles within the group and understand how things are going to work for the next hour or so. The discussion is quite general but starting to become more focused. The moderator's role as facilitator and guide, rather than authority figure or judge, is established and understood. The group is now ready to perform.

Performing. The group wants to work at this stage. The moderator can get into the main focus of the discussion, guide and introduce projective techniques and other tasks. Sometimes, when a new task is introduced, group participants may revert to the norming or storming stage to overcome anxiety or confusion as to what is required of them. This situation is not unusual, and the group will arrive back at the performing stage with guidance.

If confusion or anxiety are not addressed and resolved, either the group will begin to go off on tangents or it will turn on the moderator with dismissive or aggressive comments and behaviour such as silence, turning away, looking at the time, or questioning the value of the discussion.

Mourning. This is the end of the group, a phase sometimes overlooked due to time constraints. The group dynamic that has formed needs time to break up. This is a time for people to reveal if they have anything more to say. It is also an opportunity for mutual congratulations and thanks, during which the moderator reassures the group members that they have been really great to work with. The group members express the hope that they have been helpful and acknowledge having enjoyed the session. That done, everybody goes home happy.

Simple Solutions

Sometimes, the simple things are best. At a briefing for a design project we at The Research Centre carried out, a heated debate took place among members of the client team. Some of the team believed that an element of the existing pack design was iconic and a major part of the brand's DNA. Others argued that keeping it would restrict the designer's freedom and get in the way of establishing a dynamic new identity. The argument flowed back and forth until we came up with a solution.

At the start of each focus group, we gave participants pencils and sheets of paper (how very analogue). We then called out a number of well-known brand names, including the client's brand, and invited participants to draw what they could recall of the brand's visual imagery. While people accurately drew key elements from each brand's visual identity, none included the design element at the centre of the argument.

This simple approach put the argument to rest, and the insight generated during the course of the focus groups resulted in a design brief that gave scope to the designer to create a new, dynamic visual identity that greatly enhanced the on-shelf impact of the brand.

Grave Matters

One of the more unusual projects on which we recently worked was a job for Dublin's largest cemetery. Glasnevin (www.glasnevintrust.ie) was established back in 1828, with a mission to allow the burial of anyone, regardless of religious persuasion. Described by the city's citizens as the "dead centre of Dublin," the cemetery is the final resting place of over one and a half million people, ranging from aristocrats and patriots to the most humble pauper. It is a truly democratic place and still in use today.

Glasnevin is run by a board of trustees in an unbroken line stretching back to its foundation. It is not just a graveyard but also houses an impressive museum and genealogy centre, providing useful resources for people looking to trace their Irish ancestry. Cemetery records can be accessed both on-site and online.

The outcome of our work was a clever advertising campaign highlighting the historical importance of Glasnevin and inviting people to explore the cemetery and to take part in tours and re-creations of historical events. The ads play on some of the unusual names of people buried in the cemetery.

Not your everyday project, but something different and rewarding, both from our point of view and from that of the client.

Colm Carey hails from beautiful Ireland. He holds an honours degree in psychology and a diploma in counselling and psychotherapy. Colm established The Research Centre Limited (www.theresearchcentre.ie) in 1991 and has carried out research projects throughout Ireland, the U.K., and the U.S. He is the only Ireland-based member of the United States–based QRCA and is also a member of ESOMAR and the Marketing Institute of Ireland. Colm can be reached at colm@theresearchcentre.ie

MRIA Institute of Professional Development

COURSE CALENDAR FOR 2013–14 IS POSTED ON OUR WEBSITE AND NOW ACCEPTING REGISTRATIONS THROUGH OUR PORTAL

Grace Woo, Manager Member & Board Relations

Although you don't have to be a member to register and attend, substantial discounts are available to members, which often, with just two courses, cover the cost of the membership itself. And of course, with MRIA membership, you are afforded many other benefits to you personally and also to the marketing research industry as a whole by funding projects that just would not be possible without everyone chipping in a little bit.

Simulcasting over the Internet (New This Year)
For members outside of the city where the course will be held, many of the courses will also be simulcast. Registrants of this option have the same opportunities as those attending in-person to participate live from their home or office and to ask the instructor questions.

The following table is a **partial** list of our course schedule. Please see for details on all the courses and login to www.mriaportal-arimportail.ca **to view the entire schedule**, qualify for **early bird rates** and to register:

Register early to avoid disappointment!

Course	Start Date	Deadline to Register	Location	Other comments
203-Statistique en recherche marketing & Analyse de données	October 16, 2013	October 9, 2013	Montreal	
101-Introduction to Marketing Research	October 23, 2013	October 16, 2013	Toronto	simulcast
Gamification	October 31, 2013	October 24, 2013	Edmonton	
201-Marketing Research Design	November 1, 2013	October 25, 2013	Toronto	simulcast
202-Questionnaire Design	November 5, 2013	October 25, 2013	Toronto	simulcast
402-Advanced Analysis Techniques (2 days)	November 7, 2013	October 31, 2013	Toronto	
101-Introduction to Marketing Research	November 12, 2013	November 5, 2013	Ottawa	simulcast
Moderator's Tool Box: Mapping & Projective Techniques	November 20, 2013	November 13, 2013	Toronto	MAX 6 participants
102-Ethics	November 28, 2013	November 21, 2013	Toronto	simulcast
Communicating Research Results with High Impact Graphs	December 5, 2013	November 28, 2013	Toronto	
303-Marketing Management for Researchers	December 10, 2013	December 3, 2013	Ottawa	simulcast
CMRE Prep (2 days)	January 7, 2014	December 31, 2013	Toronto	simulcast
Market Segmentation Research	January 23, 2014	January 16, 2014	Toronto	
204-Qualitative Marketing Research	February 4, 2014	January 28, 2014	Toronto	simulcast
Writing Results	February 11, 2014	February 4, 2014	Toronto	
203-Marketing Research Statistics and Data Analysis	February 18, 2014	February 6, 2014	Ottawa	
Measuring Customer Satisfaction, Loyalty & Retention	February 20, 2014	February 13, 2014	Toronto	
Mesure de satisfaction et de fidélisation de la clientèle	February 21, 2014	February 14, 2014	Montreal	
401-Online Research	February 26, 2014	February 19, 2014	Toronto	simulcast
204-Qualitative Marketing Research	March 4, 2014	February 25, 2014	Edmonton	simulcast
403-Advanced Qualitative Marketing Research	March 5, 2014	February 26, 2014	Edmonton	simulcast
Categorical Data Analysis	March 18, 2014	March 11, 2014	Toronto	NEW
302-Market Intelligence	April 3, 2014	March 27, 2014	Toronto	simulcast
Semiotics	April 8, 2014	April 1, 2014	Toronto	simulcast
Measuring Customer Satisfaction: Advanced	April 17, 2014	April 10, 2014	Toronto	
Conjoint Analysis	April 22, 2014	April 15, 2014	Toronto	
SPSS: Introduction	April 23, 2014	April 16, 2014	Toronto	
SPSS: Advanced (2 days)	April 24, 2014	April 17, 2014	Toronto	
301-Competitive Intelligence	April 29, 2014	April 22, 2014	Toronto	simulcast
403-Advanced Qualitative Marketing Research	May 6, 2014	April 29, 2014	Toronto	
Communicating Insights	May 13, 2014	May 6, 2014	Toronto	
CMRE Prep Course (2 days)	June 3, 2014	May 27, 2014	Toronto	simulcast

QUALITATIVE RESEARCH REGISTRY (QRR)

In accordance with federal privacy laws, MRIA's Qualitative Research Registry (QRR), or Registre de la recherche qualitative (RRQ) in French, was created to provide an ongoing, user-friendly vehicle for tracking those who do not want to be contacted or should not be contacted for qualitative research studies.

QRR is a comprehensive do not call list

of those who have recently participated in qualitative research studies, those who have asked not to be contacted further, and those felt by recruiters and moderators to be best served by not being contacted. These respondents are marked as "do not call" in accordance with established MRIA Standards.

All field and full-service companies are encouraged to submit a list of their qualitative respondents for entry into the QRR system each month, including those who do not wish to be contacted.

Participating firms will receive monthly updates of respondents to be screened from qualitative recruitment samples. QRR works effectively to increase the quality and integrity of the qualitative research process, by serving as a control to ensure respondents are not contacted more frequently than is necessary.

However, the ability of the system to function effectively is directly related to the co-operation received from firms who provide recruitment services. If you are a full service research firm or field supplier that is currently participating in the Qualitative Research Registry program – thank you very much and keep up the good work!

If you are not currently participating, please get involved! If you are interested in submitting to QRR, please visit the MRIA website at http://mria-arim.ca/about-mria/qualitative-research-division/qualitative-research-registry for further explanation and guidance on how to submit qualitative research participants' names, along with the required electronic forms.

QUALITATIVE RESEARCH REGISTRY SUBMISSIONS SHOULD BE SENT TO: QRRQ@MRIA-ARIM.CA

Submission templates and payment forms can be found at http://mria-arim.ca/about-mria/qualitative-research-division/qualitative-research-registry-fees

THE FOLLOWING COMPANIES HAVE SUBMITTED NAMES TO QUALITATIVE RESEARCH REGISTRY FOR APRIL 2013

ONTARIO

Barbara C. Campbell Recruiting
Consumer Vision
CRC Research
Dawn Smith Field Management Services Inc.
Opinion Search
Quality Response
Research House Inc.
The Logit Group Inc.
I & S Recruiting

QUEBEC

MBA Recherche
The Logit Group Inc.

WEST

Barbara C. Campbell Recruiting
CRC Research
Research House Inc.

Rules of Conduct and Good Practice for Members of the Marketing Research and Intelligence Association (2007), Section C Rules Specific to the Conduct of Qualitative Research:

20. Recruiters should provide accurate data to the Qualitative Research Registry, where such exists, on a consistent basis and check all respondents against the Registry.

21. Moderators buying recruiting services should give primary consideration to recruiting agencies which submit to the Qualitative Research Registry, where such a service exists, on a regular and ongoing basis.

RESEARCH REGISTRATION SYSTEM

Since 1994, the RRS has allowed respondents to verify the legitimacy of a research project; helped legislators and regulators differentiate between legitimate survey researchers and unscrupulous telemarketers, phishers and scammers; and protected the industry from unnecessary and unwanted regulation.

MRIA's Research Registration System (RRS) has long been a cornerstone self-regulatory mechanism for the marketing, survey and public opinion research and market intelligence industry in Canada.

Combined with other self-regulatory initiatives such as our Code of Conduct and Good Practice and our Charter of Respondent Rights, the RRS has paid huge dividends in protecting the industry's positive reputation and good name with Canadians.

All Gold Seal and Basic Corporate Research Agency members of the Association are obligated to register all of their research projects with the RRS, and Client-Side Corporate members are encouraged to require their agency suppliers to do so.

MRIA's Research Agency Council provides strategic, policy-level oversight of the Research Registration System, and receives aggregate data-only on the System's performance.

Questions about the Research Registration System should be addressed to **Erica Klie**, Member Services & Events Coordinator, at 1-888-602-6742 or 905-602-6854, ext. 8727 or eklie@mria-arim.ca or, in her absence, Interim Executive Director, **John Ball**, CMRP at ext. 8724 or jball@mria-arim.ca.

Rules of Conduct and Good Practice

For Members of the Marketing Research and Intelligence Association (2007):

Section A (5)

Members must uphold the MRIA Charter of Respondent Rights.

Charter of Respondent Rights, Article 2

You can verify that the research you have been invited to participate in is legitimate in one of two ways. You can either obtain a registration number and the MRIA's toll-free telephone number for any research registered in the MRIA's Research Registration System or you can obtain the contact information of the research director who is conducting the study.

THE FOLLOWING COMPANIES HAVE REGISTERED RESEARCH PROJECTS WITH THE RESEARCH REGISTRATION SYSTEM DURING APRIL 2013:

GOLD SEAL CORPORATE RESEARCH AGENCIES

Academica Group
Advanis Inc.
Advitek Inc.
BBM Analytics
Blue Ocean Contact Centers
Campaign Research
Canadian Viewpoint Inc.
Cido Research
Consumer Vision Ltd.
EKOS Research Associates Inc.
Greenwich Associates
Harris/Decima Inc.
Head Count
Hotspex Inc.
Ipsos Reid
MBA Recherche
MD Analytics Inc.
MQO Research
Nanos Research
NRG Research Group
Opinion Search Inc.
R.A. Malatest & Associates Ltd.
Research Dimensions
Research House Inc.
Tele-Surveys Plus / Télé-Sondages Plus
The Logit Group Inc.
TNS Canada (Canadian Facts)

BASIC CORPORATE RESEARCH AGENCIES

Barbara C. Campbell Recruiting Inc. (BCCR Inc.)
ERIN Research
Nexus Market Research Inc.
Quality Response Inc.

http://mria-arim.ca/about-mria/research-registration/research-registration-overview

PEOPLE AND COMPANIES IN THE NEWS

- To read more news online, or to submit your "People and Companies in the News," simply fill out our online form at http://mria-arim.ca/news/people-and-company-news.
- The *Vue* editorial team reserves the right to select and edit your submission for appearance in *Vue*.
- MRIA is neither responsible for the accuracy of this information nor liable for any false information.

Vision Critical

Online community specialist Vision Critical has appointed **Ryan Merkley** as Managing Director and Senior Vice President of its Public Affairs practice. Merkley joins from non-profit organization Mozilla Foundation, where he served as Chief Strategy Officer. Prior to this, he held senior communications roles at the City of Vancouver, the City of Toronto and for former Toronto Mayor David Miller. He currently serves on a variety of political, environmental and business Boards, and is a founding member of TEDxToronto, the city's annual event promoting ideas and innovation. Website: www.visioncritical.com

ORC International

In the U.S., customer and employee satisfaction specialist ORC International has appointed **Frank Francese** as Senior Vice President, in charge of its expert advisory network Intota. The network provides access to a B2B database of more than 10,000 screened peer-recommended experts across a wide range of industries, to help companies recruit the right individual for their information needs. Website: www.orcinternational.com

Q-Fi Solutions

Canadian market research software development firm Q-Fi Solutions has appointed **Romain Baczyk** as Executive Vice President of Global Sales, with a remit to build and oversee sales initiatives and establish strategic partnerships. Toronto-based Q-Fi, which is part of online and telephone data collection agency The Logit Group, develops data and insight collection tools for the market research sector. Baczyk joins with a background in software sales and business development. For the past five years, he worked at Confirmit, where he latterly served as Senior Director of Sales, prior to which, he was Sales Manager at Voxco. Website: www.qfisolutions.com

Research Now

Melanie Courtright is promoted to Senior Vice President of Client Services at Research Now and will lead the company's operational team in the Americas, responsible for the United States, Canada and Latin America. With nearly two decades of experience in all facets of research, including ten years focused on digital data collection, Melanie will focus on continuing Research Now's history of delivering the highest levels of client satisfaction and upholding the industry's highest quality standards. Melanie will also serve as a member of the company's Global Client Services Leadership Team, focusing on key areas of global coordination and alignment across the various business functions. Melanie Courtright is based out of Research Now's headquarters in Plano, Texas.

ESOMAR

Global MR industry turnover grew by 3.2% to $39.1 billion in 2012, according to **ESOMAR's latest Global Market Research Report**. During the year, strong performance was seen in Asia Pacific, Africa and Latin America, countering "sluggish" performances elsewhere. Europe saw 21 markets decline in 2012, as turnover for the region dropped 1.4% to $15.6 billion. The exception was Germany, which bucked the trend with growth of 5.8%. The North American research sector recorded a third successive year of growth, with turnover increasing to $14.5 billion. In Latin America, growth surged 5.6% to $1.9 billion, making it the best performing region in 2012 – last year's top performer Asia Pacific saw turnover up 4.8% to $6.3 billion. Website: www.esomar.org

Ipsos Names Leader for Audience Measurement Group

Ipsos has appointed **Evan Borak** as Senior Vice President of its media, content and technology division Ipsos MediaCT in the U.S., and Head of its Audience Measurement Group (AMG). Borak joins after working as a consultant to the management teams of a number of media, entertainment and tech companies. Prior to this, he served as COO at marketing services agency Brand Connections; co-founded digital media firm The Rail Network (acquired by CBS Corporation); and worked as VP, Strategic Development and General Counsel at TSI Broadband (acquired by Intellispace). Website: www.ipsos.com

Fresh Intelligence Hires Accomplished Researcher for NY Office

Rebeca Fucci joins Fresh Intelligence to run their U.S. business. Prior to joining Fresh Intelligence, Rebeca spent thirteen years as VP of Research at Ipsos ASI in Norwalk, Connecticut. Rebeca brings immense experience in optimizing advertising and cross-platform campaigns amidst a rapidly evolving advertising ecosystem. Her decade of analytical experience spans pre-testing, tracking, qualitative, quantitative, behavioural and sales data, providing value-added analytics and insight across diverse sectors and industries. Rebeca will report to SVP Josh Cormie and be based in New York. Website: www.freshintelligence.com

EVENTS
MARK YOUR CALENDAR

MRIA Chapter Events

Oct. 3, 2013
Toronto: Unlocking the Mystery of Canadian Millennials

Oct. 16, 2013
Edmonton: Sharon Bell & Tema Frank

Oct. 17, 2013
Calgary: Sharon Bell & Tema Frank

Oct. 24, 2013
Ottawa: Fad or Follow: Making Sense of the Ever Changing Research and Technology Landscapes

Nov. 6, 2013
Atlantic: The Importance of Being Neutral

Nov. 21, 2013
Ottawa Public Opinion Polling: Is there a Future for the Discipline?

Jan. 30, 2014
Net Gain 8.0
Toronto

June 8–10, 2014
MRIA National Conference
Saskatoon SK

Partners Events

Oct. 7–10, 2013
CASRO Conference
Los Angeles

Oct. 30, 2013
ESOMAR Best of Canada
Vancouver

Oct. 16–18, 2013
MRA CRC Conference
Dallas

Oct. 16–18, 2013
QRCA Congress
San Diego

Oct. 16–18 2013
TTRA Conference
Ottawa

Chapter Chat ... as the seasons change

Welcome to the autumn edition of Chapter Chat! This is the fourth time that *Vue* magazine has devoted an entire section to items of information that the individual chapters wish to share. The ultimate goal of this piece is to include all seven chapters in every issue. Although that objective has yet to be reached, five chapters are represented here.

In June the **Prairie Chapter** held its AGM featuring presentations by Angela Bohonos of the University of Manitoba and Mike Krywy of Red River College, while over the summer our board worked on a number of initiatives for the upcoming twelve months. We're particularly thrilled that next year's national conference will be back in the prairies (Saskatoon, June 8–10). Planning has already begun for this not-to-be-missed event under the guidance of Corrin Harper, the 2014 conference chair.

Meanwhile, the **Alberta Chapter** has welcomed a new board member – Renee Matsalla – who will be working with Barry Davis and Linda Affolder on our communications team. Renee belongs to a student group at the University of Calgary's Haskayne School of Business called *Alliances in Marketing*. Renee's membership on the board serves to strengthen MRIA's relationship with the student community as well as to provide her with valuable marketing and communications experience.

Renee Matsalla

The **BC Chapter** now has a Twitter account (@BCMRIA) and a Facebook page (www.facebook.com/bcmria). Please follow our feed and like our page! Also, we're hosting an event on October 30th at Simon Fraser University in conjunction with ESOMAR that features several talks by nominees for ESOMAR'S research excellence award. Speakers will discuss how to blend traditional MR techniques with social media and mobile devices.

Not to be outdone by Alberta, the **Atlantic Chapter** has welcomed three new board members – Elizabeth MacRae (ALC), Claude Perreault (CRA), and Spencer Wood (Spielo). We want our members to know that we're always looking for more volunteers, so if you're interested, please contact us.

Elizabeth MacRae

Claude Perreault

Spencer Wood

In the wake of recent provincial elections where voting results ran contrary to polling results, the **Ottawa Chapter** has put together a mini-conference designed to shed light on the future of public opinion polls and whether or not such research is still useful. This half-day conference has been organized for the afternoon of November 21st with a moderator from Phoenix Strategic Perspectives and commentators from Canadian Press, Harris/Decima, Ipsos Reid, and ThreeHundredEight.com, followed by a social hour with wine and cheese.

Members and guests are welcome at all MRIA events: Check our online calendar at http://mria-arim.ca/events-awards/calendar for more information on all events and how to register. Members receive emails directly with event updates, so please check your inboxes for instructions how to register for the October and November events!

QUALITAS

Experience as Incentive

Dennis Talon
Ipsos Reid UU

I recently had a simple exchange of pleasantries with a respondent at the conclusion of a project; it was brief but stuck with me. I thanked him for participating, he thanked me for providing an opportunity to share his opinion – "it's not often people ask *me* what I think." Looking back at his responses, it was obvious that his gratitude was sincere. His responses were thoughtful, insightful, and entertaining. It wasn't simply that we asked his opinion that elicited such great feedback, though: it was how we asked.

Some methods are more conducive to providing the type of experience that will enhance participation. The exchange above was from an online AutoEthnographic approach which utilizes creative activities to engage respondents. Whenever we conduct studies using this method, I am elated by the level of participant engagement; as we all know, high levels of participant engagement will result in better data.

That being said, even more traditional methods can be infused with elements designed with the respondents' experience in mind. Whether it is in-group activities or simply getting respondents to work in teams, the more creatively engaged your respondents are, the better it will be for the process.

Qualitative approaches have a unique ability to provide an engaging, creative, and reflexive experience for respondents. A platform where individuals can engage in discussion and reflect on their experiences can be highly rewarding. Additionally, they often even get to hear that other people share idiosyncrasies that they thought only they worried about; it's therapeutic while also providing us with valuable insight.

When executed effectively, the experience of participating in qualitative research is often more rewarding than the monetary incentive.

THE COURT OF PUBLIC OPINION

Expert Evidence – Everything Old Is New Again

Ruth M. Corbin, CMRP
CorbinPartners Inc.

Does the process for delivering expert evidence to the legal system create unnecessary complexity, excess cost and partisan testimony? Today's "adversarial" system encourages both parties to a dispute to engage separate experts, who give separate testimony, frequently at odds with each other. Much time and effort may be spent on highly technical cross-examinations and re-examinations of both witnesses, whose differences of opinion need to be somehow reconciled. One of the solutions under debate is that of a single court-appointed expert, with no direct accountability to either party. This seemingly original idea for the times comes from the fourteenth century.

Expert opinions were originally commissioned directly by British judges on wide-ranging matters. The first documented case occurred in 1345, in which surgeons were brought from London to advise the judge on whether an appellant claiming physical injuries had wounds that were truly "fresh." Cases in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries show judges calling on "masters of grammar" to help them interpret the significance of clauses written into contracts, sometimes in Latin. The case *Alsop v. Bowtrell* in 1620 concerned the legitimacy of a child, legitimacy then referring to whether a child's parents were married. The mother bore the child 41 weeks and two days after the untimely death of her husband. Could the child be his? Physicians testified that indeed a 41-week pregnancy was plausible. In the *Witches* case of 1645, a certain Dr. Brown of Norwich reported to the court that the defendants' seizures and fits constituted scientific proof that they were witches. The consequences of being found to be a witch in the seventeenth century are too gruesome to describe here.

Discretionary appointment of court experts was undertaken before our current adversarial system of legal process took hold. Now the idea is resurfacing. For example, a single marketing research expert might conduct a survey to test the theory of each party's case simultaneously, or summarize conclusions on a topic from the collective professional literature. There are both ardent supporters and ardent critics of such an option.

As the well-respected Justice Learned Hand wrote in 1901 in the *Harvard Law Review*: "No one will deny that the law should in some way effectively use expert knowledge wherever it will aid in settling disputes. The only question is...how it can do so best." One hundred and twelve years later, the question is still being asked.

CBC News May 15, 2013

"Why were polls so wrong…?"

Globe and Mail May 15, 2013

"…phone polls fared much better than online polls."
— Josh Wingrove

Globe and Mail May. 17 2013

"Pollsters – especially those using robocall and online methodology instead of telephones – were largely wrong about the Quebec election results…, wrong about Alberta…, and now wrong about B.C."
— Jeffery Simpson

The Globe and Mail July 25 2013

"Telephone….still widely considered the gold standard of public opinion polling…"
— Éric Grenier

Center for the People & the Press November 7, 2012

"The Pew Research Center remains committed to rigorous, probability-based sampling and to dual frame telephone surveys for measuring public opinion…"

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