

ESOMAR 26 Questions about Netquest Panels

Spain, Portugal and Mexico

Created: November 12, 2009

In line with the implementation of the ESOMAR's quality standards to conduct research online, Netquest has answered to the 26 questions in order to define the quality of its services. These questions will help researchers consider issues which influence whether an online sampling approach is fit for purpose in relation to a particular set of objectives; for example whether an online sample will be sufficiently representative and unbiased. They will help the researcher to ensure that they receive what they expect from Netquest as an online sample provider.

COMPANY PROFILE

1. What experience does Netquest have with providing online samples for market research?

Netquest is the first survey software and online fieldwork provider in Spain since 2001. The team has broad experience in online research and has developed more than 1,000 fieldwork projects in Spain, Portugal and Mexico. Thanks to its proprietary panels, Netquest is positioned as the top quality sample supplier in this region by local and international agencies.

SAMPLE SOURCE

2. Please describe and explain the types of source(s) for the online sample that you provide (are these databases, actively managed panels, direct marketing lists, web intercept sampling, river sampling or other)?

Netquest panels are actively managed databases exclusively dedicated to market research purposes. The recruitment of panellists is active, also known as "by invitation only". Individuals can only register in the panel if they received a personal invitation by a website in which they are already members. No one can volunteer to join the panel. Netquest doesn't recruit through banners, advertising campaigns, river sampling or massive mailings. Potential panellists receive a personal and unique invitation to participate in a survey, and no incentive is previously announced to minimize self-selection. At the end of the survey, respondents are offered only one chance of becoming members of the panel. At this point, we incentive registration in order to maximize conversion rates.

3. What do you consider to be the primary advantage of your sample over other sample sources in the marketplace?

Our recruitment process and incentive system are clearly the point of distinction of our panels. Recruitment is closed and controlled and incentives are points redeemable for gifts (delivered by Netquest). Unlike passive recruitment panels where the registration is open, Netquest selects through a controlled process the profiles needed and controls the representativeness of the panel. The advantage of this process is reflected in higher quality of the samples delivered: we avoid self-registration (active recruitment) and monitor panellist profiles (gifts delivered). Incentives are delivered by courier which encourages higher engagement and allows Netquest to control duplications.

4) If the sample source is a panel or database, is the panel or database used solely for market research? If not, please explain.

Yes. Every registered panellist only receive surveys for market research. The maximum number of surveys that a panellist can receive is 1 every 10 days.

5) How do you source groups that may be hard-to-reach on the internet?

Thanks to active recruitment, screening difficult targets is a relatively simple process: we close agreements with local web sites where this specific target is registered and invite them personally and individually to the panel via email. They will receive a gift for signing up in our panels.

6) What are people told when they are recruited?

In every personal invitation, panellists are clearly informed about the registration process and the involvement. Registration is completely voluntary and they have to double opt-in to be members. Engagement is encouraged with a draw and a direct gift for every registration. This direct gift encourages participation in the profiling survey and gives us the opportunity to know the personal address of the user to check if there are duplications. The process is transparent: if the user unsubscribes, he or she is automatically deleted from our database.

PANEL RECRUITMENT

7) If the sample comes from a panel, what is your annual panel turnover/attrition/retention rate and how is it calculated?

The annual attrition rate is the percentage of panellists unsubscribed per year. For 2008 our average attrition rate was 0.83% -> 527 unsubscribed out of 63,118 panellists for Spain (the 62,591 panellists at 31 December + the 527 who dropped out). In Mexico and Portugal the annual rate of attrition has not yet been calculated.

8) Please describe the opt-in process.

First of all, potential panellists receive a personal invitation to register into the panel. Only personal data, email address and password are mandatory. Once registered, they automatically receive a confirmation email with a link (double opt-in) and afterwards a survey for data entry with demographic profiling. We add a "triple-optin" since only those members who receive our welcome gift by courier (address validated) are accepted in the panel.

9) Do you have a confirmation of identity procedure? Do you have procedures to detect fraudulent respondents at the time of registration with the panel? If so, please describe.

Identity confirmation process is performed by two ways: first by checking that every personal information they enter in the profiling survey (Name, address, email address, phone, etc.) do not match with another panellist registered. Furthermore, as we send a welcome gift to their homes we confirm that this person is currently living in that place and there is no duplication.

10) What profile data is kept on panel members? For how many members is this data collected and how often is this data updated?

Panellists have more than 100 variables in average as part of their profile: sociodemographic variables, household consumption, electronics, automotive, financial, insurance, entertainment, technology, leisure and consumer products. Socio-demographic information is updated annually. Under some circumstances Netquest redirects panellists after being screened-out to a continuous profiling site, where they can add more information on their consumption.

11) What is the size and/or the capacity of the panel, based on active panel members on a given date? Can you provide an overview of active panellists by type of source?

The maximum capacity of the panel is approximately 45% of its size, given a field period of 2 weeks. The current capacity of the panels is:

- Spain: $74.000 \times 45\% = 33.300$ surveys.
- Portugal: $9.000 \times 65\% = 5,850$ surveys.
- Mexico: $34,000 \times 55\% = 17,800$ surveys.

It is possible to provide an overview of active panellists by type of source, this information is part of their profile.

12) Please describe your sampling process including your exclusion procedures if applicable. Can samples be deployed as batches/replicates, by time zones, geography, etc? If so, how is this controlled?

- Only those panellists who have the profile for the study are selected (using our extensive list of variables)
- Not having completed a survey in the last 10 days, to prevent wear out and professionalization of the panel.
- Not having been invited to participate in another survey in the last 7 days, even if the panellist did not participate.
- Two invitations are never sent on the same subject in less than 3 months (unless the customer specifically asks us to do it)
- If someone works in the Marketing research industry cannot become part of Netquest panel.

13) Explain how people are invited to take part in a survey. What does a typical invitation look like?

The invitation email is sent by the person who manages the panel in each country. All emails have the same content, where we communicate the availability of a new project without specifying either the duration of the questionnaire or the subject matter. The subject contains a project name with neutral topics (related to geography, nature, etc.) in order to locate the project in case any panellist needed support. No clues are given about the theme of the survey, neither in the subject, nor in the invitation text. The email contains a unique link to the survey that can only be used once in order to avoid double participation. Once a panel member starts the survey, no indication is given as to the length of the survey or possible incentives. To ensure that we meet the highest compliance standard for anti-spam, we clearly stipulate the email recipient in the email. For those email recipients who believe that they have received the email in error, a toll-free number and an email address of the Panel Support Center are provided for questions or comments in every country.

14) Please describe the nature of your incentive system(s). How does this vary by length of interview, respondent characteristics, or other factors you may consider?

Incentives are cumulative and redeemable points for gifts on the panellist's website: www.nicequest.com
Each survey gives a number of netquest points based on its length, with exponential increases in surveys longer than 20 minutes. The amount of points varies depending only on the survey length and, in some cases, on any added complexity (e.g. testing a product). Points are redeemable for more than 100 different types of gifts, all of them purchased, controlled, stored and sent by Netquest in order to control panellists identities and engagement.

15) How often are individual members contacted for online surveys within a given time period? Do you keep data on panellist participation history and are limits placed on the frequency that members are contacted and asked to participate in a survey?

A panellist can only complete a survey once every 10 days. The historical data on participation is stored and used to select samples, to determine the limits when it comes to invite to a new survey and to prevent to answer surveys about the same subject within 6 months.

POLICIES AND COMPLIANCE

16) Is there a privacy policy in place? If so, what does it state? Is the panel compliant with all regional, national and local laws with respect to privacy, data protection and children e.g. EU Safe Harbour, and COPPA in the US? What other research industry standards do you comply with e.g. ICC/ESOMAR International Code on Market and Social Research, CASRO guidelines etc.?

Panel Data management complies with the Spanish, Portuguese and Mexican Data Protection Laws. Netquest meets current regulations at all security levels according to the Data Protection Act. Netquest also complies with ESOMAR standards for conducting online research and AEDEMO code (spanish market research association).

17) What data protection/security measures do you have in place?

Panellists have access to their accounts using a user name and a password. The access is encrypted to prevent third parties access to their personal data. Every access to a Netquest database is controlled by a single network administrator, with a permission system that prevents theft of passwords. The server where the information is stored is protected by anti-theft systems and firewalls to prevent third parties access to personal data.

18) Do you apply a quality management system? Please describe it.

There is no external quality audit as ISO yet. However Netquest has designed its own quality standards for the processes performed. All employees are trained to perform a very detailed workflow process to deliver data to the client in the timing requested and at the same time to comply with the internal panel regulations.

19) Do you conduct online surveys with children and young people? If so, please describe the process for obtaining permission.

Yes, we obtain the permission by sending the survey to their parents. Occasionally we ask them to redirect it to their children or answer it together with them. Netquest doesn't allow children under 14 years to register, in accordance with ESOMAR codes. The information collected in response to such surveys is not combined with identifying information about the child.

PARTNERSHIPS AND MULTIPLE PANEL MEMBERSHIP

20) Do you supplement your samples with samples from other providers? How do you select these partners? Is it your policy to notify a client in advance when using a third party provider? Do you de-duplicate the sample when using multiple sample providers?

Netquest uses external panels only in case incidence rates turn to be much lower than estimated and therefore not budgeted to cover the sample. We take this decision together with our client.

In case Netquest cannot cover the whole sample size at the proposal stage, external sample sources are revealed to the client, and again at the sample plan stage, within the context of the type of research needed and the business issue. To avoid duplications, Netquest can control (as part of the profiling survey) which respondents are already registered in any external panel and avoid inviting them to the survey.

21) Do you have a policy regarding multi-panel membership? What efforts do you undertake to ensure that survey results are unbiased given that some individuals belong to multiple panels?

Netquest follows a policy of active recruitment. For this reason, it is not possible for a panellist to join the panel unless he or she receives an invitation. This is a strong way to avoid panellists who also belong to different panels. In the registration, we ask our panellists to which other panels they belong.

22) What are likely survey start rates, drop-out and participation rates in connection with a provided sample? How are these computed?

Participation rate: Panellists who complete the survey out of the total invitations sent. The current participation rate is around 45% for Spain, 65% in Portugal and 55% for Mexico.

Drop-out rate: Panellists who have started the survey but who abandoned before reaching its end. It strongly varies depending on the type of survey and ranges from 1-2% for short surveys to 10% in very extensive surveys or surveys with excessive multimedia.

23) Do you maintain individual level data such as recent participation history, date of entry, source, etc., on your panellists? Are you able to supply your client with a per job analysis of such individual level data?

Yes. These are stored and used to determine causes of participation, to analyze behaviour by segments of the population and to improve the panel's incentive system and can be supplied to the client.

