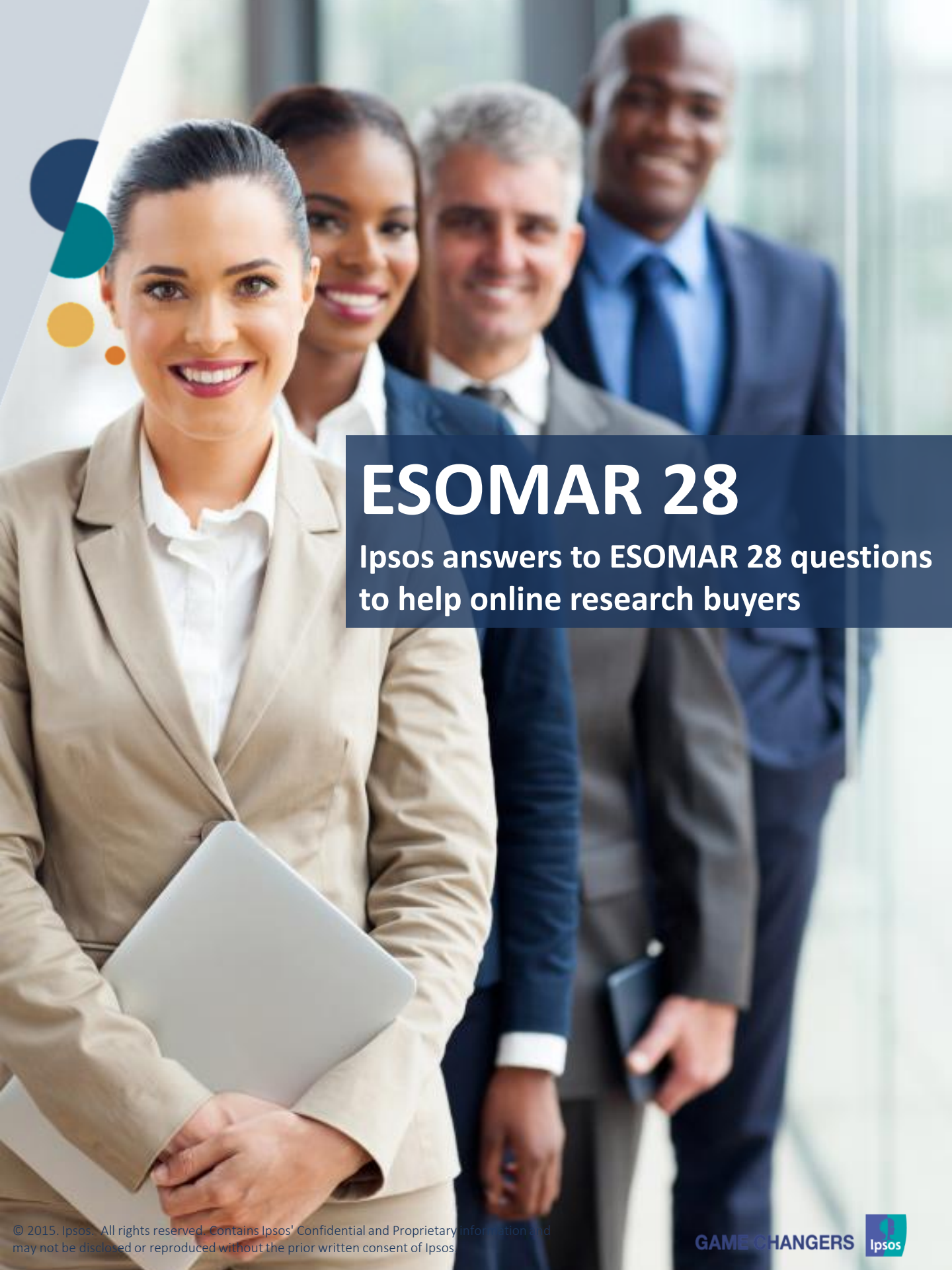




# ESOMAR 28

**Ipsos answers to ESOMAR 28 questions  
to help online research buyers**

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# ABOUT THIS DOCUMENT

The primary aim of the ESOMAR 28 Questions is to **increase transparency and raise awareness of the key issues for researchers to consider when deciding whether an online sampling approach is fit for their purpose**. Put another way, the aim is to help researchers to ensure that what they receive meets their expectations. The questions are also designed to introduce consistent terminology for providers to state how they maintain quality, to enable buyers to compare the services of different sample suppliers. Notes on the context of the questions explain why the questions should be asked and which issues researchers should expect to be covered in the answer.

These new questions replace ESOMAR's "26 Questions to help Research Buyers of Online Samples". ESOMAR has updated the text to recognize the ongoing development of techniques. While some of the questions remain constant, new questions have been added to incorporate new techniques and new technology in this area. In particular, this revision recognises the broad trend within the industry to build online samples from multiple sources rather than relying on a single panel.

With over 4,5 million panelists in 50 countries, the Ipsos Online Panel has one of the most robust coverage in the world, with panels in all major markets in Europe, North America (NA), Latin America (LatAm), Asia-Pacific (APAC) and Middle-East (ME). Ipsos has the capability to conduct online research anywhere in the world where Internet penetration and usage allow. Today, panels are the largest sample source for online studies. They are powerful and tactical research tools. Thanks to our global organization, our clients benefit from the advantage of a worldwide network, combined with high and consistent quality across countries.

It should be noted that these 28 Questions focus on the questions that need to be asked by those buying online samples. If the sample provider is also hosting the data collection you will need to ask additional questions to ensure that your project is carried out in a way that satisfies your quality requirements.

The 28 Questions complement ESOMAR's Guideline to Online Research which was revised in 2011 to add updated legal and ethical guidance and new sections on privacy notices, cookies, downloadable technology, and interactive mobile.

The background of the slide features a blurred office scene. In the upper half, three people are silhouetted against a bright window, appearing to be in a meeting. In the lower half, a desk is visible with several documents, each containing bar charts. A yellow banner is positioned across the middle of the image, containing the text 'COMPANY PROFILE'.

# COMPANY PROFILE

# 1. What experience does your company have in providing online samples for market research?

**Context:** *This answer might help you to form an opinion about the relevant experience of the sample provider. How long has the sample provider been providing this service and do they have for example a market research, direct marketing or more technological background? Are the samples solely provided for third party research, or does the company also conduct proprietary work using their panels?*

Ipsos' commitment to panel research quality is a tradition extending back to our mail panel heritage in the 1970s and '80s. This formed the foundation of our global online panels and our research-on-research program, which has helped us develop best practices for achieving and maintaining high-quality data and respondent engagement. There are only a few other companies with this heritage and extensive expertise in market research and panels.

Ipsos Interactive Services has panels in over 50 countries in **North America, Europe, Latin America, Asia-Pacific, and the Middle East**. Its divisions adhere to the same online research industry principles and panel management guidelines, though some differences in regional approaches exist. Rules and privacy policies may vary to reflect the needs in the respective regions.

Ipsos began conducting online surveys in 1999, and has been running online panels for more than 10 years. We have conducted almost every type of research online. Study types fielded include (but are not limited to) concept, package and product testing, website evaluations, public opinion, sensitive topics, voter exit polling and ad testing.





# SAMPLE SOURCES & RECRUITMENT

## 2. Please describe and explain the type(s) of online sample sources from which you get respondents. Are these databases? Actively managed research panels? Direct marketing lists? Social networks? Web intercept (also known as river) samples?

**Context:** The description of the types of sources a provider uses for delivering an online sample will provide insight into the quality of the sample.

Ipsos Interactive Services is able to guarantee excellent market research results thanks to our experience in panel management within the Ipsos Group, both offline and online, and because Ipsos was one of the first companies to embrace the switch from traditional to online data collection methodologies. Our panels are not just lists or databases of individuals, but **actively managed research Access Panels**:

- **Individuals who have volunteered to take part in market research surveys**
- **Created and managed for long-term use and access**
- **Extensively profiled to efficiently target respondents**

Our experience has shown that the sample source plays a vital role in a company's ability to make accurate business decisions based on the facts. Ipsos' online panels are continuously refreshed using a variety of sources and methods. We firmly believe that data quality begins with recruitment. The vast majority of our panelists are referred to us through various online suppliers. Based on our many years of experience, we know that multi-source recruitment is the best option for maintaining a representative base of respondents. We only use high quality recruitment sources to entice people who are eager to take surveys.

We strategically focus on developing processes that reflect the newest internet practices as may currently be found through **social networks**. **Email lists, banners, website and text ads, co-registration, and search engine marketing** are also used. When evaluating the priority of sources, the recruitment process takes the following into consideration:

- **Panel parameters:** ex. response rates, attrition, data quality and demographics
- **Census representivity:** Though we consider it in our recruitment strategies, we aim to recruit a selection of panelists who meet business requirements (including census representative samples for frequently used groups, ex. Females aged 18 - 49)
- **High demand targets:** ex. people with certain ailments or from certain professions.

### 3. If you provide samples from more than one source: How are the different sample sources blended together to ensure validity? How can this be replicated over time to provide reliability? How do you deal with the possibility of duplication of respondents across sources?

**Context:** *The variation in data coming from different sources has been well documented. Overlap between different panel providers can be significant in some cases and de-duplication removes this source of error, and frustration for respondents.*

When necessary, Ipsos will utilize multiple sample sources to support client needs. We employ a router (whose brand name is “Cortex”) to manage our sample so that it will be representative of a population. Through extensive research on research, we have shown our blended samples are representative of the population, on demographics, attitudes, and behaviors. Our results also show that our blended sample is stable and sensitive enough to accurately reflect survey results over time.

We remove the possibility of duplication across sources through the use of Imperium’s RelevantID® service, which prevents duplicate respondents from entering live surveys based on **digital fingerprinting criteria**. The RelevantID® check is applied to all surveys conducted by Ipsos, including those where mixed panel or non-panel sources are used for the same survey.

### 4. Are your sample source(s) used solely for market research? If not, what other purposes are they used for?

**Context:** *Combining respondents from sources set up primarily for different purposes (like direct marketing for example) may cause undesirable survey effects.*

Ipsos panels are used solely for market research purposes.





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

**Context:** Ensuring the inclusion of hard-to-reach groups on the internet (like ethnic minority groups, young people, seniors etc.) may increase population coverage and improve the quality of the sample provided.

We constantly carry out **targeted recruitment** through:

- **Various “wide net” methodologies** (ex. email campaigns, affiliate networks, banner ads, text ads, search engine, co-registration, offline-to-online, specialized websites)
- **Customized incentives and materials** for recruiting special targets such as mothers of babies, age group 55+, etc.

Moreover, we are continuously testing new recruitment sources and methods (specialized websites, social networks, etc.).

## 6. If, on a particular project, you need to supplement your sample(s) with sample(s) from other providers, how do you select those partners? Is it your policy to notify a client in advance when using a third party provider?

**Context:** Many providers work with third parties. This means that the quality of the sample is also dependent on the quality of sample providers that the buyer did not select. Transparency is essential in this situation. Overlap between different providers can be significant in some cases and de-duplication removes this source of error, and frustration for respondents. Providers who observe process standards like the ISO standards are required to give you this information.

Due to the dynamic nature of the online market research business, at times we must rely on third-party online sample providers to complete client-sponsored market research studies. We have a tightly controlled supplier vetting process through which we identify companies who adhere to quality and respondent management process which closely mirror our own. Companies selected as preferred partners adhere to stringent guidelines on each project commissioned. Additionally, we have a Supplier Quality/Satisfaction program through which we capture qualitative & quantitative measures on supplier performance which are then reviewed monthly by management.

A man with glasses and a beard, wearing a dark suit, and a woman with blonde hair, wearing a light-colored blazer, are both smiling and looking at a tablet computer. The man is pointing at the screen with his right hand. They are sitting at a desk with some papers and a pen. The background is a bright, out-of-focus office space.

# SAMPLING & PROJECTS MANAGEMENT

## 7. What steps do you take to achieve a representative sample of the target population?

**Context:** The sampling processes (ex. how individuals are selected or allocated from the sample sources?) used are the main factor in sample provision. A systematic approach based on market research fundamentals may increase sample quality.

Sampling begins by developing targets to **match official census statistics** or **profiles as requested** by the client for any given country. For certain target populations, such as mobile phone owners, pet owners, etc., we have the ability to generate representative quotas based on a sub-sample of the panel, and then use these quotas to obtain a balanced sample of the target population.

Sampling is carried out via a proprietary sampling application that allows us to construct **complex samples** based on the target and screening requirements. The software selects potential respondents that balance according to the targets (ex. selected to be representative of the general population, internet population or other specific demographic profile required).

The software uses an interactive selection algorithm that balances one variable at a time in order of priority, as follows:

- The first step is to **extract all active and available panelists that meet the screening criteria** (ex. demographic, geographic).
- The **sample pool is randomly sorted**.
- The **algorithm then examines the first (primary) variable** and selects the number of panelists who satisfy each target. (Sometimes, there may not be enough available sample to fill all cells and since some variables are more important than others, lower priority variables may not balance precisely).
- Finally, the **sample may be distributed and balanced among more than one cell** so that different treatments or surveys may be fielded in equal balanced groups or cells.

**Exclusion procedures:** panelists will be eliminated from participating in surveys for specific periods of time. Ipsos applies its own exclusion rules which take into account the type of study, the category researched, the number of surveys respondents have already participated in, etc. These rules are based on our panel management expertise and are aimed at eliminating the bias resulting from overusing the same respondents, while maintaining panelist engagement.

**Deployment:** The sample can be deployed in batches using any criteria requested by the client. This is controlled by the email application used in the management of the panel mail-outs. The mail-out tool allows automatic mailing at a predefined time/day and by batches.

We can also control the number of completes for any specific cell by setting desired end quotas on any specified criteria (ex. gender, age ...). Once a target quota is achieved, the survey will close for respondents within that target.

## 8. Do you employ a survey router?

**Context:** A survey router is a software system that allocates willing respondents to surveys for which they are likely to qualify. Respondents will have been directed to the router for different reasons, perhaps after not qualifying for another survey in which they had been directly invited to participate, or maybe as a result of a general invitation from the router itself. There is no consensus at present about whether and how the use of a router affects the responses that individuals give to survey questions.

Yes, when fielding, we may choose to employ our **Cortex Field Management Platform** to link studies to the full spectrum of available sample sources: our own panels, social networking sites, partner panels, online communities, affiliate networks, and more. Routing and reallocation offers multiple benefits during the survey process - from field management, to respondent engagement, to precision of survey results. Two key benefits include higher quality and increased sample capacity.

### Higher quality (respondents and data)

- Increased respondent satisfaction: respondents have a higher likelihood of finding a survey to take when they want to take one.
- Increased data quality: achieved through more rigorous quotas and comprehensive elimination rules. Nested/interlocked quotas deliver greater precision which allows for a better match to sample targets and reduces the need for data weighting. Elimination rules are managed within the entire system, allowing for eliminations to be managed across all sample sources.

### Increased sample capacity

- Increased capacity: extended reach provides expanded access to the target population.
- Easier to fill quotas: more efficient use of sample increases sample flow and helps fill quotas more easily.
- Easier to reach “hard to get” demographics: more efficient use of in-demand, low response demographics (such as ages 18-34) enables more studies to be fielded using these demographics.

## 9. If you use a router: Please describe the allocation process within your router. How do you decide which surveys might be considered for a respondent? On what priority basis are respondents allocated to surveys?

**Context:** Biases of varying severity may arise from the prioritisation in choices of surveys to present to respondents and the method of allocation.

The same selection bias that exists in panels and other methods (mail, phone, etc.) also exists in a router and is related to the amount of priority in the router. While selection bias is known to be present in other methodologies, due to cost/logistical reasons it could not be measured and optimally controlled. With routers, however, the bias is more visible, and due to automation control is more feasible. At Ipsos, we have developed an approach to measure selection bias due to the router (presented at the 2010 CASRO Online Research conference), and have put in place best practices to control it.

A key approach to controlling bias is to minimize the amount of priority in a router (some priority is necessary), and to have an adequate and diverse number of studies in the router at any given time. This will ensure that any potential bias is spread out across many studies and has a minimal impact on any one of them.

Respondents are allocated to surveys at Ipsos using either a random approach or a hybrid approach (a combination of random and priority). In a random approach, studies are selected entirely at random from all studies in the router. In a priority approach, studies are given preference for selection based on a specified level of priority. In a hybrid approach, a proportion of the selection is random and a proportion is based on priority. Although Ipsos seeks to minimize the use of priority allocation whenever possible, some priority is usually necessary for effective management of surveys. For many Ipsos studies, a hybrid approach is used. A 100% random approach is used for some studies.



## 10. If you use a router: What measures do you take to guard against, or mitigate, any bias arising from employing a router? How do you measure and report any bias?

**Context:** *If Person A is allocated to Survey X on the basis of some characteristics then they may not be allowed to also do Survey Y. The sample for Survey Y is potentially biased by the absence of people like Person A.*

The router is a complex system, and proper, rigorous management is a key part of maintaining the integrity and quality of the system and each individual study within the system. This contributes in part to the quality of the results as well.

Crucial to maintaining quality in a router environment is establishing and following best practices in router operation – rules for how to manage, monitor, and control the router environment. Ipsos follows best-in-class principles established through years of experience and research, ex.:

- Designated team to manage and monitor the router, made up of Ipsos sampling and methodology experts.
- Router management team has final authority over which studies are in the router and any prioritization decisions.
- Restricted impact of highly-targeted studies.
- Random and priority reallocation is balanced.
- Respondents allowed to opt-out of the screening process with no penalty.
- Diverse, large number of studies maintained in the router.
- Limited number of custom screening questions allowed.
- All router studies are reviewed by the router team and removed from the router if necessary.
- Key metrics monitored several times per day to identify potential performance issues.
- Supplier traffic is monitored daily to ensure consistency.
- Representivity and consistency of the router population to the general population is monitored.

See Question 11 for another approach that Ipsos uses to control and mitigate any potential bias. As referenced, diversity and number of studies in the router is important to reduce any bias that may arise from the routing process.

## 11. If you use a router: Who in your company sets the parameters of the router? Is it a dedicated team or individual project managers?

**Context:** *It may be necessary to try to replicate your project in the future with as many of the parameters as possible set to the same values. How difficult or easy will this be?*

Proper management of a router is critical. Ipsos has implemented operational best practices to monitor and control our router environment.

At Ipsos, a team solely dedicated to router management controls the overall router environment, including the randomization / prioritization algorithm for the main and mini-routers, the priority sequence of studies (as needed), whether a study is included in the router or not, and all practices and processes related to the router management (including quality processes). This team has final authority over all router decisions; an individual study project manager must abide by these decisions. This is done to protect individual studies in the router and ensure the health of the overall router environment. The team is composed of sampling and sample methodology experts.

For an individual study, the sample blend and quotas are controlled at the study level by Ipsos project managers. The router team monitors sample blending at the overall router level, across multiple studies.

## 12. What profiling data is held on respondents? How is it done? How does this differ across sample sources? How is it kept up-to-date? If no relevant profiling data is held, how are low incidence projects dealt with?

**Context:** *The usefulness to your project of pre-profiled information will depend on the precise question asked and may also depend on when it was asked. If real time profiling is used, what control do you have over what question is actually asked?*

At a minimum, the Ipsos online panels have information on the following elements:

- Name
- Gender
- Birth year
- State/Province/Region
- Zip/Postal code
- Email
- Education level
- Employment status
- Occupation
- Sector of activity
- Annual household income
- Household size
- Internet usage
- Age and gender of other household members

Additional information on the panelists (ex. pets, beverages, financial, electronics, internet usage, vehicles) is collected right after the recruitment questionnaire in a series of short **profiling surveys**. Further information may be available depending on the country in question. Besides the information from the recruitment and profiling questionnaires, we collect a wide range of data on a variety of **topics through periodic screener surveys**.

All active panelists are asked annually to provide us with **updated demographic information**. Active panelists are also encouraged to update their contact information as necessary on our Panel Member Services site. This information can be used for targeted sampling purposes if required.

**13. Please describe your survey invitation process. What is the proposition that people are offered to take part in individual surveys? What information about the project itself is given in the process? Apart from direct invitations to specific surveys (or to a router), what other means of invitation to surveys are respondents exposed to? You should note that not all invitations to participate take the form of emails.**

**Context:** *The type of proposition (and associated rewards) could influence the type of people who agree to take part in specific projects and can therefore influence sample quality. The level of detail given about the project may also influence response.*

All online data collection (including surveys) is conducted via websites. Through the sampling process, panelists are pre-selected to answer a certain survey; the surveys are not “open access” (ex. respondents are not self-selected), and respondents do not know the survey content.

Panelists receive an invitation email with the following information:

- Survey information (end date, survey number, survey duration, number of incentive points)
- A unique URL that provides access to the questionnaire
- Physical address for Ipsos
- Member support email address
- Link to privacy policy
- Opt-out information

Respondents are automatically routed to relevant questions according to their answers. The survey is controlled so that all respondents answer the sections of the questionnaire that are relevant to him/her. The survey is controlled to collect answers on every question in turn; therefore, unlike other self-completion methodologies, online will ensure that blank answers are not present in the end data set. Respondents will be given 'don't know' options as necessary throughout the questionnaire to ensure we are not 'forcing' an answer.

## 14. Please describe the incentives that respondents are offered for taking part in your surveys. How does this differ by sample source, by interview length, by respondent characteristics?

**Context:** *The reward or incentive system may impact on the reasons why people participate in a specific project and these effects can cause bias to the sample.*

All panelists receive **appropriate incentives** to participate in our surveys. The incentives vary depending on the country, survey length, and complexity. Ipsos uses a **point system** to incentivize panelists, along with sweepstakes draws. Points systems are recognized as being the best in class in online market research, as they are seen as a neutral system which does not skew the participation of specific groups of people. From time to time we strengthen the incentive policy by adding prize draws or other incentives.

**Incentive points** are allocated depending on the **questionnaire length**. Panelists who don't qualify for a survey (ex. are screened out after the screening questions) receive a small number of points for their willingness to participate. Accumulated points can be redeemed on the dedicated panelists' website for a variety of rewards.

Besides rewards for surveys, panelists also benefit from:

- **Real time point allocation for surveys** (after a survey is completed by a panelist, the points allocated can immediately be seen in the points balance).
- **Monthly newsletters** containing articles on different topics, survey results, panel news, prize draw winners, panelists' tips, FAQs.
- **A custom built website** allowing panelists to check in real time their points balance, to browse and redeem rewards, to take their available surveys, to update their contact information, to learn more about the panel, and to read our newsletters.
- **Access to support (via email and phone).**
- **Confidentiality.**
- **Social Networking** via Facebook & Twitter allows our panelists to interact amongst themselves and with us. We communicate at least bi-weekly with our followers with status updates, articles, quick polls, contests, and more.

- **Loyalty program:** panelists are awarded with bonus points every time they have completed a certain number of surveys. The survey count takes place once a month and different points are allocated according to the number of surveys completed – more points for a higher number of completed surveys.
- **Quarterly prize draws:** Panelists will earn an entry in this quarterly draw when they complete a sweepstake-based survey. Currently, specific types of projects are included in this category.

We also utilize different sample partners and incentives differ from partner to partner. Cash rewards, gifts, points, sweepstakes and in some cases, no incentives are used. Each partner varies in how they increase their offering based on the survey's length or complexity. By using so many different incentives, we minimize the possibility of incentives biasing responsiveness or creating satisficing behaviour.

## 15. What information about a project do you need in order to give an accurate estimate of feasibility using your own resources?

***Context:** The “size” of any panel or source may not necessarily be an accurate indicator that your specific project can be completed or completed within your desired time frame.*

We provide feasibility estimates for a client's study based on the following information:

- **Overall sample definition:** who is being targeted for the study.
- **Demographics:** specific variables and quotas that must be achieved.
- Any **other qualification criteria**, and whether:
  - We have pre-screened our panel on those factors;
  - We need to pre-screen prior to launching the study; or
  - We can qualify incoming respondents in the survey itself.
- **Incidence level:** can usually be estimated from sample target if client has no prior research.
- **Number of completes** required.
- Any **over-quotas** required, and definition of groups if so.
- Estimated **survey length**.
- Any special **stimuli** involved (ex. image files, audios, videos).
- Any special **tasks** to be programmed (ex. conjoint task, card sort).
- **Time in field**.

This will tell us whether we can complete the study on time and on specs using our own sample sources, or if external sources are required. If there is a feasibility issue, we always work with the client to decide on the best course of action (ex. reducing the number of completes, increasing time in field, loosening qualification criteria, or adding external respondent sources).



## 16. Do you measure respondent satisfaction? Is this information made available to clients?

**Context:** *Respondent satisfaction may be an indicator of willingness to take future surveys. Respondent reactions to your survey from self-reported feedback or from an analysis of suspend points might be very valuable to help understand survey results.*

Ipsos has multiple approaches to monitoring respondent satisfaction.

**Survey Satisfaction:** Upon completion of every survey, panelists are invited to respond to a few questions about the survey they just completed. The questions are optional and clients can access the results either directly from the reporting page, or by request. Threshold values to check against are also provided and significantly high or low scores are outlined.

**Quarterly Satisfaction Survey:** Every three months we field a standard survey that measures our panelists' satisfaction towards panel membership activities (panelists' website, newsletter, survey invitations, rewards, etc.). Scores are continuously monitored and translated into panel management actions and improvements. These results focus more on the experience of being a panelist, and are not relevant for clients.

We also communicate with our panelists through our **blog and email support**, and are quick to resolve any issues they may raise.

An indirect measure of respondents' satisfaction is **abandon rate**.

Abandon rates are reported for each survey at individual question level; high abandon rates imply respondent dissatisfaction with the questions presented to them and can lead to data quality concerns around non-response bias. High abandon rates for given questions can trigger the re-thinking and re-designing of questions to become more user friendly to respondents.

## 17. What information do you provide to debrief your client after the project has finished?

**Context:** *One should expect a full sample provider debrief report, including gross sample, start rate, participation rate, drop-out rate, the invitation/contact text, a description of the field work process, and so on. Sample providers should be able to list the standard reports and metrics that they make available.*

**Ipsos provides a full fieldwork report including:**

- Date of study launch
- Date of study completion
- Outgo sample size
- Response rate, completion rate
- Incidence rate
- Information of the average survey length
- Other reports at request



# DATA QUALITY & VALIDATION

## 18. Who is responsible for data quality checks? If it is you, do you have procedures to reduce or eliminate undesired within survey behaviours, such as (a) random responding, (b) illogical or inconsistent responding, (c) overuse of item non-response (ex. “Don’t Know”) or (d) speeding (too rapid survey completion)? Please describe these procedures.

**Context:** The use of such procedures may increase the reliability and validity of survey data.

Extensive quality procedures are in place within IIS to ensure that the survey inputs (sample and questionnaire design) allow for high quality survey outputs (survey data).

**We commit that our respondents are REAL, FRESH, UNIQUE and ENGAGED thanks to the following measures:**

- **REAL - They are who they say they are:**
  - **Country Geo-IP validation:** a respondent connected from an IP outside the surveyed country is not allowed to participate.
  - **Removal of mismatched device settings and Geo-IP location:** certain combinations of device settings and geo-location proved to be good predictors for fraudulent behaviour. That’s why any connection from such a device is stopped from the very beginning, when respondent attempts to enter the survey.
  - **Anonymous proxy detection:** someone connected from an open anonymous proxy is hiding her/his device identity and geo-location. This behaviour is highly correlated with deliberate fraud attempts.
- **UNIQUE and FRESH - They only take the survey once and they have not participated recently in similar surveys:**
  - **Strict panel usage rules** are employed to avoid interviewing the same people too often and prevent them from becoming too used to a type of survey or product category.
  - **Duplicate devices detection through digital fingerprint:** the RelevantID® solution from Imperium gathers a large number of data points from a respondent's computer, such as operating system version, browser version, plug-in, etc., and assigns a relative weight to each data point. The data gathered is put through deterministic algorithms to create a unique digital fingerprint of each computer. We do not allow multiple respondents completing the same survey from the same device. Also we use the digital fingerprint to reject respondents who completed a similar survey recently from the same device.

- **Duplicate devices detection through web cookie / flash cookie:** a cookie once placed on the respondent's device can uniquely identify it, provided the cookie is not deleted by the respondent. Cookies are used at survey level for de-duplication and eliminations purposes; they are used in conjunction with digital fingerprint (RelevantID®).
  - **Duplicate emails identification:** external sample providers do not share email addresses, but some agreed to share anonymized email addresses which allows us to de-duplicate them.
- **ENGAGED - They complete surveys seriously:** each respondent's survey taking behavior is evaluated in real time, through standard self-adjusting algorithms. The worst offenders are automatically removed from the data deliverables; they are not counted against quotas.
    - **Speeding detection:** to identify someone who displays inattentive survey-taking behavior through completing a survey too quickly, we measure not only the time spent in the survey overall, but also the number of answers provided. This allows us to calculate a completion speed for each respondent as the number of answers provided per minute.  
A *speeder* is someone who completes the survey 3+ times quicker than the median speed for the survey. We identify and remove *speeders* from live surveys, in real time. The process is fully automated and standardized across all IIS surveys, from all regions and all sample sources. On our panel, we deactivate panelist accounts that record speeding across multiple surveys.
    - **Straight-lining detection:** to identify someone who displays inattentive survey-taking behavior through providing identical answers across multiple questions within and across multiple grids, we measure straight-lining response patterns.  
A *straight-liner* is someone who provides a straight-line response pattern; across one or more grids and has completed the survey 2+ times quicker than the median speed registered for the survey, or regardless of their survey completion speed if the grid has opposite statements that encourage the respondent to use a range of scale points across the grid.  
As with the speeders detection, the straight-lining module runs on live surveys in real time, in a fully automated and standardized way. Both speeding and straight-lining algorithms are self-adjusting. They do not use fixed pre-defined benchmarks; the threshold levels are derived in real time based on previous respondents' behaviors within the survey. We deactivate the panelist account that records straight-lining across multiple surveys.

- **Open ends evaluation:** to identify someone who displays inattentive survey-taking behavior, we measure the quality of answers to open ended questions. The algorithm detects unusable verbatim through a pre-defined dictionary of words including “no comment”, “unknown”, “do not remember”, “not sure”, “no answer”, “no clue”, “no idea”, “none” and is available for English language surveys.

We identify and remove *inattentive respondents* that provide unusable responses from 4+ open ended questions within a survey. This module runs on surveys in real-time in a fully automated and standardized way. We deactivate panelist accounts that record unusable open ended responses across multiple surveys.

- **Coming soon; Real Answer.** A solution from *Imperium* that further evaluates the verbatim from open ended questions in real-time, flagging likely robotic answers, nonsense, and offensive words.

All these quality measures that we employ in live surveys are fully automated and fully standardized across all regions and all types of surveys and all sample sources. They are applied by default with no additional charge for the research buyer.

IIS experts are constantly monitoring and reviewing the performance of our quality measures and updating and integrating new ones as respondents’ behaviors and the online landscape evolve.

## 19. How often can the same individual be contacted to take part in a survey within a specified period whether they respond to the contact or not? How does this vary across your sample sources?

**Context:** Over solicitation may have an impact on respondent engagement or on self-selection and non-response bias.

Once a panelist has completed a survey, they do not typically receive another survey invitation for 2 days in NA and 4 days in Europe, MENA and LatAm. This is our minimum exclusion period; other factors (ex. surveys within the same topic/category, surveys of the same methodology such as ad tests or product tests) require longer exclusion periods. However, if a panelist does not reply to an invitation or replies but disqualifies, then they are still eligible to receive further survey invitations at any time. We may also limit contact frequency to control response frequency as required by the mandates of the specific research being conducted.

Respondents can be invited multiple times if they belong to multiple sources, but our de-duplication tools and rules ensure they cannot complete the same survey more than once.

## 20. How often can the same individual take part in a survey within a specified period? How does this vary across your sample sources? How do you manage this within categories and/or time periods?

**Context:** Frequency of survey participation may increase the risk of undesirable conditioning effects or other potential biases.

We allow our panelists to attempt to qualify and take all surveys they have been invited to—provided that the studies are still open in field—because we know from experience that the cumulative effect of eligibility screening, quota restrictions, and dropout behaviour make it very unlikely that they could actually complete several surveys in a short time period. However, allowing respondents to “participate” by responding to all survey invitations they have been sent keeps them motivated and engaged. For our router sample that are not i-Say panelists (ex. non-panel and other panel sources), we impose a limit of one study completion every 24 hours.



## 21. Do you maintain individual level data such as recent participation history, date of entry, source, etc. on your survey respondents? Are you able to supply your client with a project analysis of such individual level data?

**Context:** *This type of data per respondent including how the total population is defined and how the sample was selected and drawn, may increase the possibilities for analysis of data quality.*

Yes, we do maintain data related to contact and participation history. We maintain databases that record all aspects of a panelist's survey history and experience on our panel: their recruitment date and tenure on the panel, their complete demographic profile, their survey invite history and response history, and their technical configuration (operating system, browser, Java, Flash settings, IP address, etc.) at the time they entered the survey. We routinely supply many of these variables to clients, such as via standard sample reports that contain the target definition and sample profile versus panel profile versus eligible part profile on as many dimensions as are applicable to the study. Other individual-level variables are available either within the respondent data file itself or upon request.

## 22. Do you have a confirmation of respondent identity procedure? Do you have procedures to detect fraudulent respondents? Please describe these procedures as they are implemented at sample source registration and/or at the point of entry to a survey or router. If you offer B2B samples what are their procedures, if any?

**Context:** *Confirmation of identity can increase quality by decreasing multiple entries, fraudulent panelists etc.*

Ipsos' commitment to panel research quality is a tradition extending back to our mail panel heritage ('70s), and it is the foundation of our global online panels. We have extensive experience in conducting online and mobile surveys. Our knowledge has been harnessed in our research-on-research program that has helped us to define best practices and that continues to support the delivery of high-quality online research in an ever-changing online world.

The quality processes span the lifecycle of a panelist which begin when an individual joins the panel and continues through panel management and survey response.

Validation via **CAPTCHA** security code to prevent automated registration and stop robot answers. It is applied at panel registration.

**Double-opt in email confirmation** to ensure validity of the email address provided. Respondents who want to join our panel receive a confirmation link on the email address provided. Once they click on the confirmation link they are allowed to continue.

**Removal of “5 minutes” emails.** We remove records with email addresses which are available only for several minutes or only for a limited number of messages received (automatically generated by specialized websites).

**Country Geo-IP validation.** A respondent connected from an IP outside the surveyed country is not allowed to participate.

**Removal of Ipsos black listed emails.** The list includes email extensions of clients, competitors and Ipsos employees.

**Removal of mismatched device settings and Geo-IP location.** Certain combinations of device settings and geo-location proved to be good predictors for fraudulent behaviour. These rules were implemented at panel and survey level to prevent future fraud attempts.

**Anonymous open proxy detection.** Someone connected from an open anonymous proxy is hiding her/his device identity and geo-location. This behaviour is highly correlated with deliberate fraud attempts.

**Detection of anomalies and patterns in panel registration data.** Detection of patterns in names/email/IP/demos collected at registration. Accounts having multiple elements in common are inactivated. Semi-automated procedures built and maintained in-house are employed at an early panel stage.

**Duplicate emails identification.** Our panelists cannot create multiple accounts with the same email address.

**Duplicate contact details detection.** At panel registration, respondents provide name, surname, street address, phone numbers and email address. Using this information we can identify panelist accounts that are very likely to be duplicates.

**Duplicate devices detection through digital fingerprint.** The RelevantID® solution from Imperium gathers a large number of data points from a respondent's computer, such as operating system version, browser version, plug-in, etc., and assigns a relative weight to each data point. The data gathered is put through deterministic algorithms to create a unique digital fingerprint of each computer. We do not allow respondents to create multiple panelist accounts from the same device.

**Panelists' history** is monitored across surveys and used for panel purge removing “bad” or inactive respondents. Constant speeders, straight-liners, duplicates, those providing robotic answers and offensive words are deactivated from the panel.



# POLICIES & COMPLIANCE

## 23. Please describe the ‘opt-in for market research’ processes for all your online sample sources.

**Context:** The opt-in process indicates the respondents’ relationship with the sample source provider. The market generally makes a distinction between single and double opt-in. Double opt-in refers to the process by which a check is made to confirm that the person joining a panel or database wishes to be a member and understands what to expect (in advance of participating in an actual survey for a paying client).

Ipsos uses a “**double opt-in**” process for all panelists. Individuals wishing to join the Ipsos panel first complete the online recruitment survey, and accept the **terms and conditions of membership**. We inform our panelists that Ipsos agrees to keep all personal information regarding its panelists confidential (their habits, preferences, personal addresses, etc.), and that this **information is used only for Ipsos research**. Likewise, panelists are requested **to adhere to rules regarding the confidentiality** of our surveys. Agreement to these terms and conditions provides the first “opt-in” to panel membership.

Once the recruitment questionnaire is completed, panelists receive an email and are required to click on a link to confirm they would like to participate in panel membership. This constitutes the second “opt-in”.

Upon completion of the recruitment questionnaire, a subsequent series of short **profiling questionnaires** are made available to panelists so that we may gather additional information like: pet ownership, car ownership, internet usage, household equipment, etc.

Finally, panelists receive a welcome note or are redirected on the Panelists’ website from where they can start taking surveys. Also they are informed about the dedicated hotline where they can send any queries.

We ensure that it’s simple for panelists to **opt-out**, or unsubscribe, from the panel at any time. Opt-out information is provided at the time of recruitment, on the panel website, and in each email a panelist receives from us.

In our router, non-panel respondents come in via intercept. During their online interactions within a game, community, or social network, they are given the option to earn additional units of the environment’s virtual currency (ex. points, credits) and one method is to take a survey. Since they are not required to provide an email address or confirm it before taking one of our surveys, we would consider these people as single opt in respondents.

## 24. Please provide a link to your Privacy Policy. How is your Privacy Policy provided to your respondents?

**Context:** Not complying with local and international privacy laws might mean the sample provider is operating illegally. An example privacy policy is given in the ESOMAR Guideline for Online Research.

Individuals can view our extensive **Privacy Policy** at the time of panel registration. As well, the introduction to our standard survey invitation includes a link to the policy, and reminds panelists that we hold all information provided to us in the strictest of confidence.

Our full Privacy Policy is available at the below links:

**Europe and NA:** <http://i-say.com/Footerlinks/PrivacyPolicy/tabid/282/Default.aspx>

**LATAM:** <http://livra.com/Footerlinks/Privacy/tabid/336/Default.aspx>

**Australia:** <http://myview.com.au/PrivacyPolicy/tabid/147/Default.aspx>

**MENA:** <http://rewarding-panel.com/PrivacyPolicy/tabid/147/language/en-JM/Default.aspx>

We comply with the standards of **MRIA, MRA, and CASRO** in North America, and with **ESOMAR, AIMRI and EFAMRO** standards in Europe. Further, in North America, we strictly abide by all ethical, privacy, and anti-spam laws/policies of the following organizations:

- **MRIA-ARIM:** <http://www.mria-arim.com>
- **CASRO:** <http://www.casro.org>
- **PIPEDA:** [http://www.priv.gc.ca/legislation/02\\_06\\_01\\_e.cfm](http://www.priv.gc.ca/legislation/02_06_01_e.cfm)
- **CAN-SPAM:** <http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/edu/pubs/business/ecommerce/bus61.shtm>

Our personally identifiable information collection and emailing practices have been audited and are certified to comply with all relevant privacy and spam laws by the two premier online trust authorities: **TRUSTe and Sender Score Certified**.

Compliance with the **Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA)** is guaranteed because we don't collect personal information from children, and surveying of panelists' children is only done through advocacy.

Ipsos Interactive Services is also affiliated with professional market research organizations, such as **AIMRI, ESOMAR, and EFAMRO**. Its full membership gives Ipsos full recognition as a professional market research agency fulfilling the following requirements:

- The principal business activity of the company must be **marketing or social research**.
- Members must confirm that they abide by the **ICC Code of Conduct** (as endorsed by ESOMAR) and/or the relevant code of their national market research association.
- Members are required to adhere to the **AIMRI Code of Business Practice and the AIMRI Guidelines** for Quality Standards.

## 25. Please describe the measures you take to ensure data protection and data security.

**Context:** The sample provider usually stores sensitive and confidential information on panelists and clients in databases. These data need to be properly secured and backed-up, as does any confidential information provided by the client. The sample provider should be able to provide you with the latest date at which their security has been evaluated by a credible third-party.

Ipsos applies strict data protection and **security processes** to protect both client and panelists' data. Our security measures fall under two broad categories: Physical Security and Logical Security. These practices are applied at all Ipsos data centers and managed hosting providers.

**Physical Security** measures include the following:

- 24/7 security guards at our managed hosting providers.
- Night Guard for Ipsos Data Centers (guard can be reached 24/7).
- Mandatory sign in by all staff.
- Authorized staff only permitted to access data center. All vendors are escorted while on premise.
- Man trap at our managed hosting provider.
- Data center walls extended to ceiling.
- Monitored alarm system.
- CCTV at our managed hosting provider.
- Fire Suppression System.
- Statement on Auditing Standards compliance: SAS 70 Type II Certification at our managed hosting providers.

**Logical Security** measures include the following:

- Firewalls with DMZ.
- Monitored IDS.
- Change Management Process.
- Segregation of duties.
- Access Control ( Request / Authorization / Verification / Termination).
- Scheduled audit of accounts.
- Password Policy.
- Restricted Domain Admin access – named only.
- No generic accounts allowed – named only.
- Logical control: all rights to directories are kept at the group level in order to provide confidentiality of our various clients.
- Anti-Virus policy and procedure.
- Utilization of SSL is standard practice for viewing survey websites.
- Utilization of SSL is standard practice for viewing Web Survey Reports.



- Information Security Awareness Program.
- Regular scheduled network vulnerability scans.
- Regular scheduled application vulnerability scans.
- Server and PC hardening Policy.
- Data Retention/Destruction Policy.
- Backup Policy.
- Disaster Recovery Plan.

Finally, Ipsos Interactive Services Europe has been **certified ISO 27001** (“Information technology — Security techniques — Information security management systems”) since 2007. Further details on all processes applied are available upon request.

## 26. What practices do you follow to decide whether online research should be used to present commercially sensitive client data or materials to survey respondents?

***Context:** There are no foolproof methods for protecting audio, video, still images or concept descriptions in online surveys. In today’s social media world, clients should be aware that the combination of technology solutions and respondent confidentiality agreements are “speed bumps” that mitigate but cannot guarantee that a client’s stimuli will not be shared or described in social media.*

Ultimately this is a decision every client must make. When you expose new-to-the-world product visuals, descriptions, or ideas to a group of people to collect their opinion, you are necessarily taking some small chance that they will act on that information independently once the survey is over.

In such cases, we do ask respondents to give formal agreement to a confidentiality statement, and we can implement some technological restrictions such as disabling the contextual Copy or Save mouse functions on particularly sensitive screens.

If the material is particularly sensitive, we may suggest using an alternative survey methodology. The degree of risk is lower in situations where **we control the environment** in which the respondent takes the survey, such as in home, mall intercept, or central location testing at a controlled research facility. Telephone surveys by their very nature limit the exposure of stimuli to verbal descriptions. But there really isn’t any methodology that guarantees total stimuli security, be it within an online or offline environment, and so we do make clients aware that exposing proprietary information to respondents does in a sense put that information into the public domain.

## 27. Are you certified to any specific quality system? If so, which one(s)?

**Context:** *Being certified may require the supplier to perform tasks in a pre-determined manner and document procedures that should be followed.*

Ipsos has documented all procedures related to the survey and sample process. These procedures are strictly followed. Employees receive training as new procedures are developed, or as existing procedures are improved.

Ipsos Europe is certified in accordance with **ISO 9001: Quality management systems — Requirements** and **ISO 27001: Information technology — Security techniques — Information security management systems**.

Ipsos Interactive Services Europe and LatAm are also certified **ISO 20252: Market Research standard**.

## 28. Do you conduct online surveys with children and young people? If so, do you adhere to the standards that ESOMAR provides? What other rules or standards, for example COPPA in the United States, do you comply with?

**Context:** *The ICC/ESOMAR International Code requires special permissions for interviewing children. These are described in the ESOMAR Online Research Guideline. In the USA researchers must adhere to the requirements of the Children's Online Privacy Act (COPPA). Further information on legislation and codes of practice can be found in Section 6 of ESOMAR's Guideline for Online Research.*

Compliance with the **Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA)** is guaranteed because we do not store personal information from children, and surveying of panelists' children is only done through advocacy.

# ABOUT IPSOS INTERACTIVE SERVICES (IIS)

IIS, the Ipsos online and mobile global research division with more than 15 years of experience.

With **1,400 passionate online and mobile experts** we deliver industry leading research with access to **90+ countries**. The Ipsos network spans **online panels, real time sampling and mobile** respondents.

**IIS is member of** ESOMAR, AIMRI, CASRO, ARF and EFAMRO and certified on key **ISO 9001, 20252 and 27001**.

[www.ipsos.com](http://www.ipsos.com)



## QUESTION

For more information on this document,  
contact your IIS client service representative.