


The Future Is Now: How Surveys Can Harness Social Media to Address 21st Century Challenges

Amelia Burke-Garcia, MA, PhD

Brad Edwards, MBA

Ting Yan, PhD

April 16, 2019



“The survey and polling business is in crisis ... response rates have been falling for more than 30 years... Even high-quality face-to-face surveys rarely reach a 70% response rate these days.”

— *Tourangeau, 2017*

“One person was displaced every two seconds in 2017,
with developing countries most affected.”
— *UNHCR, 2018*



“Foreign citizens made up 7.5% of persons living in the EU Member States on 1 January 2017.”
— *EuroStat, 2018*



“One-in-five American adults are ‘smartphone-only’ internet users.”

— *Pew Research Center, 2018*



“People now
generally lose
concentration
after eight seconds.”
— *Microsoft, 2015*





“Only 18% of Americans today say they can trust the government.”

— *Pew Research Center, 2017*



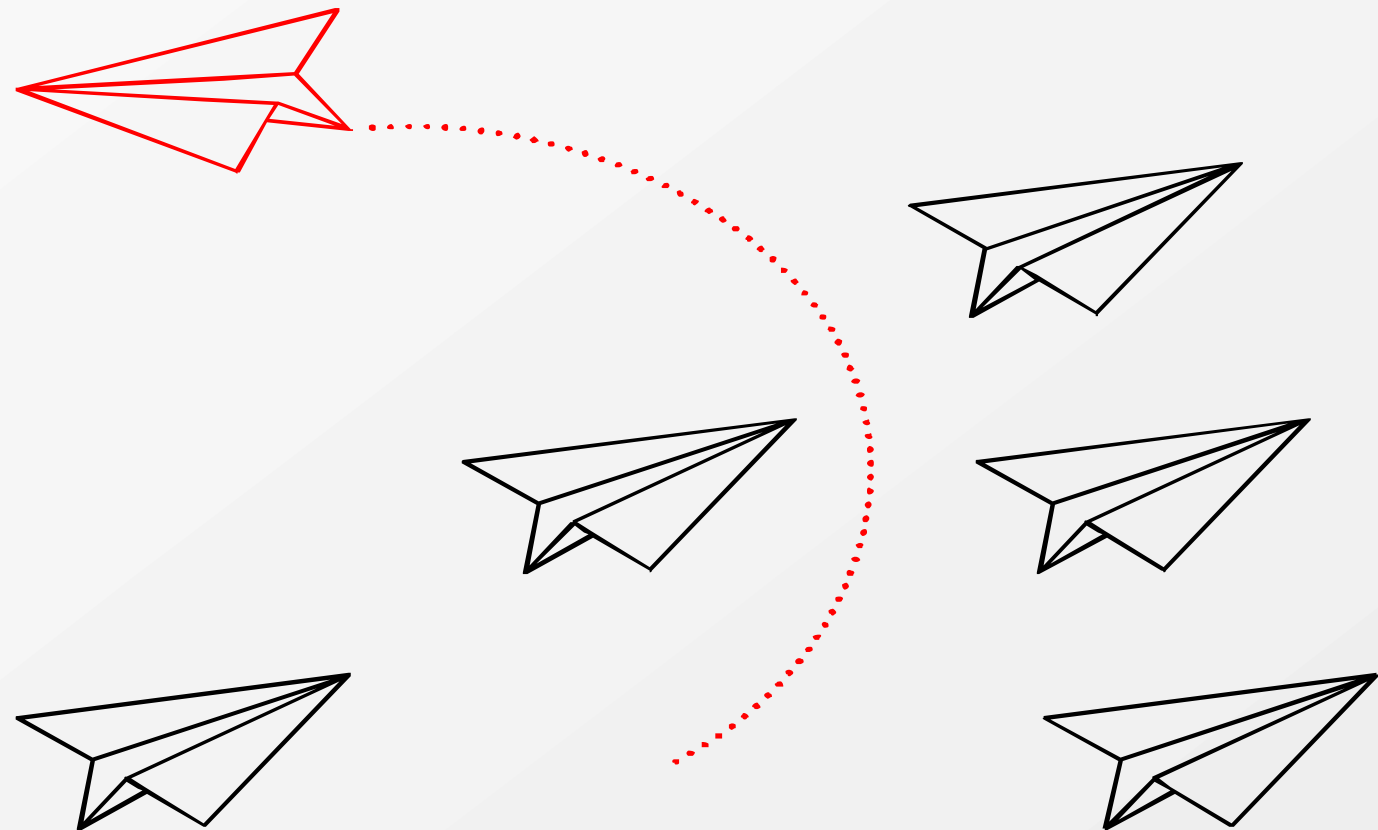
“83 percent of employed people spend more time working at the workplace than at home.”
— *American Time Use Survey, 2018*

The whole
world
is getting
hard
to survey.



“The change in the nature of the new types of data, their availability, the way in which they are collected, and disseminated are fundamental. The change constitutes a paradigm shift for survey research.”

— *APPOR, 2015*

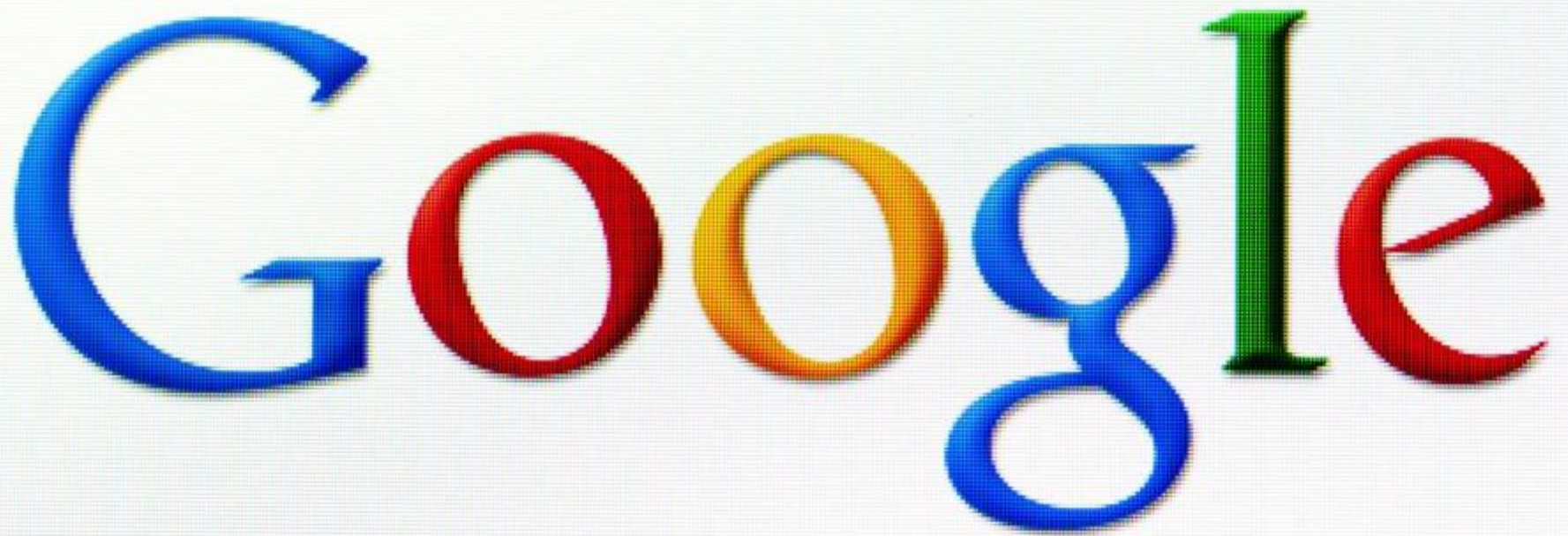


A new survey world
“that uses multiple data
sources, multiple modes,
and multiple frames.”

— Lyberg & Stukel

To A Broader Conceptualization of Social Media

“The context of who, what, and where we are, not just the explicit message (text or images) we communicate.”

The word "Google" is displayed in its iconic multi-colored font. The letters are: G (blue), O (red), O (yellow), g (blue), l (green), e (red). The font is a sans-serif typeface with a slight 3D effect and a shadow.

“There are more than 3,000,000 Google searches –
every minute.”



“There are more than 2 billion monthly active Apple device users – *globally.*”



“There are more than 2.2 billion people on Facebook – *globally.*”



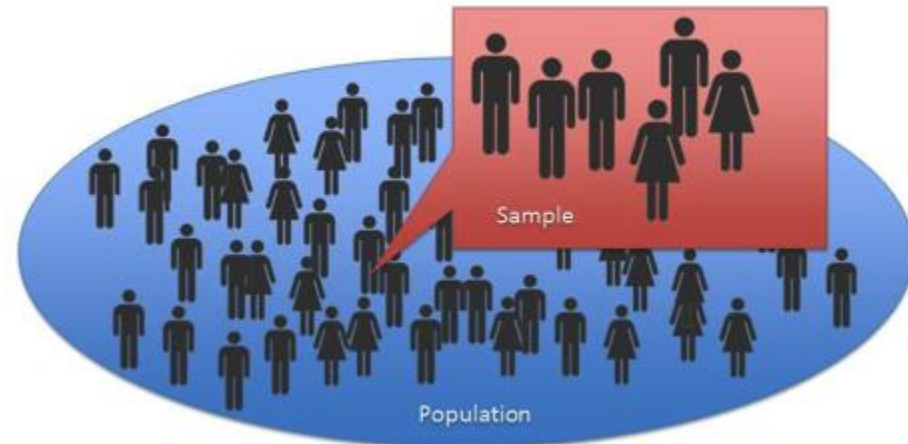
“There are more than 300 million monthly active Amazon users – *globally.*”

The Hard-to-Survey Framework



The Opportunities for... *Sampling People*

- Venue-based, Time-Space sampling
 - What is VBTS sampling?
 - Translating for an online context
 - Virtual events – how they work online?
 - The importance of the group manager
- Respondent-Driven Sampling
 - Online groups
 - Online influencer networks



The Opportunity for... *Identifying People*

- Confirming characteristics
 - Essential variables such as gender, age, and geographic locations
 - Other variables, e.g., membership to certain types of groups, personal interests or passions
- Lowers burden by not asking key questions via a screener
- Data needs to be public



The Opportunities for... *Reaching People*

- Paid social media advertising
 - Promote the survey brand
 - Serve direct link to web survey
 - Ads can be easily developed
 - Tailored to demographic and psychographic subgroups
 - Designed to fit specific platforms
- Tracing



The Opportunities for... *Persuading People to Participate*

- Paid social media advertising
- Online influencers
 - The act of influencing requires a specific result: *a change in thinking or behavior*
 - Layperson opinion leaders have the ability to share information with their readers
 - They have the trust of their readers and followers



The Opportunities for... *Interviewing People*

- Passive social media data mining
 - Collect & analyze social data
 - Which questions can be more easily answered
- Active data collection
 - Obtain needed services & ideas by soliciting contributions from a large group of people
 - Has had dramatic impact on the speed and scale at which scientific research can be conducted



Outstanding Challenges

- Platforms are rapidly changing
- How populations use them is also changing, e.g., ad blockers
- Inactive users/fake accounts/bots
- Gaps in understanding & awareness amongst users
- Transparency, privacy, consent, and appropriate use of the data
- Tools to analyze data
- Budget
- Human error/misrepresentation
- Hawthorne effect



Future Directions



- Investment in pilot and feasibility studies
- New frameworks for how to successfully integrate such data into survey research
- New ways of thinking about error in survey research
- Protocols for appropriately and successfully using social media



“We are all now connected by the Internet, like neurons in a giant brain.”
— *Stephen Hawking*



Thank you!

The logo for Westat Digital is centered within a dark blue oval. The word "Westat" is in a bold, white, sans-serif font, followed by a registered trademark symbol (®). The word "Digital" is written in a white, cursive script font that overlaps the end of "Westat".

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Amelia Burke-Garcia, MA, PhD
Director, Westat Center for Digital Strategy & Research
ameliaburke-garcia@westat.com