

**SSRS TEXT MESSAGE PANEL  
METHODOLOGY**

**2021**





## BACKGROUND

SSRS is a leading full-service, non-partisan public opinion research firm. For more than 30 years, SSRS has specialized in healthcare, public and social policy, and non-partisan political research studies conducted via all data collection modes. Our clients are comprised of various public and private sector entities including major academic institutions, leading national media organizations, and top research institutes ([www.ssrs.com](http://www.ssrs.com)).

## SSRS TEXT MESSAGE PANEL

The SSRS Text Message Panel is a nationally representative TCPA compliant probability-based panel of U.S. adults age 18 or older who have a mobile phone and internet access<sup>1</sup>. We are in the process of including non-internet adults in this panel. Panelists receive short and interactive text message-based surveys (as opposed to web-based survey links in text message).

The hallmarks of the SSRS Text Message Panel are methodological rigor, representativeness and affordability. Conducting surveys via text message improves the ability to contact hard-to-reach demographic groups such as younger adults (age 18 to 29), lower educated (HS Grad or lower), Hispanics and African Americans. This is a probability-based panel therefore findings are statistically projectable to the target population.

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<sup>1</sup> 87.2% adult age 18 or older population coverage according to our research based on historical SSRS Omnibus data and the 2019 American Community Survey.

Text message-based surveys are most suitable for:

- Short (1 to 10 questions), quick turn-around studies (typically 1 to 2 days from start to finish).
- Point-in-time data collection.
- Cost efficient population incidence estimate studies.
- Concept testing.

As a charter member of the AAPOR (American Association for Public Opinion Research) Transparency Initiative, SSRS is committed to full compliance of AAPOR standards and transparency.

## **SSRS TEXT MESSAGE PANEL SERVICE OFFERING**

The SSRS Text Message Panel team includes industry renowned technological experts and methodologists who stand ready to support both data collection and analytic client needs. We work closely with clients from the early project planning stages to developing and delivering effective customized solutions. Our services include questionnaire design, questionnaire programming and hosting, user experience (UX) testing, cognitive interviews, data collection, statistical weighting, and data analysis and reporting. Specific SSRS Text Message Panel services include:

- Questionnaire design consulting that meets industry best practices.
- Methodological consulting.
- Highly collaborative team that works closely in meeting client schedules.
- Design and implementation of subpopulation-specific surveys that leverage panelist profile data, such as surveys of Hispanics, people with specific health insurance statuses, caregivers, parents, registered voters, and people with different chronic health conditions.

## **PANEL RECRUITMENT**

The SSRS Text Message Panel is recruited as a part of our probability-based SSRS Opinion Panel. Panel members are recruited randomly based on a nationally representative ABS (Address Based Sample) probability design (including Hawaii and Alaska). Additionally, we recruit hard-to-reach demographic groups via our Omnibus survey platform. The SSRS Omnibus survey is a nationally representative (including Hawaii and Alaska) bilingual telephone survey designed to meet standards of quality associated with custom research studies. The SSRS Omnibus completes more than 50,000 surveys annually with a 70% cell allocation.

The advantage of this recruiting design is that it relies on a high-quality ABS design that utilizes a sampling frame that has almost complete coverage of the population and yields a higher response rate compared to phone. Additionally, it leverages our Omnibus platform to ensure adequate representation of typically under-represented groups in public opinion polls such as Hispanics, African Americans, lower educated, or lower income populations.

During the recruitment process, full demographic information on panelists is collected. This data is stored securely and used to determine eligibility for specific studies (if needed). We also rely on these data in order

to improve the survey experience for panelists by avoiding the need to re-ask demographic questions with each survey. Samples are drawn among panel members to best meet the study criteria.

## **SURVEY MODE**

Survey invitations are sent via text messages. Respondents take interactive surveys via text message on their phone (as opposed to receiving a survey link via text message). The advantage of this approach is that these surveys can be taken by everyone who has a cell phone, and not just those with smartphones. Research shows that while 81% of adults have a smartphone, 15% of adults have a cell phone that is not a smartphone<sup>2</sup>. In addition, internet service is not required for text message-based surveys as it uses cellular data.

## **WEIGHTING**

To ensure that sample estimates are unbiased and projectable, SSRS Text Message Panel data are weighted based on industry best practices. The weighting process starts with the application of a base weight which accounts for disproportionate probabilities of selection across panelists. Following the application of the base weight, survey data are calibrated to known target population parameters such as age, race, gender, region, and education. SSRS advanced methods team can turn-around weights very quickly.

## **HOW IS THE SSRS TEXT MESSAGE PANEL AN IMPROVEMENT OVER OTHER TEXT MESSAGE BASED PANELS?**

Most recent research suggests that full probability samples provide the most accurate data. Surveys that utilize a probability sample combined with an opt-in sample are less accurate than surveys of full probability samples. Least accurate are surveys comprised entirely of opt-in panel sample.<sup>3</sup> The SSRS Text Message Panel is a fully probability-based panel because it recruits randomly selected panelists from a probability-based sample source that reflects the full U.S. adult population (ABS and dual-frame RDD). Results obtained from this panel can statistically represent the target population with a known margin of error. Unlike typical opt-in panels, no one can “volunteer” to be part of the SSRS Text Message Panel. They must be selected randomly and invited to participate. Most other text message panels are opt-in panels.

## **SSRS TEXT MESSAGE PANEL STANDARD DELIVERABLES**

SSRS Text Message Panel standard deliverables include a weighted SPSS data file including survey responses, standard demographic variables, and an AAPOR compliant methodology statement. Standard panel demographic variables included in the data are age, gender, education, employment status, race, marital status, income, home ownership, region, and party ID.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/fact-sheet/mobile/>

<sup>3</sup> The Accuracy of Measurement with probability and non-probability survey samples by Bo MacInnis, Jon A. Krosnick, Annabell S. Ho, Mu-Jung Cho, POQ, Vol 82, No. 4, Winter 2018, pp. 707-744

SSRS is a full-service non-partisan public opinion firm. In addition to standard deliverables, our deliverables and other offered services are fully customizable to client needs.

## SSRS TEXT MESSAGE PANEL DEMOGRAPHICS

A battery of demographic and other questions is asked during the recruitment of panelists. These questions are stored securely and kept for identifying target respondents, used for weighting, and can be appended to study data to expand what is known about respondents. Demographics are typically not re-asked for every survey unless there is reason to believe that the data could have changed in a meaningful way. Key demographics are provided below:

Respondent Demographics		Household Characteristics	
Age	Party Identification	Income	Zip Code
Gender	Political Ideology	Internet Type	Metro Status
Education	Voter Registration	Home Ownership	
Employment Status	Parental Status	Home Type	
Race	Religion	Household Size / Composition	
Health Insurance Status	Health Insurance Type	Active Duty / Armed Forces Service	
Marital Status	Sports Fandom	Age of Children	
Disability/Handicap	Chronic Conditions	State	
Caretaker Status	Work Travel Patterns	Region	

## WHO DO I CONTACT TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THE SSRS TEXT MESSAGE PANEL?

Further information about the SSRS Text Message Panel can be found [HERE>>](#).

We are happy to answer any questions you may have and provide a quote for a study to meet your specific objectives. For further information, please contact your SSRS account executive or send an email to [cturakhia@ssrs.com](mailto:cturakhia@ssrs.com).

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