

An aerial photograph of a large crowd of people walking on a checkered floor. The image is partially obscured by a dark grey shape on the left and bottom. A pink triangle is in the top left, and an orange rounded square is in the bottom right.

SSRS

ESOMAR 37

Answers to Questions to Help Users
and Buyers of Online Probability Samples

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Company Profile

Q1

What experience does your company have in providing online samples for market research? How long have you been providing this service? Do you also provide similar services for other uses such as direct marketing? If so, what proportion of your work is for market research?

SSRS is a full-service survey research firm that specializes in creative problem-solving and informed analysis to meet its clients' research goals. SSRS was established in 2006 and has successfully grown into one of the country's leading social science research firms. SSRS conducts a wide range of survey research and qualitative research, from small-scale omnibus studies to large-scale custom research projects; from basic data-delivery studies to projects requiring extensive statistical analyses and reporting; and from fast-turnaround general population polls to extensive and complex studies of specialized low-incidence populations.

Founded in 2016, the SSRS Opinion Panel is a probability-based nationally representative panel of U.S. adults ages 18 or older. The hallmarks of the SSRS Opinion Panel are methodological rigor, accuracy, affordability, mode flexibility, and representativeness. Our panel is actively used by major academic institutions, media organizations, and other private sector entities – both in the U.S. and abroad.

Our panel is strictly used for research purposes and gathering public opinion. It is not used for direct marketing.

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.

Q2

Do you have staff with responsibility for developing and monitoring the performance of the sampling algorithms and related automated functions who also have knowledge and experience in this area? What sort of training in sampling techniques do you provide to your frontline staff?

The SSRS Opinion Panel team is comprised of industry experts with deep knowledge of probability-based sampling techniques. The Panel team works closely with SSRS methodologists to develop and optimize sampling strategies, which are then executed using the Forsta+ (formerly known as Confirmit) platform. In addition, the Panel team oversees sample releases for every project conducted using the SSRS Opinion Panel and works with frontline project staff to ensure studies are executed to specification.

Bios for SSRS leadership can be found [here](#).

Q3

What other services do you offer? Do you cover sample-only, or do you offer a broad range of data collection and analysis services?

The SSRS Opinion Panel is a full-service platform and offers a broad range of data collection and analytic services. This includes, but is not limited to, full-service custom surveys, sample-only endeavors, recruitment to qualitative research such as focus groups and in-depth interviews, and projects that utilize a hybrid probability/nonprobability approach.



Sample Sources and Recruitment

What is this section about?

Answers to the questions in this section will help you understand the types of sample available from different sample providers in the market and the sources they rely on.

This will help you evaluate the quality of the sample being offered, whether it is suitable for measuring change over time, and whether there are any specific constraints you need to consider when using it. It will also allow you to understand whether the sample provider is drawing the sample from its own sources or aggregating sources from other providers. We recommend that you first identify the sample types being offered and then ask the relevant questions for all sources.

Broadly speaking, there are two models of sample sources and recruitment:

PANELS

These are databases of potential participants who declare that they will cooperate for future data collection if selected, generally in exchange for a reward/incentive. This includes traditional access panels, co-branded panels, or opt-in databases of individuals who agreed to complete research projects and also undertake other non-market research activities (watch ads, download an app, complete marketing offers, etc, also known as loyalty programmes, or rewards communities within GPT (Get paid to) sites.) Loyalty card and subscription databases are included here if there is a continuous relationship with members who understand the commitment asked of them.

INTERCEPTS

This includes intercepts from offer walls, affiliate networks, social media or other platforms to drive traffic to a survey. Intercept is an approach where potential participants are asked to take a survey for a reward while they are engaged in another activity such as playing an online game, reading news, or some other online activity. Intercepted participants may be previously unknown to the sample provider or may have been pre-identified and profiled through a prior survey experience

Sample Sources and Recruitment

Q4

Using the broad classifications above, from what sources of online sample do you derive participants?

Participants are derived from the SSRS Opinion Panel. SSRS Opinion Panel members are recruited randomly based primarily on nationally representative Address Based Sample (ABS) design. ABS sample is drawn from the Delivery Sequence File (DSF) maintained by the U.S. Postal Service. Population coverage of the DSF is in the 98%-99% range. Additional panelists are recruited via random digit dial (RDD) telephone sample of prepaid cell phone numbers. Phone numbers used for the prepaid cell phone component are randomly generated from a cell phone sampling frame.

Q5

Which of these sources are proprietary or exclusive and what is the percent share of each in the total sample provided to a buyer? (Assume proprietary to mean that the sample provider owns the asset. Assume exclusive to mean that the sample provider has an exclusive agreement to manage/provide access to sample originally collected by another entity.)

100% of the sample from the SSRS Opinion Panel is proprietary and exclusive to SSRS. All recruited SSRS Opinion Panelists are wholly owned by SSRS.

Sample Sources and Recruitment

Q6

What recruitment channels are you using for each of the sources you have described? Is the recruitment process 'open to all' or by invitation only? Are you using probabilistic methods? Are you using affiliate networks and referral programs and in what proportions? How does your use of these channels vary by geography?

The SSRS Opinion Panel consists entirely of sample recruited using, nationally representative probabilistic methods (Address Based Sample and RDD telephone sample of prepaid cell phone numbers). Recruitment is strictly by invitation only. Invitations include instructions to select a random adult in the household to participate. There are no network affiliates or referral programs.

Q7

What form of validation do you use in recruitment to ensure that participants are real, unique, and are who they say they are? Describe this both in terms of the practical steps you take within your own organisation and the technologies you are using. Please try to be as specific and quantify as much as you can.

SSRS generates unique survey passwords that are assigned and provided via mail to the randomly selected households. The recruitment survey can only be accessed using this unique password. In addition, at the start of every recruitment survey, potential panelists are asked to verify they live at the sampled address and are terminated if they indicate they live elsewhere. Panelists who join as web panelists are asked to provide their email address and panelists who join as telephone panelists are asked to provide a phone number. No two panelists may have identical email addresses or phone numbers.

Sample Sources and Recruitment

Q8

What brand (domain) and/or app are you using with proprietary sources? Summarize, by source, the proportion of sample accessing surveys by mobile app, email or other specified means.

SSRS uses Forsta+ (formerly known as Confirmit) software and data warehousing solution for the SSRS Opinion Panel. Forsta+ is the world's leading provider of survey and reporting software. Forsta+ is a sophisticated web-based data collection tool with capabilities to deliver tailored, fully branded, and highly structured surveys for all types of feedback and market research programs. SSRS utilizes Forsta+ for survey design and reporting, as well as for phone, web, and SMS data collection. Web programs are optimized for administration via smartphone or other mobile handheld devices. In our experience, more than 60% of SSRS Opinion Panel web surveys are completed on a smartphone or other mobile device.

SSRS leverages Forsta+ to invite panelists to surveys via email or SMS (if consenting) and contact telephone panelists via outbound dialing conducted by professional interviewers.

Q9

Which model(s) do you offer to deliver sample? Managed service, self-serve, or API integration?

The SSRS Opinion Panel only provides sample as a managed service.

Sample Sources and Recruitment

Q10

If offering intercepts, or providing access to more than one source, what level of transparency do you offer over the composition of your sample (sample sources, sample providers included in the blend). Do you let buyers control which sources of sample to include in their projects, and if so, how? Do you have any integration mechanisms with third-party sources offered?

The SSRS Opinion Panel does not offer intercepts. The SSRS Opinion Panel consists entirely of sample recruited based on probabilistic methods.

Q11

Of the sample sources you have available, how would you describe the suitability of each for different research applications? For example, Is there sample suitable for product testing or other recruit/recall situations where the buyer may need to go back again to the same sample? Is the sample suitable for shorter or longer questionnaires? For mobile-only or desktop-only questionnaires? Is it suitable to recruit for communities? For online focus groups?

The hallmarks of probability-based sample are methodological rigor, accuracy, mode flexibility, and representativeness. As such, SSRS Opinion Panel sample is suitable for a wide variety of research applications, methodologies, and survey lengths. We have the ability to target various sub-populations of interest based on panel demographics for research studies. Panelists can be recontacted for multiple surveys for tracking studies. All web surveys are programmed with a responsive layout that ensures surveys are optimized for administration on both desktop and mobile devices. Panelists may also be recruited for online qualitative research like focus groups or in-depth interviews. SSRS reserves the right to review any survey topics that are overly sensitive in nature or that require collection of personally identifiable information (PII).



Sampling and Project Management

Q12

Briefly describe your overall process from invitation to survey completion. What steps do you take to achieve a sample that “looks like” the target population? What demographic quota controls, if any, do you recommend?

The SSRS Opinion Panel leverages probability proportional to size (PPS) sampling to select probability samples from the Panel that are representative of the target population. The entire SSRS Opinion Panel is first weighted to demographic benchmarks for the U.S. adult population with respect to gender, age, educational attainment, race/ethnicity, Census division, civic engagement, population density, Internet use frequency, voter registration status, party identification, religion, household size, and home tenure. The Panel is then broken into strata defined by quantiles of this weight. A random sample is then selected within each stratum, with higher-weight strata having a higher selection probability. Depending on the target population and study goals, additional stratification variables and/or quota controls may be implemented. Final data is then weighted to population benchmarks to be representative of the target population.

Q13

What profiling information do you hold on at least 80% of your panel members plus any intercepts known to you through prior contact? How does this differ by the sources you offer? How often is each of those data points updated? Can you supply these data points as appends to the data set? Do you collect this profiling information directly or is it supplied by a third party?

As a part of enrollment process, panelists complete a survey that contains a variety of socio-demographic and household composition information that is collected and saved as part of the panelist profile. Additional information is collected during a follow-up survey conducted shortly after registration. This information may also be expanded or updated during engagement surveys that are conducted throughout the year. These data points may be appended to datasets.

A list of available demographics can be found at <https://ssrs.com/insights/2025-look-book/>.

Q14

What information do you need about a project in order to provide an estimate of feasibility? What, if anything, do you do to give upper or lower boundaries around these estimates?

In order to provide accurate cost and feasibility, it is most helpful to receive the following information at the proposal stage: Target population group(s), sample size, survey length and complexity, mode requirements, subject matter of research, Spanish language requirement, project timeline, and any special requirements or deliverables.

Services may include weighted datasets, open-end coding, data tabulation, questionnaire design support, and data analysis support. The Panel team can use a combination of expected incidence, historical response rate, and panel composition to determine feasibility.

Q15

What do you do if the project proves impossible for you to complete in field? Do you inform the sample buyer as to who you would use to complete the project? In such circumstances, how do you maintain and certify third party sources/sub-contractors?

As a charter member of AAPOR's (American Association for Public Opinion Research) Transparency Initiative, SSRS is committed to full transparency with our clients and the general public. In the event we need to supplement our panel with sample from other providers, SSRS discloses this upfront to the client.

We have strategic relationships with high-quality sample providers. Our technology infrastructure supports use of sample from multiple partners.

Sampling and Project Management

Q16

Do you employ a survey router or any yield management techniques? If yes, please describe how you go about allocating participants to surveys. How are potential participants asked to participate in a study? Please specify how this is done for each of the sources you offer.

SSRS does not use survey routers for the SSRS Opinion Panel.

Q17

Do you set limits on the amount of time a participant can be in the router before they qualify for a survey?

SSRS does not use survey routers for the SSRS Opinion Panel.

Q18

What information about a project is given to potential participants before they choose whether to take the survey or not? How does this differ by the sources you offer?

Panelists are not told any specific information about the subject of a survey prior to participating in order to preserve independence of research and reduce non-response bias. In the invitations, panelists are told the value of the incentive they will receive for completing the survey and are typically given a due date.

Q19

Do you allow participants to choose a survey from a selection of available surveys? If so, what are they told about each survey that helps them to make that choice?

No, panelists are never given the option to choose from a selection of available surveys. Each survey invitation includes a unique link to a single survey.

Q20

What ability do you have to increase (or decrease) incentives being offered to potential participants (or sub-groups of participants) during the course of a survey? If so, can this be flagged at the participant level in the dataset?

All panelists who qualify for and complete the survey via web are offered a post-participation compensation in the form of an electronic gift card, sent via email immediately after completion of the survey. They have the option of redeeming their rewards as a cash equivalent gift card (such as a Visa gift card) or as a gift card for one of many online or in-store retailers. All respondents who complete the survey via telephone are offered post-participation compensation via a mailed check.

Hard-to-reach population groups are typically offered a higher compensation. The Panel team will often make a recommendation for a higher compensation for longer survey lengths. Incentives values can be adjusted during the survey field period if needed.

We can provide participant-level compensation payout data as a special service.

Q21

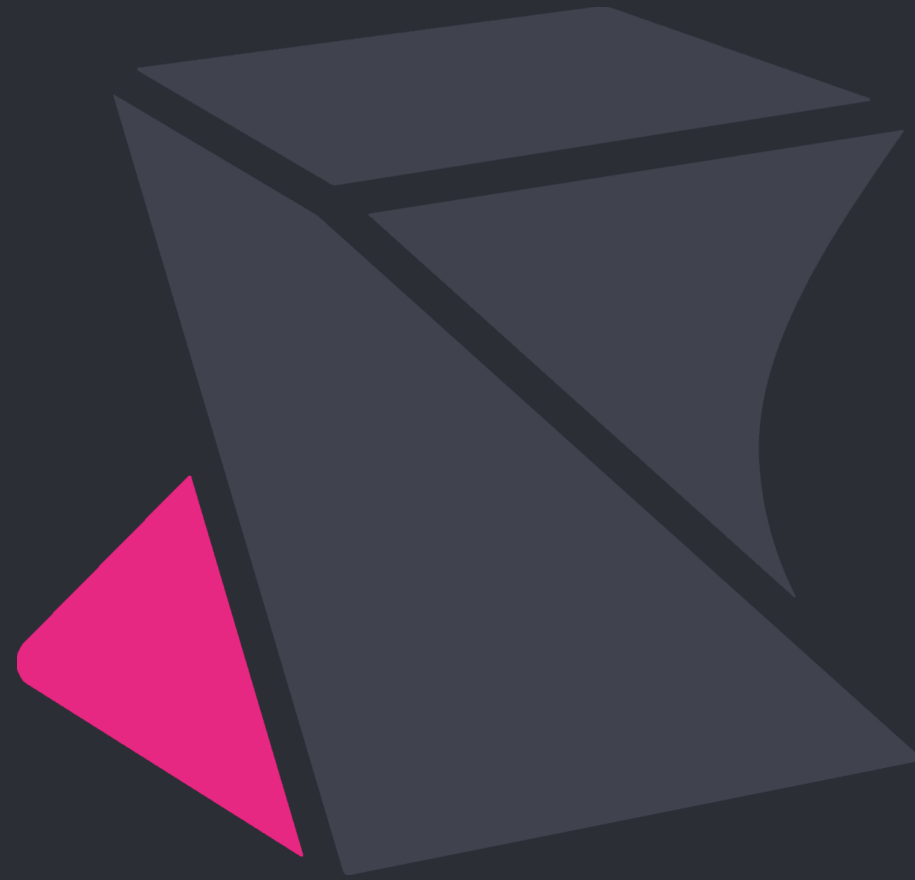
Do you measure participant satisfaction at the individual project level? If so, can you provide normative data for similar projects (by length, by type, by subject, by target group)?

All survey-specific respondent communication contains contact information for the SSRS Opinion Panel manager. We carefully review survey-specific respondent feedback and take necessary action promptly in the event an anomaly is detected. In addition, we also ask survey-specific respondent satisfaction questions for our internal quality control at the end of every survey. Survey level satisfaction data can be provided as a special service.

Q22

Do you provide a debrief report about a project after it has completed? If yes, can you provide an example?

As a charter member of AAPOR's (American Association for Public Opinion Research) Transparency Initiative, SSRS reporting is fully compliant with AAPOR's transparency standards. After completion of the study, in addition to a fully labeled data file with demographic weights, SSRS provides a methods report containing detailed information about design, sampling, AAPOR response rate calculations, weighting, and data processing. This report can also contain various performance metrics, including but not limited to margin of error, design effect, survey start rate, survey completion rate, drop-out rate, and overall length of interview.



Data Quality and Validation

Q23

How often can the same individual participate in a survey? How does this vary across your sample sources? What is the mean and maximum amount of time a person may have already been taking surveys before they entered this survey? How do you manage this?

The SSRS Opinion Panel is a relatively low burden panel in that our panelists generally do not receive more than 2 to 3 survey invitations per month. This keeps the engagement level and data quality high. As an additional measure, we maintain a 24 hour lock out, so that a panelist cannot be invited to more than 1 survey per day.

Q24

What data do you maintain on individual participants such as recent participation history, date(s) of entry, source/channel, etc? Are you able to supply buyers with a project analysis of such individual level data? Are you able to append such data points to your participant records?

SSRS maintains individual participation data including participation rate, number of survey invitations, number of surveys completed, dates of completed surveys, and registration date. We analyze and use this data for panel management purposes. This data is not a part of our standard deliverables. We can provide aggregated data as a custom service.

Data Quality and Validation

Q25

Please describe your procedures for confirmation of participant identity at the project level. Please describe these procedures as they are implemented at the point of entry to a survey or router.

For web surveys, invitations are sent to the unique email address provided by respondents at the time of registration. All email invitations are addressed to the panelists by name and contain a unique survey link. For telephone surveys, interviewers ask for the member of the panel by name and are trained not to conduct interviews with anyone else in the household who may be willing.

Q26

How do you manage source consistency and blend at the project level? With regard to trackers, how do you ensure that the nature and composition of sample sources remain the same over time? Do you have reports on blends and sources that can be provided to buyers? Can source be appended to the participant data records?

The SSRS Opinion Panel consists entirely of sample recruited based on probabilistic methods and is therefore treated as a singular source. For tracking studies, we make sure each wave of sample is similar in demographic composition with minimized respondent duplication across waves.

Q27

Please describe your participant/member quality tracking, along with any health metrics you maintain on members/participants, and how those metrics are used to invite, track, quarantine, and block people from entering the platform, router, or a survey. What processes do you have in place to compare profiled and known data to in-survey responses?

SSRS maintains a survey history database that tracks individual panelist metrics including invitation and participation history, breakoff rate, quality control failure, survey satisfaction ratings, and variety of other paradata. The SSRS Opinion Panel regularly tracks panel health and reviews the panel database regularly for chronic non-responders. Chronic non-responders are given a final opportunity to confirm their membership with an engagement survey. Those who do not respond to the engagement survey are excluded from future sampling. We also systematically replenish the panel to account for panel attrition over time.

Upon request, SSRS may program questions into a survey that can compare profiled and known data to in-survey responses.

Q28

For work where you program, host, and deliver the survey data, what processes do you have in place to reduce or eliminate undesired in-survey behaviours, such as (a) random responding, (b) Illogical or inconsistent responding, (c) overuse of item non-response (e.g., “Don’t Know”) (d) inaccurate or inconsistent responding, (e) incomplete responding, or (f) too rapid survey completion?

For web surveys, quality checks are incorporated into the survey itself. Respondents who fail the quality checks are not included in the final dataset. These quality control measures include checks for speeders, high non-response, and the administration of trap questions and insincerity checks. Additional quality control measures may be included depending on the scope of the project.

For telephone surveys, interviews are closely monitored by interviewing staff for quality control. In addition, randomly sampled recordings are reviewed by supervisors to monitor quality and interviewer procedures.



Policies and Compliance

Q29

Please provide the link to your participant privacy notice (sometimes referred to as a privacy policy) as well as a summary of the key concepts it addresses.

The SSRS Opinion Panel Privacy Policy is available at <https://ssrsopinionpanel.com/privacy/>.

Q30

How do you comply with key data protection laws and regulations that apply in the various jurisdictions in which you operate? How do you address requirements regarding consent or other legal bases for the processing personal data? How do you address requirements for data breach response, cross-border transfer, and data retention? Have you appointed a data protection officer?

Survey response data provided to clients by the SSRS Opinion Panel is anonymized and contains no PII, except in cases where the respondent has given explicit permission to share personally identifiable information.

As a company, SSRS is ISO/IEC 27001:2022 certified. ISO/IEC 27001:2022 is an international standard on how organizations are to handle information security. SSRS holds certificate number IS 743297 and operates an Information Security Management System which complies with ISO/IEC 27001:2022 for the following scope: The information Security Management System for the management of the processes necessary to securely deliver Public Opinion and Market Research to clients in accordance with the Statement of Applicability version 7.0 dated 01/27/2025. Our certificate issued by BSI is valid until 06/24/2027.

The SSRS Opinion Panel stores its database in Forsta+ (formerly known as Confirmit) software. For decades, Forsta+ has maintained one of the highest levels of security in our industry, allowing them to earn the trust of the most demanding companies, and meet their stringent security and privacy requirements. Forsta+'s operations undergo an annual comprehensive SOC 2 Type II (SSAE 18 / AT 101) examination by a highly-reputable AICPA accredited firm. Their SaaS production environment, where client data is stored and processed, is ISO 27001 certified, SOC 2 Type II audited and PCI-DSS certified.

In addition to the comprehensive third-party SOC 2 Type II audits of their operations, Forsta+ performs a battery of additional testing to ensure the effectiveness of their security posture. These include weekly penetration testing by information security team which are validated by annual third-party penetration tests by independent security professionals (McAfee). Forsta+ also performs static code-scanning of the software, which is validated by third-party white-hat application testing performed by highly trained cyber-security professionals (Veracode). Forsta+ has always completed the third-party testing with the highest security grade available, "A".

Forsta+'s full security features can be reviewed here:

https://extranet.confirmit.com/Extranet/media/PublicDocuments/SaaS/Confirmit_Horizons_SaaS_Security-January_2019.pdf

SSRS IT department handles all data protection issues.

Q31

How can participants provide, manage and revise consent for the processing of their personal data?

What support channels do you provide for participants?

Panelists may:

- Request access to the personal information we have collected about them;
- Request correction or deletion of their personal information;
- Request disclosure of the categories of personal information we collect, the purposes for which we collect it, sell or disclose that information, and the categories of third parties with whom we share the information;
- Request to restrict or stop the processing of their personal information; and opt-out of the sale of your personal information. At this time, SSRS does not sell your information.

To make any of the above requests, panelists may email a request to the panel manager or privacy@ssrs.com or mail a request to SSRS headquarters.

Q32

How do you track and comply with other applicable laws and regulations, such as those that might impact the incentives paid to participants?

SSRS Opinion Panel is fully compliant with all applicable laws in the United States including incentives paid to participants. SSRS is compliant with all regulations set forth by our incentive vendors. In addition, we conduct an annual HIPAA self-assessment to identify compliance gaps and strengthen safeguards for protected health information.

Q33

What is your approach to collecting and processing the personal data of children and young people? Do you adhere to standards and guidelines provided by ESOMAR or GRBN member associations? How do you comply with applicable data protection laws and regulations?

The SSRS Opinion Panel only accepts panelists age 18 or older. In the event that a project seeks to survey the child of an adult panelist, SSRS will first get consent from the responsible adult then ask the child for their agreement. The responsible adult will be told the name and contact details of the research organization, the nature of the data to be collected, the purpose of collecting the data, how the data will be used, and benefits or potential impact of the research.

Q34

Do you implement “data protection by design” (sometimes referred to as “privacy by design”) in your systems and processes? If so, please describe how.

Our internal systems and processes have all been certified as ISO 27001 compliant. This includes system security, file access/handling, storage, credential management, vulnerability testing, etc.

Q35

What are the key elements of your information security compliance program? Please specify the framework(s) or auditing procedure(s) you comply with or certify to. Does your program include an asset-based risk assessment and internal audit process?

As a company, SSRS is ISO/IEC 27001:2022 certified. ISO 27001 includes a risk assessment process, organizational structure, Information classification, Access control mechanisms, physical and technical safeguards, Information security policies, procedures, monitoring, and reporting guidelines.

Q36

Do you certify to or comply with a quality framework such as ISO 20252?

As a company, SSRS is ISO/IEC 27001:2022 certified. ISO/IEC 27001:2022 is an international standard on how organizations are to handle information security. SSRS holds certificate number IS 743297 and operates an Information Security Management System which complies with ISO/IEC 27001:2022 for the following scope: The information Security Management System for the management of the processes necessary to securely deliver Public Opinion and Market Research to clients in accordance with the Statement of Applicability version 7.0 dated 01/27/2025. Our certificate issued by BSI is valid until 06/24/2027.



Metrics

Q37

Which of the following are you able to provide to buyers, in aggregate and by country and source?

Please include a link or attach a file of a sample report for each of the metrics you use.

01. Average qualifying or completion rate, trended by month.
02. Percent of paid completes rejected per month/project, trended by month.
03. Percent of members/accounts removed/quarantined, trended by month
04. Percent of paid completes from 0-3 months tenure, trended by month
05. Percent of paid completes from smartphones, trended by month
06. Percent of paid completes from owned/branded member relationships versus intercept participants, trended by month
07. Average number of dispositions (survey attempts, screenouts, and completes) per member, trended by month (potentially by cohort)
08. Average number of paid completes per member, trended by month (potentially by cohort)
09. Active unique participants in the last 30 days
10. Active unique 18-24 male participants in the last 30 days
11. Maximum feasibility in a specific country with nat rep quotas, seven days in field, 100% incidence, 10-minute interview
12. Percent of quotas that reached full quota at time of delivery, trended by month

The SSRS Opinion Panel is U.S. only and comes from a single probability-based source. We can provide some aggregate data that we use for tracking panel health. This will be handled as a special request on a study-by-study basis.



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