Discussion: Conrad and Schober
Taking Surveys to People's Technology

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The bigger picture

- Our culture is in the middle of huge changes in the way that people *communicate* and *manage their accessibility*

- These changes have significant consequences for research data collection

- Related: important changes in the locus of control from researcher to respondent

- Respondents have more influence than ever on what times and modes are acceptable for participation

These changes are permanent

- So, collecting data by smartphone (and text in particular) will only grow in importance

- Key question: *what kind of quality can we expect from such data?*

- News is largely good: text mode performed better than voice on some useful quality measures:

  - More precise/less rounding

  - More response variety/less straightlining

  - More disclosure and sensitive reporting

Potential liabilities of smartphone/text data collection

- Limitations of screen size

- Text response data: limited control over what you receive (even if you specify categories)

- Timing and attention: limited control over pace; increased likelihood of distraction and multi-tasking

- Idiosyncracies as a speech act:
    - Use of shorthand, code, non-obvious meanings
    - Optimal for short bursts rather than fleshed out thoughts
    - Lacks nuance
    - Limited cues for diagnosing and repairing misunderstandings

Promising findings

- Pleasant surprise of positive quality indicators

- Rather than data problems, signs that there is <u>benefit</u> to meeting respondents in a mode that maximizes their comfort and convenience

- Worries about multi-tasking... respondents are, and it's not detrimental!

- Not only better quality, but different enough data to possibly lead to different substantive conclusions.

Caveats

- Still a considerably burden on us to ensure that particular measures actually work in that mode
- Potentially many ways to measure quality
  - Response accuracy (and does it vary based on question type?)
- Does response process work differently through text?
  - Comprehension: same details absorbed? Limit to potential complexity/detail of questions?
  - Variation in recall processes?
 - Maximum number/complexity of response options?

Question evaluation considerations

- Text/smartphone questions often developed and administered in a different mode

- Determining how well they work in the new mode is often conceptualized as a *usability evaluation*
  - Interfacing with the device, navigation, find and use tools to aid response…

- Traditionally we've spent less time thinking about how the adaptation affects the *response process.*

1. The following is a list of activities that people often do during the week. Although for some people with several medical problems it is difficult to determine what it is that limits them, please go over the activities listed below and indicate how much limitation you have had **due to chest pain, chest tightness or angina** <u>over the past 4 weeks</u>.

Place an X in one box on each line.

Activity	Extremely limited	Quite a bit limited	Moderately Limited	Slightly limited	Not at all limited	Limited for other reasons or did not do the activity
a. Walking indoors on level ground	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. Gardening, vacuuming or carrying groceries	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
c. Lifting or moving heavy objects (e.g. furniture, children)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
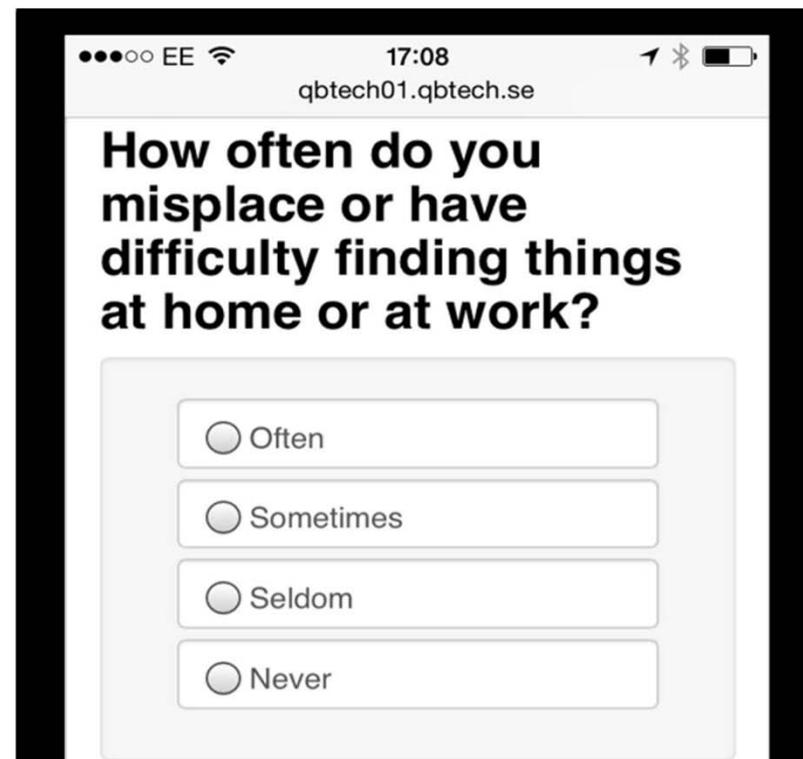
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How often do you misplace or have difficulty finding things at home or at work?

○ Often

○ Sometimes

○ Seldom

○ Never

Multi-mode considerations

- Offering a limited choice (within the smartphone) also offers benefits. Choosers:
    - More conscientious in answers
    - Liked the task more
- But combining data from multiple modes again highlights importance of understanding measurement error properties of text data
- Potential differences between data collected from *self-contained* and *asynchronous* events

In conclusion

- The fact that text data can be of good quality is welcome news, given its likely increasing importance

- Text is probably just one phase in continuing evolution of technology and communication

- Meeting people where they are, and in the way they prefer to communicate, has great potential

- Intriguing thought that rather than standardizing mode, we should standardize willingness to meet respondents in their preferred mode

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