New Interview Modes and Mixed Mode Data Collection to Reduce Respondent Burden and Increase Participation

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Brief Overview

- What we (think we) know about alternative modes and mixed-mode data collection
  - Challenges (and opportunities)
- What we don't (yet) know
  - What research needs to be done

- Note: this presentation is mostly commentary, as much of the detail has been (or will be) covered in other presentations

Why Explore Alternative Modes?

- **Enhancing and extending measurement**
  - Getting data we can't (easily) get through surveys
  - Getting better quality data than we currently get
  - Getting data with greater granularity

- **Reducing respondent burden or survey length**

- **Increasing participation rates**

- **Reducing costs or limiting cost increases**

- **You can't have your cake and eat it**
  - We can't optimize on <u>all</u> of these goals

What We Know: Alternative Modes of Data Collection 1

- Two broad approaches
  - Provide devices to respondents
  - Have respondents use own devices
- Two broad types of technology use
  - Active: e.g., have respondents use technology to report data in a different way
    - E.g., Web surveys; text message surveys; EMA; electronic diaries; receipt scanning
  - Passive: use technology to collect data directly
    - E.g., accelerometry; GPS; browser tracking
    - Eg., administrative data linkages

What We Know: Alternative Modes of Data Collection 2

- Some methods involve a mix of active and passive measurement
  - E.g., ask respondent to use online financial tools and consent to linkage; use of loyalty cards to capture some expenditures
- All approaches require active consent from participants
  - Willingness, consent, and compliance vary by nature of task and characteristics of respondents
- Using these tools in surveys is a different proposition to using among volunteers

What We Know: Mixed-Mode Data Collection 1

- Much more research in self-administered than interviewer-administered modes

- No evidence that mixed-mode data collection increases response rates – or reduces non-response bias – relative to single-mode alternatives
  - Mail and Web mixed-mode response rates

- Self-administered modes present additional measurement challenges
  - See later

What We Know: Mixed-Mode Data Collection 2

- Little evidence of significant cost savings of mixed-mode data collection over single-mode alternatives

  - Other than in very large-scale operations (e.g., censuses and ACS)
  - Initial (transition) costs may be substantial
  - One exception: Schupp & Kűhne (2016) report a 25% saving of Web-CAPI over CAPI only

- Not a simple turnkey solution

  - Requires significant effort to convert complex instruments
  - Case management systems also needed

Measurement Challenges of Mixed Mode

- Difficulty of doing physical measurements and biomeasures (e.g., grip strength; whole blood)
  - But some research on blood spot and saliva in self-administered modes (mail)
- Equivalence of cognitive tests across modes unknown

- Consent rates (e.g., to admin record linkage) lower on Web than interviewer-administered

- Self-reports to sensitive questions likely better

- But mode effects found in substantive variables

So Why Bother?

- Evidence to date does not suggest a lot of advantage for mixed-mode approaches

- Alternative explanation is that we just haven't figured out how best to do it
  - ACS example: initial tests resulted in lower self-response rates; now fully implemented sequential mixed-mode design
  - All the identified challenges can be viewed as opportunities for research

Research Opportunities 1

- How to target mixed-mode designs to maximum effect?
  - E.g., PSID work on predicting mode and targeting protocol
  - What's the best incentive schedule to maximize use of Web?
  - Modularization of Web mode?
- How to address differential Internet and smartphone coverage?
  - At what point is it cost-effective to provide equipment?
  - <u>Why</u> do people not want to self-administer?
  - <u>How</u> do they differ from those who do?

Research Opportunities 2

- How to deal with difficulty of enhanced measurements?

  - Some work done on self-report (mail) blood spots, saliva samples, etc.
  - Work ongoing to find equivalent cognitive tests

- How to increase rates of consent to admin data linkage on Web?

  - Ongoing work on *Understanding Society*, focusing both on consent <u>rates</u> and on whether consent is <u>informed</u>

Research Opportunities 3

- How to increase uptake of new technologies or tools?

    - Current research on <u>willingness</u> to permit various measurements
    - Current research on <u>compliance</u> with additional active and passive tasks (accelerometry, GPS, etc.)

- How to do this all in longitudinal surveys without negatively affecting the core process?

    - Innovation panels, separate (parallel) studies, embedded tests, etc.

Final Thoughts

- Longitudinal surveys provide richer opportunities than cross-sectional surveys for mixed-mode research
  - Measure preferences and behavior
  - Obtain detailed contact information at baseline
  - Rich covariates for modeling
- But the risks are also potentially greater
  - Converting an existing panel to mixed-mode is different than starting a new panel
- Goal of balancing resources to move our knowledge forward without harming the surveys