



## CONNECTING RESEARCHERS WITH PEOPLE

Cint's Answers to the ESOMAR 26 Questions

### INTRODUCTON TO THE ESOMAR 26 QUESTIONS



ESOMAR IS the world organisation for enabling better research into markets, consumers and societies. As part of their guide to conducting online research on the Internet ESOMAR have recently updated a series of questions designed to help market researchers when purchasing and conducting online research.

Cint has developed a unique online marketplace for connecting owners of online panels with buyers of online sample through a fully transparent platform with built in quality standards and procedures for conducting online research. Buyers of online sample can see exactly what they are purchasing and have full control over their online fieldwork. This document demonstrates how this unique system meets and often exceeds the requirements set for conducting online research.

### COMPANY PROFILE

#### 1. What experience does your company have with providing online samples for market research?

Cint is a software company that provides new generation solutions for conducting online research in the most efficient way possible. The company was founded in 1999 and developed the Cint Panel Exchange, an open online panel marketplace where panel owners can open access to their panels and users can login and purchase access to online panels. Through the Cint Panel Exchange (The Exchange), Cint were able offer online samples in the Scandinavian market from 2000. The company is now a large international provider of online sample access as well as offering an extensive range of solutions for efficient panel set up and management.

### SAMPLE SOURCE

#### 2. Please describe and explain the types of source(s) for the online sample that you provide (are these databases, actively managed panels, direct marketing lists, web intercept sampling, river sampling or other)?

Panel owners in Cint Panel Exchange source panels through the following types of recruitment:

- Active recruitment through telephone
- Active recruitment through face to face

- Online recruitment using banners on different portals and websites
- Online recruitment through the owner's portal using editorial space
- Email recruitment through the owner's newsletters
- Specific invitations sent to the owner's database
- Email recruitment by sending invitations to permission based databases



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### **3. What do you consider to be the primary advantage of your sample over other sample sources in the marketplace?**

Working with Cint and using the Exchange differs to the conventional way of working with panel suppliers. The system is completely transparent, meaning that you at any time have full control over the sample you are purchasing, you can decide which panels you want to use, for example based on how the members are recruited or what incentives are applied. You can also check price and availability directly in the system before starting a survey. Because all the panels are managed on the same platform, they are subject to the same rigorous panel management and survey management procedures and features that ensure high quality respondents.

Cint Panel Exchange adds quality as the panels are owned by local companies, not global companies. There is a strong relationship between the panel owners and the respondents (in comparison to other panel companies who have to build up the relationship from scratch).

The other big advantage with the Exchange is that you can blend panel sample from multiple panels, taking away the bias of any one type of panel recruitment and allowing the user to find more targeted groups.

### **4. If the sample source is a panel or database, is the panel or database used solely for market research? If not, please explain**

The panels within Cint Panel Exchange are only used for market research. When members register they are informed that they only register for surveys, and nothing else. Direct users of sample in the Exchange are also required to sign an agreement that includes that they can only use sample for market research purposes.

### **5. How do you source groups that may be hard-to-reach on the internet?**

Cint Panel Exchange has a large accumulation of panels in one place, recruited using different methods and from different online sources. Panelists are also profiled so that specific target groups can be identified. When sourcing from multiple panels, simultaneously, it makes it possible to find harder to reach groups in suitable sizes to run surveys.

We also encourage panel owners to meet the demand generated in the Exchange, by recruiting groups that are less represented in the Exchange.

### **6. What are people told when they are recruited?**

They are asked to provide opinions on new products and services by joining an internet based consumer panel (or other specialized research panel), where they will from time to time be invited to take part in surveys regarding different consumer products and/or opinion polling. They are also offered incentives for their time (although the monetary rewards are designed not to encourage professional response, but to encourage response over a long time). Each panelist gets a panelist page, where they can set their own level of participation. No panel is used for marketing. At any stage they can choose to leave the panel.



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### PANEL RECRUITMENT

**7. If the sample comes from a panel, what is your annual panel turnover/ attrition/ retention rate and how is it calculated?**

The rate of attrition varies by type and age of panel. For many panels it is between 1 and 3% of the panel per year. Another advantage of the Cint Panel Exchange is that because it is a marketplace for online sampling, it generates a steady demand for surveys throughout the year, keeping panelists engaged and active. The system also has an automated indexing procedure for panelists which allows the panel owner to identify inactive panelists.

**8. Please describe the opt-in process.**

Online recruited panelists are usually recruited via link to a panel registration page. Once they have completed their details they are thanked and informed they will receive their panel account login details in an email. Once this email is received they double opt in by logging into their account to activate it. It is also a chance for them to check their personal information, set the frequency of surveys they would like to receive and view other information provided by the panel owner.

If a panel owner moves their panel to Cint Panel Exchange and existing panelists are imported into it, or if a list of contacts has expressed interest in joining a panel they are re-validated by being sent an email informing them of their new panel account together with their login details and the link to their panel account page. To become or continue being panel members they are requested to login and activate their account. Therefore they are required to opt in at least twice by clicking on the panel account link and then logging in.

**9. Do you have a confirmation of identity procedure? Do you have procedures to detect fraudulent respondents at the time of registration with the panel? If so, please describe.**

Panelists cannot register in a panel more than once with the same email address. Profile data is collected, including personal identification numbers in relevant countries, so checks can be made. Panelists are required to enter a home address relevant to the country of the panel, first and last name, and many panel owners use incentives which require bank information or send incentives to panelists home addresses.

**10. What profile data is kept on panel members? For how many members is this data collected and how often is this data updated?**

Profile data stored includes: Email Address, Name, Address, Phone numbers, Gender, Postal Code, Year of Birth, Education, Occupation, and all answers given to panel questions. The Data is updated every time panelists make changes to their profile information in their panelist account. Also after responding to a survey panelists are presented with the opportunity to complete unanswered, non mandatory questions.

**11. What is the size and/or the capacity of the panel, based on active panel members on a given date? Can you provide an overview of active panelists by type of source?**

As a sample buyer you can see specific information on all available panels including live response rates as well as checking availability of panelists on a specific date. Average response rates range between 40 to 50 percent. Type of panel recruitment has less influence on response rates, compared to how well the panels are managed by the panel owner. Regular communication from the panel owner, and a continuous recruitment program is more likely to improve response rates.



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### PANEL AND SAMPLE MANAGEMENT

**12. Please describe your sampling process including your exclusion procedures if applicable. Can samples be deployed as batches/replicates, by time zones, geography, etc? If so, how is this controlled?**

Sampling in Cint Panel Exchange is available in over 30 countries and is controlled by preset timing (24/7/365) for send outs to meet the requirements of the survey. We recommend users begin with a soft launch, or small send out of 50-150 invites (depending on Incidence rate (IR) and fieldwork timing) Any differences to the original estimate result in a re-calculation of CPI or even project cancellation if the project does not meet the required standards e.g. on LOI (max 27 min), incidence rate (minimum 5%) or if the survey tool links do not work properly. After the soft launch the study is fully launched. Minimum fieldwork period is usually 3 days, any closed interviews with the first 3 days results in an extra charge.

**13. Explain how people are invited to take part in a survey. What does a typical invitation look like?**

Survey invitations are addressed to the respondent, are set up to match the panel owners branding and are sent in the Panel owners' names. They ask respondents for their opinions and detail the length of the survey and amount of the reward. For those who do not want to take part they are invited to select the decline link. The invite includes a support address for any queries relating to the survey.

**14. How often are individual members contacted for online surveys within a given time period? Do you keep data on panellist participation history and are limits placed on the frequency that members are contacted and asked to participate in a survey?**

Another of the automated quality features in Cint Panel Exchange makes sure that all members are quarantined after participating in a survey. The standard quarantine period of this type in the Exchange is 10 days after participating in a survey. This can be set by the panelist and the panel owner (the least frequent selection takes priority). Panelists receive a score for how active they are in terms of participating in surveys and a participation history on response is recorded by the system. On top of this Cint Panel Exchange has a subject category quarantine setting which stops panelists receiving a survey of the same subject category for 3 months. Respondents can also be excluded from future surveys by excluding previous projects when selecting sample in the Exchange.

**15. Please describe the nature of your incentive system(s). How does this vary by length of interview, respondent characteristics, or other factors you may consider?**

Cint Panel Exchange includes a reward system based on points. The number of points are affected by the length of interview. On reaching a redemption level set by the panel owner, panelists can receive their rewards through different online payment partners linked to the Cint Panel Exchange, the size of the rewards being based on the number of points earned by the panelists. Panelists can choose to receive their rewards in terms of cash sent to their bank accounts or they can shop online with associated online merchants. Some panels include an option to make payments to charity. Alternatively the panel owner can opt to provide the panelist rewards themselves. The incentives have been set to encourage long term participation but also to discourage participation for payment purposes only. A key feature that boosts long term participation is that the different panel owners choose which payment options to offer their members based on how the profiles of the members look like.



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### POLICIES AND COMPLIANCE

**16. Is there a privacy policy in place? If so, what does it state? Is the panel compliant with all regional, national and local laws with respect to privacy, data protection and children e.g. EU Safe Harbor, and COPPA in the US? What other research industry standards do you comply with e.g. ICC/ESOMAR International Code on Market and Social Research, CASRO guidelines etc.?**

All panel providers within Cint Panel Exchange are required to sign a contract that they work in accordance with Swedish legislation on the protection of personal information (which is aligned with European Data Protection legislation) or equivalent legislation which has been agreed by Cint. In addition they agree to work within ESOMAR standards for conducting online research or equivalent, informing members that they can only gather information for the purposes of market research and they can choose to opt out a panel whenever they wish. Panel owners are required to inform panelists that any personal information gathered is kept strictly confidential.

**17. What data protection/security measures do you have in place?**

#### *Sampling security:*

- Access to information about the project is only granted to the user who creates each project.
- Users are automatically logged off after a given period of non-activity.
- Respondents reach their surveys by GUIDS (globally unique identifiers), which are impossible to hack.

#### *Panel management security:*

- Access to information about the panels and panelists is only granted to the company who owns the panel.
- Users are automatically logged off after a given period of non-activity.

#### *Security Assessments - Cint ASP Environment:*

- The Cint ASP environment has been designed with security, high-availability and performance in mind.
- All servers, services and network are monitored 24/7 by both Cint and the hosting partner with operation teams on stand-by.

Cint Panel Exchange uses Secure Sockets Layers (SSL) for sampling, panel management and critical panelist information.

**18. Do you apply a quality management system? Please describe it.**

We do not invite duplicate email addresses in one project or selection.

Other features include a ranking system for every panelist. This gives us a good indication of the activity levels of the entire panelist list. From the panelist side, we have a satisfaction measurement system, where they can go in and grade the questionnaires they fill out for length language and logic. If the results are poor these are fed back to the sample user. Continued poor results can lead to the cancellation of the sampling user licence.

Another key quality process include the checking of all survey links by Cint for logic and language, before project launch. Any links which do not work or are of insufficient quality must be amended before launch.

We are also designing new technology to find additional ways to identify possible duplicates and professional responses.

**19. Do you conduct online surveys with children and young people? If so, please describe the process for obtaining permission**

We only conduct online surveys with children and young people (below adult age) through requesting consent from parents, to survey



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### PARTNERSHIPS AND MULTIPLE PANEL MEMBERSHIP

**20. Do you supplement your samples with samples from other providers? How do you select these partners? Is it your policy to notify a client in advance when using a third party provider? Do you de-duplicate the sample when using multiple sample providers?**

Our policy is not to use other suppliers of sample. In a very limited number of cases, where we need to supplement a small percentage of the project we only use trusted partners, who are members of ESOMAR. In all cases we notify the client in advance.

**21. Do you have a policy regarding multi-panel membership? What efforts do you undertake to ensure that survey results are unbiased given that some individuals belong to multiple panels?**

It is possible for panelists to be members of more than one panel in Cint Panel Exchange. However due to the fact that most panels are recruited from very different communities and use different methods of recruitment, the likelihood is low. Before each survey the sample used for a survey/tracker cannot contain double e-mail addresses. Therefore it is not possible when working with us, to receive answers from the same e-mail address. We are also designing new technology to find additional ways to identify any suspected duplicate panelists or professional respondents.

### DATA QUALITY AND VALIDATION

**22. What are likely survey start rates, drop-out and participation rates in connection with a provided sample? How are these computed?**

children in the needed age group. When requesting consent from parents we ask them to sit in on the survey. Depending on topic we may detail the topic of the survey in the invitation. Response rates are calculated our software based on level of activity and propensity to respond to a survey request. On average 30-65% start a survey and dropout rates are below 10%. Response rates are when a respondent clicks on a link compared to number invited. Drop outs are people that never reached our end link compared to the number who responded. Drop outs are normally due to poor questionnaire quality, longer surveys and problems with survey links. Participation is based on those who start a survey and are either screened out, receive a quota full or are completes.

**23. Do you maintain individual level data such as recent participation history, date of entry, source, etc., on your panelists? Are you able to supply your client with a per job analysis of such individual level data?**

Cint Panel Exchange saves almost all data although most of this information is not usually made available to the client. We have join date, last participation date, transaction history on all the survey actions and results, redemptions, reward points transactions etc. We have the possibility of extracting this data upon request, but we have a fee for manual work done by our tech support.



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### **24. Do you use data quality analysis and validation techniques to identify inattentive and fraudulent respondents? If yes, what techniques are used and at what point in the process are they applied?**

We have a range of features to deal with professional/duplicate respondents. The system includes stratified sampling to get various types of respondents including active and less active panelists. We know the length of the survey and can compare this against individual answers. We can identify and exclude multiple panel respondents both through email address and by name and postal address and bank data if the payment method supports this.

We also receive feedback from clients and can update the status on the panelists on this feedback, in cooperation with the panel owner. In addition to this we are designing new technology to find further ways to identify any suspected duplicate panelists or professional respondents.

Quality of response is also affected by the quality of the questionnaire. Therefore we feedback to the client any issues relating to the questionnaire both before the launch of the survey as well on completion of the survey.

### **25. Do you measure respondent satisfaction?**

Every respondent that has completed a questionnaire can give their opinion on the conducted survey for length, logic and language as well as open text feedback. You can view the results in Cint Panel Exchange to see the quality of the questionnaire and the opinions of respondents.

Demographic background is available on request. Data is also collected by the client's survey tool. If there are issues in terms of the quality of survey, respondent feedback is also passed on to the client.

### **26. What information do you provide to debrief your client after the project has finished?**

All information that the client needs such as number of responses and status of response: completes, screen outs, quota full and drop outs, as well as average length of interview and incidence rate.