



## INTRODUCTON TO THE ESOMAR 26 QUESTIONS

ESOMAR is the global organization that strives to enable better quality research of markets, consumers and societies. As part of their guidelines for conducting online research on the Internet, ESOMAR have a series of questions designed to help market researchers when purchasing and conducting online research.

Cint has developed a unique and transparent online marketplace that connects online panel owners with buyers of online sample. Essential to Cint's platform are the quality standards and controls that have been developed for conducting online research. With such a transparent and unique model in place, buyers of online sample will have full control over their online fieldwork, whether they chose to 'do it themselves' or use Cint's project managers who are trained in quality control. This document demonstrates how Cint's unique approach to online market research meets and often exceeds the requirements set by Esomar, 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 ways possible. The company was founded in 1998 and developed the OpinionHUB, a transparent online panel marketplace where panel owners can join and allow access to their panels and online sample buyers can purchase access to such panels through the 'do it yourself' model. Through the exchange platform, OpinionHUB, Cint were able to offer online samples in the Scandinavian market from 2000. The company is now a large international provider of online sample access, both through our self-service SaaS (Software as a Service) platform, and through our project managers. Further, today Cint also offers an extensive range of solutions that optimize efficiency of 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 OpinionHUB 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 panel owner's newsletters.
- Specific invitations sent to the panel owner's database.
- Email recruitment by sending invitations to permission based database.

**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 OpinionHUB differs to the conventional way of working with panel suppliers. The system is completely transparent, meaning that at any time in the fieldwork stage, you have full control over the sample you are purchasing, and therefore can decide which panels you want to use. Whether you have specific preferences of methods of recruitment, or how panelists are incentivized, the exchange platform offers you this choice.

You can also check price and availability directly in the system before starting a survey. Regardless of what panels you chose to use, panels in the exchange are subject to the same rigorous panel management and survey management quality controls.

Many of the panels in the exchange are owned by local companies, rather than global companies. This offers an exceptional advantage over panel companies who may recruit at a global level. By building a panel locally, there are many opportunities to forge a better quality relationship with respondents because panel owners not only speak the local language, but they understand the culture. Online communities across the globe vary from country to country and Cint understands this.

Another advantage with OpinionHUB is that you can chose to blend your sample from multiple panels. This takes away the bias of any one type of panel recruitment and allowing you 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 OpinionHUB are only used for market research. When members register they are informed that they only register for surveys in relation to market research. Direct users of sample in OpinionHUB 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?**

OpinionHUB has a large accumulation of panels in one place, recruited using different methods and from different sources both online and offline. 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 because you are dipping into a larger pool of respondents from so many different sources, rather than a traditional online (single source) panel.

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

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

Panel owners in OpinionHUB all have different methods of recruiting and therefore provide different messages to potential panel members. Cint suggests that panel owners explain to new panelists that they will be 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. Panel owners will also explain that potential panelists will be offered incentives for their time (although the monetary rewards are designed not to encourage professional respondents, but to value a panel member's time and encourage long term membership to the panel.). Each panelist gets a panelist page, where they can set their own level of participation. No panel is used for marketing. At any stage a panelist can chose to leave the panel by opting out on their panelist profile page or via the panel owner homepage.

## 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 OpinionHUB 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 system, giving panelists a score based on how responsive they are to surveys. This feature allows panel owners to identify inactive panelists and remove where appropriate.

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

Online panelists are usually recruited via a link to a specific panel registration page. Once they have entered their details they are thanked and informed that 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. By having them log into their account on a separate occasion, a new panelist is given a chance to verify their personal information, set the frequency of surveys they would like to receive and view any other information provided by the panel owner.

If a panel owner has a running panel on their own platform and decides to move their panel to the OpinionHUB (i.e. existing panelists are imported into the Cint platform), or if a potential panel owner has a list of contacts whom have expressed interest in joining a panel, but haven't been recruited as such, they are re-validated through an email which is sent informing them of their new panel account and 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 as above. 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 that 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. Cint has also developed a Captcha IP procedure. Any panel owners who use Cint's platforms can use Captcha to test IP addresses. This ensures a panelist from different country than the panel, can join (e.g. a panelist from India cannot join a US panel).

### **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 specific questions that the panel owner can chose to ask. Cint also has a number of standard 'global questions' which are used across countries to get as much standardized data as possible on panelists. This includes questions pertaining to: automotive, healthcare, employment etc. 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 additional questions from the global questions list, which they might not have filled in before.

### **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?**

In line with Cint's adherence to transparency, as a sample buyer you can see the true live number of panelists on any panel at any time. Additional 'real time data' is also included for anyone to see, including response rates and availability of sample. Average response rates range between 40 to 50 percent and are calculated based on the last 100 send out selections. 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 what drives these exceptional response rates.

## 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 OpinionHUB is available in over 45 countries and is controlled by preset timing (24/7/365) for send outs to meet the requirements of the client. We recommend users begin with a soft launch, or small send out of 10% of the desired sample size (but this can vary depending on Incidence rate (IR) and fieldwork timing). After the soft launch the study is fully launched. Whether you deploy sample yourself, or work with our project managers, sample can be sent in as many batches as you require. Cint recommends sending smaller batches over a longer period of time so that fieldwork can be controlled in the most efficient way and responses and demographics can be monitored.

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

Panel owners set up their own invitations in the Cint and content varies by panel partner, however generally, they ask respondents for their opinions and always display the length of the time it will take to complete the survey, the 'general topic' of the survey (so as not to be leading) and the amount/type of reward the panelist will receive. For those who do not want to take part in the survey, there is a 'decline' option which is embedded in the email that a panelist can select. The invite also includes a support email 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 panelist participation history and are limits placed on the frequency that members are contacted and asked to participate in a survey?**

OpinionHUB has an automated system that ensures all panelists are 'quarantined' after participating in a survey (i.e. they cannot be sent another survey for X number of days). The standard quarantine period in OpinionHUB is 10 days however this can vary by panelist and panel owner. As mentioned above, Cint's indexing system gives each panelist a score depending on how active they are at participating in surveys. A participation history on response is recorded by the system. An additional exclusion that can be applied is on subject category. OpinionHUB 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 OpinionHUB.

**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?**

OpinionHUB includes a reward system based on points. The number of points is 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 OpinionHUB, the size of the rewards being based on the number of points earned by the panelists. Panelists can choose to receive their rewards in cash sent to their bank accounts or they can shop online with online merchants. Some panels include an option to make payments to a charity. Alternatively the panel owner can opt to provide the panelist rewards directly. The incentives have been set to encourage long term participation but also to discourage professional respondents who seek to respond to surveys only to obtain payment. A key feature that boosts long term participation is that different panel owners choose an incentive model that works best for their members, rather than taking a 'one size fits all' approach.

## 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 OpinionHUB are required to sign a contract which states 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 are asked to work within ESOMAR and ISO 20252 and 26362 standards for conducting online research or equivalent standards, informing members that they can only gather information for the purposes of market research and the panelist can choose to opt out of the panel whenever they wish. Panel owners are required to inform panelists that any personal information gathered is kept strictly confidential and is never passed onto a third party without the panelist's permission. Cint adheres to Esomar, ISO 20252/26362, Casro and MRA guidelines and standards.

**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.
- Users must sign in using a user name and password.
- Respondents reach their surveys by GUIDS (globally unique identifiers).

Panel management security:

- Access to information about the panels and panelists is only granted to the company who owns the panel. This does not include any personally identifiable data.
- 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 networks are monitored 24/7 by both Cint and the hosting partner with operation teams on stand-by.

OpinionHUB uses Secure Sockets Layers (SSL) for sam-

pling, panel management and critical panelist information.

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

Cint has a quality department that works with all departments to ensure an exceptional quality management system is followed. Through our ISO 20252 and 20263 compliant quality management system, we can ensure that all our controls around procedures for running projects meet the requirements of these international standards.

This includes quality measures on:

- Cint's organization and responsibilities.
- Recruitment measures.
- Access Panel Structure and Size.
- Access Panel Management.
- Access Panel Usage.
- Client Reporting.
- Data Collection, management and processing.
- Professional Rules of Conduct.

Some specific features include: Cint does 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 rate the questionnaires they take, in terms of length, language and logic. If negative scores come up, the project manager alerts the client. Continued poor results can lead to the cancellation of sampling user license.

Another key quality process includes 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.**

Cint follows all local legislation for conducting surveys with children. We only conduct online surveys with children and young people (age definition varies by country) through receiving consent from their parents.

## 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?**

Cint's transparent model always allows clients to see exactly where respondents come from. In cases where Cint requires panelists from outside the OpinionHUB, in line with our transparency, clients will be made aware. Outside partners are chosen based on their capabilities and quality control measures. When outside sample is used, Cint works with a technology partner that de-duplicates across sources through cookie tracking and IP address checks.

**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?**

Due to the nature of the exchange model, panelists can be members of more than one panel. However due to the fact that most panels are recruited from very different communities and use different methods of recruitment, the likelihood is low. As already mentioned, Cint uses advanced de-duplication techniques to ensure respondents who are on multiple panels cannot take part in the same survey. Cint is committed to being at the forefront in technology, and this involves, staying one step ahead of panelists and always knowing the best way to de-duplicate and validate, where necessary (whether through IP, Captcha, cookies etc).

## 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?**

Response rates are calculated by 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 calculated when a respondent clicks on a link, divided by the 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 qualify as a complete.

**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?**

OpinionHUB saves almost all data although most of this information is not usually made available to the client. Data includes: panelist join date, last participation date, transaction history on all the surveys, redemptions, reward points transactions etc. Upon request Cint can extract a number of variables: age, gender, region, year of birth, zip code, income and employment status and append this for the client. Personally identifiable information is never made available, as Cint adheres to privacy and confidentiality laws towards panel members. Survey data is also collected by our clients' survey tool.

**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.

If we receive feedback from our clients of 'fraudulent' or 'inattentive' responders, we can update the status of the panelist based on this feedback, in cooperation with the panel owner. In addition to this we are always looking at developing advanced 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 always give feedback to the client of any potential issues relating to the questionnaire that Cint feels could affect fieldwork, 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 has the option to voice their opinion. They are asked a few questions on survey length, logic and language and are also able to give feedback on anything else in an open text box. This information is available to clients in the exchange.

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

As Cint does not host the survey, we do not hold the survey data and therefore do not deliver data at the end of a project. We can however, provide additional information upon client request that we do hold on the exchange, such as: number of responses and status of response (i.e. completes, screen outs, quota full and drop outs) as well as average length of interview and incidence rate.