The Good, The Bad, and The Online Diaries

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Outline

I. Background
II. Web Diary Feasibility Test
III. Individual Diaries Feasibility Test
IV. Proof of Concept Test
V. Online Diary Improvement Project
VI. Large Scale Feasibility Test
I. Background - Consumer Expenditure Diary Overview (i.e. Single and Searching)

- CE currently uses one paper diary to collect household expenditures for a week
- Interviewers “place” the diary in-person and conduct one more visit
- The Diary gathers more detailed expenditures than the Consumer Expenditure Interview Survey
- Single proxy reporter for all HH expenditures
- The Diary is divided into four sections:
  - Food Away From Home
  - Food for Home Consumption
  - Clothing, Shoes, Jewelry and Accessories
  - All Other Products, Services and Expenses
II. Web Diary Feasibility Test (i.e. The Meet Cute)

Overview
- Mode: Desktop Diary
- New materials
  - Interviewer Talking Points
  - User Guide
- Eligible cases
  - English only
  - No Multi-CU HHs or Replacement HHs
- Single proxy reporter for all HH expenditures
- Assignment Protocol
  - If a HH screened in as eligible, HH was assigned a single diary for the entire HH, similar to official assignment protocols

Findings
- Higher median expenditures for the following sections:
  - Clothing, Shoes, Jewelry, and Accessories
  - Food and Drinks for Home Consumption
- Lower item nonresponse, as defined for a diary instrument
- Week-to-week drop-off potentially validate shift to one-week collection period
II. Web Diary Feasibility Test
III. Individual Diaries Feasibility Test (i.e. The Honeymoon Period)

**Overview**
- Modes: Desktop and Mobile
- New materials
  - User Guide
- Eligible Cases
  - English only
  - No Multi-CU HHs or Replacement HHs
  - Home internet access via PC, tablet, Smartphone
- Person-level reporting, main R recorded expenditures for ineligible Rs and for any HH members not participating

**Assignment Protocol**
- If a HH screened in as eligible, HH members were offered modes sequentially
- Mobile first & if they did not possess a Smartphone, then
- Desktop mode
- Absent eligible members were assigned mode by main R
III. Individual Diaries Feasibility Test (i.e. The Honeymoon Period)

Findings

- No improvement in household cooperation rates
- Determining the extent of contemporaneous reporting of expenses was hampered by data limitations
- Difficulty distinguishing single proxy respondents versus multi-member HHs
- Fewer entries and lower reported expenditure totals
- Positive feedback regarding the ease of recording expenses and the security of the data
III. Individual Diaries Feasibility Test
IV. Proof of Concept Test (i.e. Honey You’re Great, but...)

Overview
- Tested full redesign
- Modes: Desktop, Mobile, & Paper
- Incentivized
- Person-level reporting, main R recorded expenditures for ineligible Rs, HH level expenses, and for any HH members not participating
- Interviewers had access to a summary report of web diaries for their cases
- Interviewers were told to call the main R within 2 days of placement, if a R hadn’t logged in or if R hadn’t made entries

Assignment Protocol
- Member-level internet access and level of use were determined
- Members with internet access were offered an online diary or a paper diary
- Members without were offered the paper diary
- Absent eligible members were assigned mode by main R
IV. Proof of Concept Test (i.e. Honey You’re Great, but…)

Findings

- Participation within HHs was much broader for the POC than in prior tests
- Respondents generally higher educated and under the age of 39
- Lower take up rate for the online diary when offered a paper option
- Diary expenditures were not significantly different than equivalent production amounts
- However, HHs reported lower median expenditure totals and
- Greater numbers of small-value expenditures
IV. Proof of Concept Test

![Image of the Consumer Expenditure Diary Survey](image.png)

- **Date:** March 10, 2015
- **Description:** Enter Description
- **Cost:** $0.00
- **Category:** Select Category

You haven't entered any expenses this week.

- [ ] If you had no expenses during your diary keeping week, check here.
V. Online Diary Improvement Project (i.e. The Self Reflection Stage)

Overview
- Two instruments optimized to the R’s device (mobile or desktop/laptop) and accessed through a single portal
- Incentivized
- Person-level diary design
- Developed based on previous CE online diaries
- Robust paradata output
- Modular design that allows for technological enhancements

Findings
- Mobile devices were frequently used, but not as expected
  - Most respondents used at home
- Expenses entered via mobile device were more timely
- Password the biggest barrier to access & mobility
- Low incidence of data quality issues, but still problematic
V. Online Diary Improvement Project
VI. Large Scale Feasibility Test (i.e. Does a Large Feasibility Test Mean Forever?)

- Large-scale implementation of Online Diary Improvement Project diary design
- Return to HH-level diary in lieu of personal diaries
- Restores two one-week diary design
- Introduction of outlet question for recording business where item was purchased/consumed at
- Elimination of conditional incentives with token incentive remaining
VI. Large Scale Feasibility Test

Date & Number of Expenditures

List of Expenditures, Price Paid, & Edit and Delete Buttons

Bar with Filter, Search, & Add Buttons
VI. Large Scale Feasibility Test

Outlet Question

Expanded “Other” Categories
VI. Large Scale Feasibility Test

Food and Drinks for Home Consumption

Briefly describe the individual food or drink item purchased such as eggs, orange juice, or ground beef. Identical items such as “2 gallons of milk” can be combined with the total cost entered.
VI. Large Scale Feasibility Test
VI. Large Scale Feasibility Test

- Desktop version will render similar to the mobile version, but allow for more screen real estate
- Screenshots forthcoming
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“You see, in this world there’s two kinds of surveys, my friend: Those that are online and those that aren’t. This one’s online” – Blondie
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Double Secret Slide – Wonder Twins Powers Activate!