

# WUOL

the magazine of the  
Marketing Research  
and Intelligence  
Association

JAN/FEB 2011

**Going Lijit:** Mining  
and Monetizing  
Blogrolls

**Canadian Online  
Panels:** Similar or  
Different?

In Conversation  
with **Mitch Joel**

An Interview with  
**Andrew Laing**

**Love and Betrayal**  
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Original articles and Letters to the Editor are welcome. Materials will be reviewed by the *Vue* Editorial Team. If accepted for publication, they may be edited for length or clarity and placed in the electronic archives on the MRIA website.

The opinions and conclusions expressed in *Vue* are those of the authors and are not necessarily endorsed by the Marketing Research and Intelligence Association.

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Canadian Publications Mail Agreement #40033932

# Editor's Vue



David Hamburg

Welcome back. Here's to hoping that 2011 will be as interesting and exciting a year as was 2010. So much change everywhere, including here at *Vue*.

First on my list is a call to all MRIA members to become more involved with our publication. Submit proposals, ideas, articles and interviews. The door is wide open; share your vision with our members coast to coast.

In this issue, we explore the blog, which is perhaps the most effective way to personalize, to express oneself in the digital era. But there's another side to blogging that we uncover this month in our interview with Todd Vernon, CEO and founder of Boulder, Colorado-based Lijit and developer of the first and only search tool that uses blogs, their content, and their network connections to produce search results with unprecedented relevance. Todd shares with us some innovative and powerful methods that marketers can use to harness the power of the blogosphere to promote and support goods and services.

In line with using the blogging space for gaining insight into the business world, Kevin Hare interviews Andrew Laing, president of Cormex Research, who discusses the benefits of measuring social media versus taking surveys and measuring responses from a traditional media perspective.

Of course, what would a special blogging issue be without hearing from the blogger, the engine driving this revolution of self-expression? And who better to interview than one of MRIA's favourite speakers and long-time blogger par excellence, Mitch Joel?

Wrapping up this issue's features is a revealing article on the Canadian retail service experience, by Al Hay, president of Hay Research International.

Kick back and enjoy this month's read and, better yet, blog about it. Until next month.

David

C'est un plaisir de vous retrouver. Souhaitons que 2011 sera aussi intéressante et passionnante que 2010. Il y a tant de changements partout, y compris ici à *Vue*.

Pour commencer, je lance un appel à tous les membres de l'ARIM vous invitant à participer davantage à notre publication. Envoyez-nous des propositions, des idées, des articles et des entrevues. La porte est grande ouverte; partagez votre vision avec nos membres partout au pays.

Dans ce numéro, nous explorons le blogue, qui est peut-être la manière la plus efficace de personnaliser, de s'exprimer personnellement, dans cette ère numérique. Mais il y a un envers au blogage que nous révèle notre entrevue ce mois-ci avec Todd Vernon, chef de la direction et fondateur de Lijit à Boulder au Colorado, et développeur du premier et seul outil de recherche utilisant les blogues, leur contenu et leurs connexions réseaux pour produire des résultats de recherche d'une pertinence sans précédent. Todd nous fait part de quelques méthodes novatrices et puissantes que les praticiens de la recherche peuvent utiliser pour exploiter le pouvoir de la blogosphère afin de promouvoir et d'appuyer des produits et services.

Sur ce thème de l'utilisation de l'espace du blogage pour percer le monde des affaires, Kevin Hare a interviewé Andrew Laing, président de Cormex Research, sur les avantages de mesurer les médias sociaux plutôt que d'effectuer des sondages et de mesurer les réponses selon la perspective des médias traditionnels.

Enfin, que serait un numéro spécial sur le blogage sans l'apport d'un blogueur, le moteur animant cette révolution dans l'expression personnelle? Et qui interviewer autre que Mitch Joel, un des conférenciers favoris de l'ARIM et blogueur par excellence depuis longtemps?

Pour conclure, Al Hay, président de Hay Research International, nous offre un article révélateur sur l'expérience des services de vente au détail au Canada.

Détendez-vous et savourez la lecture de ce numéro et, encore mieux, bloguez à son sujet. Au mois prochain.

David

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# Letter **from the President**



Ed Gibson, CMRP

I have written in the past of the privilege we enjoy as marketing researchers, and of the trust that is placed in us to properly represent the views of Canadians both to governments and to commercial organizations. But privilege comes with obligations.

It has been estimated that the half-life of knowledge acquired today in becoming a licensed or certified professional is at the most five years. That means that in a relatively short space of time, half of what is known by a doctor, a lawyer, an accountant – or by a marketing research professional – becomes obsolete.

For this reason, over the past twenty years or so, it has increasingly become an expectation that being a professional entails a commitment to continuing education and a demonstrable willingness to pursue practice-enhancing learning. In fact, the public demand for accountability and consumer protection has led many jurisdictions to require continuing education for professionals. In Canada, for instance, regulators now require mandatory continuing education (MCE) for numerous licensed professions that “practise on the public.”

MRIA has always sought to be ahead of the regulators and hence, in 2006, MRIA became the first marketing research industry association in the world to introduce a charter of respondent rights. Through that covenant with Canadians, we recognize and profess that the public is our practice, and that respondents are the *sine qua non* without which our industry could not exist.

And in that connection, we owe it to respondents, to our clients, and to ourselves to keep pace with changes in our industry, its standards, and its best practices.

These are some of the compelling factors that led the MRIA board of directors to approve and introduce a maintenance of certification and professional development policy, as follows:

*All members of the Marketing Research and Intelligence Association who hold the Certified Marketing Research Professional (CMRP) designation – with the exception of retired members and members who notify the Association, in writing, that they will retire within two years – are required to demonstrate maintenance of professional competence and commitment to continuous learning by obtaining 50 credits of approved professional development activity over a two-year period.*

Let me lay to rest some potential fears about the impact of this change and assure CMRPs, new and old, that they should feel at ease in their ability to maintain their professional status. The system is very flexible and not onerous; the 50 biennial

J’ai déjà écrit au sujet du privilège dont nous bénéficions en tant que praticiens de la recherche marketing et de la confiance qu’on nous accorde pour représenter les perceptions des Canadiens auprès des gouvernements et des entreprises. Mais ce privilège s’accompagne d’obligations.

On estime qu’aujourd’hui, la demi-vie du savoir d’un professionnel détenant une licence ou une accréditation est d’au plus cinq ans. Cela signifie qu’en un temps relativement court, la moitié du savoir d’un médecin, d’un avocat, d’un comptable – ou d’un professionnel de la recherche marketing – devient périmée.

Pour cette raison, depuis environ vingt ans, on s’attend de plus en plus à ce qu’un professionnel s’engage à continuer de s’instruire et manifeste la volonté de poursuivre une formation qui améliore sa pratique. En fait, la demande du public pour la reddition de comptes et la protection du consommateur a mené un grand nombre de gouvernements à exiger la formation continue des professionnels. Au Canada par exemple, les organismes de réglementation imposent maintenant une formation continue obligatoire à de nombreuses professions réglementées dont « la pratique s’effectue auprès du public ».

L’ARIM a toujours cherché à devancer les organismes réglementaires et ainsi, en 2006, elle est devenue la première association de l’industrie de la recherche marketing au monde à instaurer une charte des droits des répondants. Par cet engagement envers les Canadiens, nous reconnaissons et déclarons que le public est notre pratique et que, sans les répondants, notre industrie ne pourrait exister.

Il s’ensuit qu’il nous incombe de suivre le rythme du changement dans notre industrie, dans ses normes et ses pratiques exemplaires pour le bien des répondants, de nos clients et pour notre propre bien.

Ce sont certains des facteurs incontournables qui ont mené le conseil d’administration de l’ARIM à approuver et instaurer la politique de maintien de l’accréditation et de développement professionnel suivante :

*Tous les membres de l’Association de la recherche et de l’intelligence marketing possédant une désignation de professionnel agréé en recherche marketing (PARM) – à l’exception des membres retraités et des membres qui avertissent l’Association, par écrit, qu’ils prendront leur retraite en dedans de deux ans – doivent prouver le maintien de leur compétence professionnelle et leur engagement envers la formation continue en accumulant tous les deux ans 50 points pour des activités de développement professionnel approuvées.*

Laissez-moi dissiper certaines craintes possibles au sujet de l’impact de ce changement et assurer les PARM, nouveaux et anciens, qu’ils devraient se sentir confiants en leur capacité de maintenir leur statut professionnel. Le système est très souple et non onéreux; les PARM activement engagés dans l’industrie et faisant des efforts raisonnables et constants pour améliorer leurs

Maintenance of Certification Program points (MCPs) can be routinely and easily earned by CMRPs who are actively engaged in the industry and who make reasonable, ongoing efforts to improve their professional competencies.

Maintenance of certification is especially important for the transparency, ongoing reputation, and credibility of a relatively new professional certification such as ours, given that the vast majority of current CMRPs have been grandparented to the designation. It elevates those who have earned the CMRP designation and enables them to set an example for those aspiring to it.

Categories of recognition for MCPs are broadly defined across three major areas of endeavour: *learning, leadership skills, and knowledge sharing*. Activities may simply require writing an article for our newsletter, completing pro bono work on behalf of a charity or not-for-profit agency, or being elected or appointed to an MRIA council, board, or conference planning committee. While some paid events (e.g., certain chapter proceedings, MRIA courses and conferences) will be included, CMRPs may also accumulate credits for purely professional development achievement *outside* MRIA in approved programs of their own choosing, or in their own company's courses, not necessarily related to marketing research.

Change is a certainty in professional fields. Their dynamic nature demands continuous education to ensure that the people who practise within them remain current. Advancements work their way into the mainstream much more slowly without continuing education and, in marketing research, both CMRP holders and their clients may suffer as a consequence. Maintenance protects the integrity of the designation by making sure that clients hiring, or staffing their own departments with, CMRPs can do so knowing that they will be working with proficient, competent professionals familiar with the latest developments.

CMRPs are our advocates for best practice and professionalism in conducting marketing research in Canada. Viewed from a long-term, strategic perspective, MRIA's newly implemented maintenance of certification policy is a win-win – for CMRPs, for our respondents and clients, and for the health and viability of our industry.

compétences professionnelles peuvent obtenir facilement, de manière routinière, les 50 points bisannuels du programme de maintien de l'accréditation (PMA).

Le maintien de l'accréditation est particulièrement important pour la transparence, la réputation soutenue et la crédibilité d'une accréditation professionnelle relativement nouvelle telle que la nôtre, étant donné que la grande majorité des PARM actuels ont obtenu leur désignation grâce à un processus de préservation de droits acquis. Ce maintien hausse la réputation de ceux qui ont obtenu la désignation de PARM et les habilite à servir d'exemple à ceux et celles qui aspirent à l'obtenir.

Les catégories reconnues pour l'accumulation des points du PMA se divisent en trois domaines majeurs d'activités : *formation, compétences en leadership et partage des connaissances*. Les activités pourraient consister simplement à rédiger un article pour notre bulletin de nouvelles, à travailler gratuitement pour un organisme à but non lucratif ou de bienfaisance, ou à être élu ou nommé à un conseil d'administration de l'ARIM ou au comité de planification d'une conférence. Bien que certains événements comprenant des frais (p. ex. des délibérations des chapitres, les cours et les conférences de l'ARIM) sont inclus, les PARM pourraient également accumuler des points pour du développement exclusivement professionnel obtenu *à l'extérieur* de l'ARIM dans des programmes approuvés de leur choix ou dans des cours offerts par leur entreprise qui ne sont pas nécessairement liés à la recherche marketing.

Le changement est une certitude dans les champs professionnels. La nature dynamique de ces champs exige une formation continue pour que les personnes pratiquant une profession demeurent à jour. Les progrès sont adoptés beaucoup plus lentement sans la formation continue et, en recherche marketing, les détenteurs de la désignation de PARM et leurs clients pourraient en subir les conséquences. Le maintien de l'accréditation protège l'intégrité de la désignation et garantit que les clients qui engagent des PARM, ou en embauchent dans leurs départements, sont conscients qu'ils travailleront avec des professionnels très compétents et au courant des développements les plus récents.

Les PARM sont les champions des pratiques exemplaires et du professionnalisme au sein de la recherche marketing au Canada. Si l'on regarde la nouvelle politique de maintien de l'accréditation de l'ARIM sous une perspective stratégique à long terme, elle est bénéfique à tous – aux PARM, à nos répondants, à nos clients, et à la santé et à la viabilité de notre industrie.



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# Message **from the Executive Director**



Brendan Wycks

## **Acting on Survey Insights to Increase Member Value and Retention (Part I)**

Welcome to 2011, and all the best for a year marked by good health, professional success, and personal happiness. As I highlighted briefly in the last issue of *Vue*, MRIA's recent Member Value and Benefits Survey generated quite a number of valuable insights, on which your association has begun to take action in order to enhance the value of membership.

## **Our aim was to identify areas of potential weakness and areas that might result in improved member satisfaction.**

Thank you to Janine Keogh of Kraft Canada, Membership portfolio chair, and Sylvie Corbeil-Peloquin, manager of Member Services, for their leadership of this important initiative. Thanks also to Gold Seal Corporate Research Agency member Matrix Research, for fielding the member survey on a pro bono basis, and to Tim Wingrove, CMRP, FMRIA, of Commins Wingrove, for a superb job in analysing the data and preparing a report with recommendations. Tim is quoted and paraphrased liberally in my observations, below.

The results of the survey contain many compliments for MRIA. However, the research was not conducted to gather praise from the converted. Rather, it was undertaken to identify areas of potential weakness, areas where we need to reflect on the ways in which members are being served, and areas that might result in improved member satisfaction and hence increased member retention.

The survey found that satisfaction with MRIA and its value to members is generally positive, but not universally

## **Des perspectives de sondage motivant des mesures pour augmenter la valeur pour les membres et leur fidélisation (Partie I)**

Bienvenue à 2011 et meilleurs vœux de santé, de succès professionnel et de bonheur personnel au cours de cette année.

Comme je l'ai souligné dans le dernier numéro de *Vue*, le récent sondage de l'ARIM auprès des membres sur la valeur et les bénéfices de leur adhésion a recueilli un grand nombre de perspectives inestimables qui ont incité votre association à prendre des mesures pour améliorer la valeur de l'adhésion.

Merci à Janine Keogh de Kraft Canada, directrice du portefeuille des adhésions de l'ARIM, et à Sylvie Corbeil-Peloquin, directrice des services aux membres, pour avoir dirigé cette importante initiative. Merci également à Matrix Research, société membre corporatif Sceau d'or, pour avoir effectué bénévolement le sondage auprès des membres, et à Tim Wingrove, PARM et membre associé de l'ARIM, de Commins Wingrove, pour son superbe travail d'analyse des données et la rédaction du rapport et des recommandations. Je cite et paraphrase Tim profusément dans mes observations ci-dessous.

Le sondage contient beaucoup de compliments à l'égard de l'ARIM. Cependant, la recherche n'a pas été menée pour recueillir les éloges des convertis, mais pour identifier des domaines présentant des faiblesses – ceux dont nous devons examiner la façon de desservir les membres, et ceux où nous pourrions améliorer la satisfaction des membres et, donc, leur fidélisation.

Le sondage a révélé que la satisfaction à l'égard de l'ARIM et la valeur de l'adhésion sont généralement positives, mais pas chez tous. Presque 20 % des répondants ont déclaré qu'ils étaient très satisfaits de l'ARIM, mais la majorité d'entre eux (66%) ont déclaré qu'ils n'étaient que « plutôt » satisfaits.

La perception que les coûts de l'adhésion sont trop élevés est un des principaux problèmes qui tend à diminuer la satisfaction des membres. Cela ne dépend pas tant de la

so. Almost 20 per cent of respondents give MRIA top marks; but the majority (66%) say they are only “somewhat” satisfied.

One key issue that tends to suppress member satisfaction is the perceived high cost of membership. It’s not so much the annual membership dues, but rather the costs of participating in many of the worthwhile activities of the association – courses, conferences, events, etcetera. Members are asking that ways be found to reduce these costs.

Members lapse for one main reason: they simply do not become engaged enough to use the association’s services to their personal benefit. These lapsed members are not that interested in MRIA’s more altruistic benefits – the standards of conduct and practice, for example, or the association’s government relations and advocacy – benefits to the entire industry. They want personal value; and they get it, to a degree, in the specifics of services provided, like *Vue*, the directories, and the annual conference. But they just don’t get enough to justify their membership.

Partly, lapsed membership is a function of not having enough time to be more involved. But obviously, it is also a function of finding insufficient attraction over a limited time span. The critical period when the decision to renew, or not to renew, is made is in the first three years of membership.

Most lapsed members (69%) are individual and not corporate members. For these individuals, the most important reason for joining MRIA in the first place is networking opportunities; this benefit is rated far higher by lapsed members than by active members.

However, in order to satisfy their networking needs, members need to participate in events that involve other members – conferences and courses, for example. Unfortunately, doing so requires added expenditure and time commitment. Interestingly, some of the most contented members highlight the activities of their local chapter, which are, of course, ways of obtaining this networking fulfillment. So, while new members often join MRIA with an eye to networking, they find few opportunities beyond those that require more time and cost commitments than they are prepared to accept. And if they are not working in an active chapter city, that route to engagement is not readily available.

Virtually no lapsed members have acted in a volunteer capacity within MRIA. Stated another way: No one who

cotisation annuelle que des coûts de la participation à un grand nombre d’activités valables de l’association – cours, conférences, événements, etc. Les membres veulent que nous trouvions des façons de réduire ces coûts.

Une raison en particulier incite les membres à laisser leur adhésion expirer : ils ne sont tout simplement pas suffisamment engagés pour utiliser les services de l’association à leur avantage personnel. Les membres qui laissent expirer leur adhésion ne sont pas intéressés aux bénéfiques plus altruistes de l’ARIM – les normes et règles de pratique, par exemple, et les relations gouvernementales et la défense des droits de l’association – dont bénéficie l’ensemble de l’industrie. Ils veulent une valeur plus personnelle – et ils la trouvent, jusqu’à un certain point, dans certains aspects de services tels que *Vue*, les répertoires et la conférence annuelle. Mais cela ne suffit pas à justifier leur adhésion.

D’une certaine façon, on laisse expirer une adhésion à cause du manque de temps pour participer davantage. Il est évident qu’une autre cause est l’absence d’éléments attirants au cours d’une période limitée. Les trois premières années d’adhésion sont la période critique où l’on prend la décision de renouveler ou non son adhésion.

La plupart (69 %) des membres qui ont quitté sont des membres individuels et non des membres corporatifs. Les possibilités de réseautage est la principale raison qui les a portés à adhérer à l’ARIM au départ; ce bénéfice se classe à un niveau beaucoup plus élevé chez les membres qui quittent que chez les membres actifs.

Par contre, pour satisfaire à leurs besoins en réseautage, les membres doivent participer aux événements avec d’autres membres – les conférences et les cours, par exemple. Malheureusement, cette participation exige des dépenses supplémentaires et du temps. Il est à noter que les membres les plus satisfaits mettent l’accent sur les activités de leur chapitre local – qui offre évidemment une façon de satisfaire aux besoins en réseautage. Donc, bien que les nouveaux membres adhèrent souvent à l’ARIM pour faire du réseautage, ils trouvent peu d’occasions de le faire sauf pour celles exigeant plus de temps et de dépenses qu’ils ne veulent accepter. De plus, s’ils ne travaillent pas dans une ville où se trouve un chapitre actif, leur parcours vers l’engagement n’est pas facile.

Presque aucun membre qui quitte n’a fait de travail bénévole au sein de l’ARIM. Par contre, aucun membre ayant participé comme bénévole n’a laissé expirer son adhésion. Mais on ne sait même pas profiter de ces occasions d’engagement.

volunteers ends up as a lapsed member. But even this opportunity for greater engagement is not being embraced.

Who are the members most at risk of not renewing? They can be profiled as follows:

- younger members, under 45 and particularly under 35
- those in their first three years of membership
- non-corporate members
- those who have paid their membership dues personally
- those who do not hold the CMRP designation
- those who work in quantitative rather than qualitative research.

Probably the most compelling of all findings from the Member Value and Benefits Survey is that the key to satisfied members – those who will continue to renew their membership, year after year – is greater personal engagement in the programs and activities of the association.

And that's the subject of my column for next month: What has MRIA done and what will it be doing to stimulate greater personal involvement in the affairs of the association, and to deliver greater value in a way that leads to higher levels of member satisfaction and retention?

Qui sont les membres les plus portés à laisser expirer leur adhésion? Voici leur profil :

- les plus jeunes membres, de moins de 45 ans, et surtout de moins de 35 ans,
- ceux et celles qui en sont à leurs trois premières années d'adhésion,
- les membres non corporatifs,
- ceux et celles qui paient leur cotisation eux-mêmes,
- les membres qui n'ont pas la désignation de PARM,
- plus probablement ceux et celles qui travaillent en recherche quantitative plutôt qu'en recherche qualitative.

Peut-être que la révélation la plus concluante du sondage sur la valeur et les bénéfices de l'adhésion est que la clé de la satisfaction des membres – ceux et celles qui continuent de renouveler leur adhésion d'année en année – est l'engagement personnel dans des programmes et des activités de l'association.

Ce sera d'ailleurs le sujet de ma chronique le mois prochain : qu'a fait l'ARIM et que fera-t-elle pour stimuler une plus grande participation personnelle aux activités de l'association et pour ajouter plus de valeur de manière à atteindre des niveaux plus élevés de satisfaction et de fidélisation des membres?

*Brendan Wycks*

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# WORLD CLASS SPEAKERS

[www.mria-arim.ca/Conference2011/WELCOME](http://www.mria-arim.ca/Conference2011/WELCOME)

The MRIA 2011 National Conference, with Pinnacle sponsor Ipsos Reid, and current Platinum sponsors Kraft, Millward Brown and Research Now, has already secured two world class speakers: John Furlong, CEO VANOC (Vancouver 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games) and Ari Popper, President of BrainJuicer® North America. Fifty session abstracts were received, and twenty presentations have been selected. We are also working on three plenary panel discussions promising to deliver vigorous debate.



## **John Furlong, O.C., O.B.C.** **CEO Vancouver 2010 Olympic & Paralympic Winter Games**

Many said it was a vision too far, urging him to set the goals at a more attainable level. Furlong refused and through an exhaustive ten year journey went on to deliver, what has now been recognised by the IOC as the most successful Winter Games ever.

Marketing research played a major part in this success, which John will cover in his keynote address. [www.JohnFurlong.ca](http://www.JohnFurlong.ca)



## **Ari Popper** **President, BrainJuicer® North America**

Ari is a highly experienced and respected marketing consultant who has worked closely with some of the world's greatest brands. An expert on branding, marketing communications and new product innovation, Ari has been leading BrainJuicer North America since

2006 where he has helped to reinvent the market research industry by successfully bringing to the US market some of the most innovative and game changing research solutions available.

### **SPONSORS**

With many of Canada's leading research companies on board, a number of very interesting options still remain. Stand-alone sponsor packages are available from as little as \$ 2,000 up to \$ 18,000. Each package guarantees you excellent and ongoing recognition building up to, during and after the event, as well as access to attending delegates, several from sister organizations abroad. Visit our website to see what's available. If you can't find anything and have a brilliant idea let Ian or Mary know at [confsponsorships@mria-arim.ca](mailto:confsponsorships@mria-arim.ca)

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### **REGISTRATION**

Registration will open end February 2011 – for updates on this and other news as it unfolds, go to [www.mria-arim.ca](http://www.mria-arim.ca)

For more information on Speakers, Sponsorship and Tradeshow opportunities go to [www.mria-arim.ca/Conference2011](http://www.mria-arim.ca/Conference2011) or contact Conference Chair, Tony Hoft on 778-477-5511 or [confchair@mria-arim.ca](mailto:confchair@mria-arim.ca)

# Going Lijit:

## Mining and Monetizing Blogrolls

### INTERVIEW WITH TODD VERNON

The founder and CEO of Lijit talks about the tools and services his company provides to Internet publishers, the small as well as the large. It's all about providing relevant information, connecting publishers to their audiences, linking them to advertisers, and monetizing their sites.

**Interviewed by  
David Hamburg**

**Todd, let's start off by introducing yourself to our readers.**

Sure. I'm the founder and CEO of Lijit, which I started in 2006. I was a blogger myself and then, naturally, was interested in that area. It seemed to me that, if you are a small publisher, you just have fewer tools available. On one side, anyone can publish in the world of the Internet – which is kind of cool. But on the other side, it's kind of the world of haves and have-nots. Large publications have access to the inventories from many different companies; they have enough impressions that they can do stuff with. But smaller publications do not; they tend to be relegated to the world of AdSense, where you don't know what's going on. You can be sure that they're not making a lot of money, but I have the sneaking suspicion that Google is.

**I'll bet. For most bloggers, it can be a very lonely world.**

That's a great point. We have publishers of all different kinds; the very large ones are really exceptions. I really liked what FeedBurner had done, providing a service that publishers could adopt and just use for free. Meanwhile, I gave them access to what was going on, on the side, which in turn allowed other monetizing and streams to surface. That's exactly what we did. The history of the company for the last three years is solid. We provide some great tools for publishers to install, giving them a lot of information about their audience that perhaps they couldn't get from other places.

We hit critical mass ramping into this year. All the information that we've gathered in aggregate is super-interesting to marketers. We are able to segment and find very specific audiences that they are looking for within the greater footprint of this entire network. By themselves, no publishers in our network could get a marketer interested in them because they're just too small. But in aggregate, it's different. You're using data that has

proved to the advertisers and marketers that these are super-engaged audiences. People may skim through the glossy pages of CNN, but I maintain that the smaller publications are a lot more interesting because they have audiences that are a lot more engaged. If you can define them, it's a perfect time to inject your message as a marketer.

**So how would a marketer use your product?**

A marketer tries to do one of two things. In the first case, he is trying to understand what's going on, say, the day before Christmas. There are a lot of places where you can go to find out what is hot and what is not. But what is interesting about us is that we can look through the data and tell you what, for example, men who are 30 to 35 are searching for on the Internet. We watch all the search terms that are coming off the search engines. The chances are that what first brought a person to a blog was probably a search query, on Google or Yahoo. We know all in aggregate, so we can engage with a marketer and say that, in this particular segment, these are the specific brands of consumer electronics, for example, that we are seeing across the Internet within our tech segment. So it's super-interesting.

You can also apply to be in our advertising services. This is how it works: You would put in some information about yourself and install ad tags on your side. We use all this data that we capture; we network and aggregate it in order to deliver ads onto your side. For example, when we deal with agencies on the ad side, they want to place their message inside or around the conversations that are happening in smaller publications.

Let's take an example like mom blogs. We have a lot of them. We tell agencies that the opinions of people who want to buy are being formed in these publications and the communities around them. Here is a great case in point: When my wife has a decision to make about what pain reliever she is

going to give the kids, she goes out and reads these mom blogs to get the opinion of what is the best product to use. She is not going to trust the publications in our network to give her the dosage amount; she is going to go to the Tylenol or the Motrin website to get the facts about the product. But to get opinions about the product and decide if she wants to buy – that is happening in these really engaged communities around these women's blogs.

So when we talk to agencies and explain to them that we have this huge network of publishers that are super-loyal and happy, their interest is piqued. Our relationship is based on data and information that help them understand their audience. I can help them understand their audience better, because I have access to that data in aggregate. If they want to place their message about a pain reliever within these communities – alongside the traditional ad unit or maybe even within the content of the publication – and start a dialogue around it, we can facilitate that for them.

**Are your aggregate search returns truer than those of Google, where search engine optimization tactics often get the higher placings rather than the best search result?**

Exactly. What happens – and this is one of the premises that we got into this space – is that people bond with blogs and individual publications for a reason. Those blogs tend to be spicier, but the real reason they bond with those sites is because of the persona driving it. It's about the author. You're getting all the opinions and all the thought. And they really believe what they write.

One of the things that we do for these bloggers is expose all of their content. We provide a great search service on everything that they have written on the subject, but also we will include photos from their Flickr account and videos from their YouTube

account and stuff they've tweeted about. So it glues the audience to the publication and forms that one-on-one metadata that you get when you really know somebody.

You are accessing numerous conversations with these small publications. They are kind of proxies for real relationships, because all ships float higher. So when a message about whether a pain reliever works for my child is out there and those bloggers are super-engaged, it becomes way more interesting to the reader than an ad is.

**Your goal is to deliver value to both sides. The bloggers get their analytics, and the agencies or companies get to have their message delivered to a wide but highly targeted and engaged audience – a perfect fit for their products.**

Spot on. We can put an advertiser in contact with specific authors and then do something like either a campaign or product review. We are like a giant site rep firm from the agency side. Actually, our relationship is very large and far-reaching with all our publishers, because we contact them once a week with an email and they come back to our site to look at their statistics. It becomes an escalated sort of relationship with our publishers. We start with the free service: the bloggers learn something about their audience. And as they become more interested in monetization and getting contacted by marketers or even newspapers, we can also provide them with a monetizing service. We are kind of like a business partner on the publisher side. On the agency side, however, we are about finding those authentic conversations and getting the agency into it.

**Are the advertising agencies your primary market on the business side of things?**

Yes, the agency, then the demand-side platforms that are attached to the agencies or different ad inventories. Then there are some marketing firms,

like tiered ones, that will show up for specific questions about the market. But primarily, we work with agencies and brands directly.

**How do you get the word out to all those agencies?**

We will kind of chat with all sales teams. We've done direct integrations with all the demand-side platforms, like Adspace, that are used by agencies. We're connected to all those platforms through real-time bidding platforms. We can give bloggers an extremely high-quality, engaged ad stream right out of the gate – for those in our network who want to monetize.

We also have a direct sales team that goes out and sells more immersive things. For instance, there is an electric car campaign that's going on right now. One of the things that we've been hearing about is a problem that will arise: range anxiety. The idea is that, if you have an electric car, you can only go so far, then you're out. Think about it as comparing the information that you get on the battery life of a laptop. Every company quote that I've ever read on the battery life of a laptop has always been overestimated. So if you're buying this electric car, you may doubt it when you're told it gets a range of, say, 100 miles. Is it really 50?

This is a perfect engagement for us, because we can go to eco- and tech-centric publications and essentially start a dialogue around this idea of ranging. You can include squares and rectangles in the advertising, but a campaign can also include inviting publishers out for a test drive so they can understand the product and be the first one in their space to test out the car. Then they can review it and write about it. That's the kind of stuff for selling through the direct channel. Go to our indirect channel, which is just a really high-quality CPM [cost per thousand impressions] ad stream that our publishers can opt into: we use all the data that we piggyback onto them, all the time, in aggregate, in order to

make that data a high-value ad stream for them.

**It seems to me that the major value proposition of your service is the objectivity of the data. It's purer; it really means something.**

You hit the nail right on the head. We just launched our new website, and I am super-stoked about it because it's the first one that actually says what we really do – on the first page. There are revolving words that are surfacing from our searches – genuine conversations from influential communities, engaged audiences. This is unlike mass media platforms, where their bored audiences are not engaged. Visitors check in to those sites a few minutes before they check out from work, just to kill time.

**Good point. In fact, all the conversations I've been hearing recently are about the end of search and the beginning of the new quest to somehow draw out the meaning from all this information. There is just too much junk to sort through. Top-ranked search findings are increasingly less meaningful. It's time to prune.**

True. It is another thing we can do internally that is interesting to marketers. For example, if you go to Google and you want to find a restaurant, it has become almost impossible now. All the results are so full of these intermediary sites that provide these lousy reviews: it's all fake. Consequently, it's a total mess. But take a step away from that. We can go out and aggregate the top fifty food publishers. Now, when you search through all their content – because we have it all indexed, not just the things they write, but the bookmarks they put in, the YouTube videos that they shoot, and the photos of restaurants they include – it is so much more interesting.

**Can you tailor your product for local or regional basis?**

We can do localized stuff, for sure. In fact, not only do we know where

publishers are from, but we also know where the readership is located. Bloggers can see that in their stats. We can pick specific publications where all the readership is, for example, in Texas. We have this incredible data stack that we can use for other purposes. What's really cool about our services is that we are 100 per cent optically pure to the publisher. What publishers don't know is that there are many networks that are gathering tons of information from their sites, but the bloggers are not getting anything back. They might be able to monetize their blogs, but I guarantee you that there are monetization streams that are happening outside of their knowledge. With us, it's more like a data co-op: You install our program and receive all that data back, and you know we use that aggregated data to go find you ways to make money. The data never leaves the network if the value is not attributed back to the publisher. We think it is very publisher-friendly, not to mention transparent, to do all this.

**That may be so, but is there really any money to be made from all this for bloggers? I would bet that 98 per cent of all blogs do not drive enough traffic to make any type of monetization significant.**

Valid point. It always comes back to the publication numbers. Still, a lot of the publications in our network have in the area of 100,000 page views per month; that's not unusual. Those guys make some money, maybe a car payment or maybe a house payment. For a lot of these bloggers, publishing is their main job. They curate or write content all day long, but they don't have a sales force or any other options to monetize. That makes us pretty appealing to them. We give them deal flow, optics into advertisers, and money, as well as their audience.

**So blogging for money is a precarious existence. In fact, I know of one top-rated, award-winning blogger who complained to me that**

**there was hardly any money to be made from his blog.**

Depends on what he's doing. If that blogger used our service, we would crawl his content and look at his blogroll. Then we'd see who he points to and who else on the Internet points back to him. Based on that, we would develop a type of influence calculation. We might say that, while he does not have millions of readers, his content vertical is super-laser-focused in a certain area and his reach is actually reasonably large. When he says something, it will percolate through the Internet very specifically to people that are like-minded.

For instance, we did a project for an agency for a book launch. They wanted us to contact a handful of influential publishers to read the book and review it. For doing that, the publishers got the book for free, they got access to the author (something that they found to be extremely interesting), and they acquired that dialogue. They were compensated modestly: a \$25 gift certificate for Starbucks.

**Speaking of influencers, how do you identify them? Twitter rates its top influencers.**

If you look at Facebook and Twitter, they tend to be short-form kinds of social interactions; they are not that deep. They're more about emotions and being social for the sake of it than anything else. But when I really want to tackle the subject, I write in my blog and then I tweet – that is a really common occurrence. It is important to include the Twitter and Facebook reach into the calculation, but it's also important that there is a longer-form way of communicating. This is really where you're going to reach the reader. You've got a creative community around that.

**It sounds like Lijit injects some life back into the blog, which seems to losing ground to those social microblogging sites. At least it gives**

**the blogger more incentive to continue publishing.**

In fact, bloggers who use our service think it's cool to look at all of the search results we deliver to them. They inherently know that's important, although they cannot quite articulate why it is. But all this makes it a much more important experience for the reader. That's the whole value of it. No matter how much you tweet – and you may build up a mental image of people based on what they tweet – you are never going to be able to find yourself engaged in a dialogue with them about, say, what types of pain relievers you are going to give your children.

When I go to buy a new car, the first thing I do is ask all my friends what they think. I don't go to any of the major car-rating websites for advice. I have a friend who is a high-performance car buff and another one who is very eco-minded. They will give me two different answers on what car to buy, and they're both right. At least I'm getting the real dope on the situation, not the opinion of someone with an unknown agenda.

**We've covered a lot of ground today, Todd, and I can understand the value of aggregated blog data. Any parting thoughts?**

Well, now I want to check out *Vue* magazine.

**That reminds me: We've got to get a blog going and hook it up to Lijit. Thanks a lot, Todd.**

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*Todd Vernon is the CEO of Lijit Networks, which he founded in 2006. By helping publishers engage and understand their readers, Lijit has created a trusted publisher network – including more than 12,000 publishers, 700 million page views per month, and 53 million unique visitors. Todd, has spoken at a number of industry events, is an avid blogger about life, multimedia, aerospace, and his start-up experiences. Go to [www.lijit.com](http://www.lijit.com)*

# Canadian Online Panels: Similar or Different?

Partnered with MRIA's Research and Development Committee, the U.S. research house Mktg Inc. conducted a study in 2009 to determine the extent to which surveys conducted by different online panels would produce the same results.

**Peter Chan, CMRP and Don Ambrose, CMRP**

Mktg Inc., a U.S. research company, initiated the Grand Mean Project in 2007 in order to assess the extent to which surveys that were conducted using different online panels could be expected to produce the same results. Their initial project compared results from 18 different U.S. online panels, each using the identical questionnaire, as well as the same hosting facility and sample quotas. Mktg Inc. has continued this research both in the U.S. and internationally, and offers a certification to those panels that can demonstrate consistent results when the project is repeated.

## The Canadian Panel Comparisons

In early 2009, Mktg Inc. expanded this project to include Canada, initially conducting surveys using samples from eight Canadian panels (stage 1). Each of the stage 1 panel studies comprised 400 to 500 completed interviews, with quotas for age, gender, and household income.

At this point, MRIA's Research and Development Committee was invited to partner with Mktg Inc. to expand this investigation. The committee recruited an additional eight Canadian online panels to participate in stage 2. In fact, two panel companies from stage 1 repeated the exercise in stage 2, so a total of 14 different Canadian panel companies are represented in this project.

Using the same questionnaire developed for earlier Grand Mean projects (but with minor modifications suggested by the committee), Mktg Inc. hosted the stage 2 online surveys in July 2009. The stage 2 panel companies were encouraged to increase their sample sizes to 800 for better reliability, and a number were able to do this. In addition to age and gender, the committee established stage 2 quotas for region but did not set quotas for income.



This research-on-research project explored the following questions:

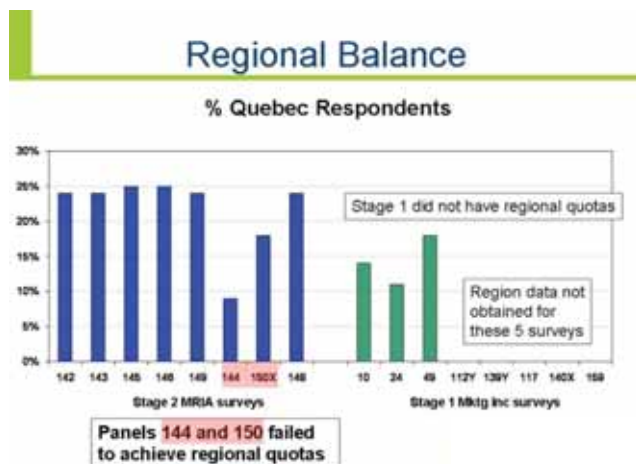
- Are Canadian online panels interchangeable?
  - how careful do you have to be when moving to a different panel provider?
- How do Canadian online panels compare on
  - professional respondents?
  - accuracy of responses?
  - Canada vs. the U.S.?
- Should we be concerned about professional respondents?

The results of this research were presented at the Net Gain 4.0 conference in January 2010. This article is a summary of that presentation, sharing the findings with those who could not attend.

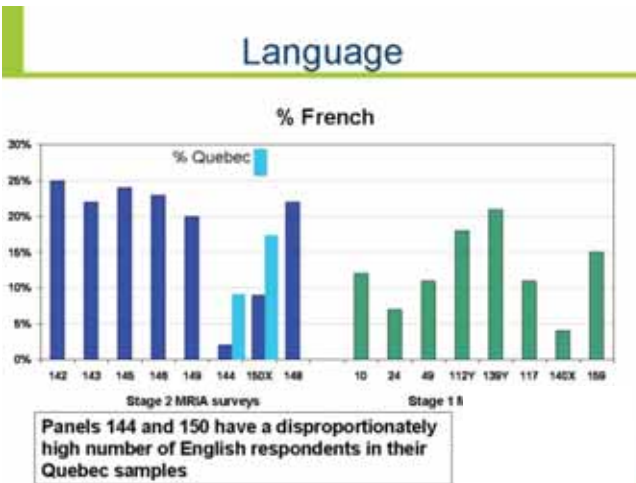
The main focus of the analysis presented here is on the eight Canadian panels in stage 2, but the results of the previous round (stage 1) are also presented for comparison.

### Regional and Language Balance

Two panels in stage 2 (144 and 150X) were unable to deliver a sufficient number of Quebec respondents and did not achieve their regional quotas.



Perhaps of even more concern, these same two panels exhibit a significant under-representation of Francophone respondents in their Quebec samples. So not only do these two panels under-represent Quebec, but the few Quebec respondents they do have are disproportionately English speaking.

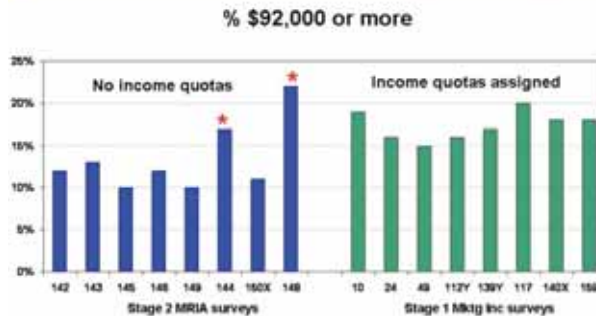


### Socio-Economic Variables

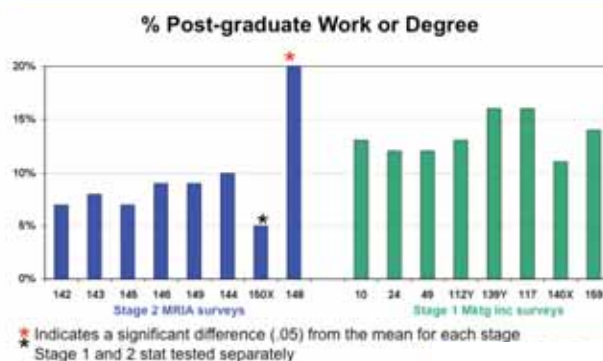
Household income was quota controlled in stage 1. While a number of these panels had some difficulty attaining the exact quota, all are in the 15-to-20 per cent range that would be correct for this high-income group. With no income controls in stage 2, six of the eight stage 2 panels under-represent the highest income group and also appear to fall short on education level.

Panel 148 slightly over-represents the higher socio-economic categories on both household income and education.

### Household Income (after tax)



### Education



### Panel Participation

The project examined three aspects of panel participation: professional respondents, accuracy of survey response, and speed in completing the survey.

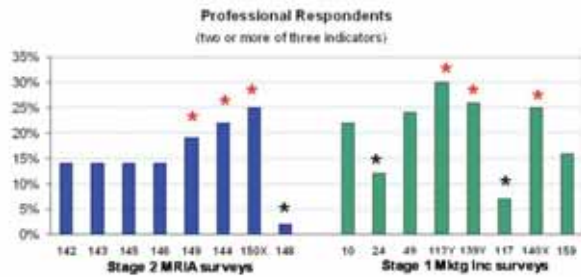
Three different measures were used to identify professional respondents. In both Canada and the U.S., just under half qualify as professional, using one or more of the three indicators. However, in Canada at least, fewer than one in five trigger two or more indicators. While panelists in both countries are equally likely to belong to five or more panels, the frequency of taking online surveys is more intense for U.S. panelists.

### Professional Respondents

	Canada 16 surveys	U.S.A. 18 surveys
Belong to 5 or more panels	45%	45%
Take an online survey practically every day	18%	32%
Over 30 online surveys in the past month	6%	14%
"Professional Respondent" (Net 1 or more of 3 indicators)	47%	49%
(Net 2 or more of 3 indicators)	17%	n/a

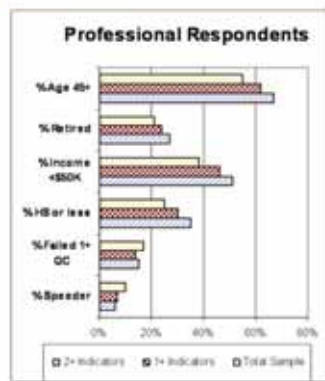
Panel 148 has the lowest incidence of professional respondents.

### Professional Respondents by survey



Professional respondents are typically a little older and more down-scale, but are not less accurate and if anything, appear to take a little more time in answering surveys.

### Who are the "Professionals"?



- older
- more downscale
- but *not* less accurate, and
- not too fast

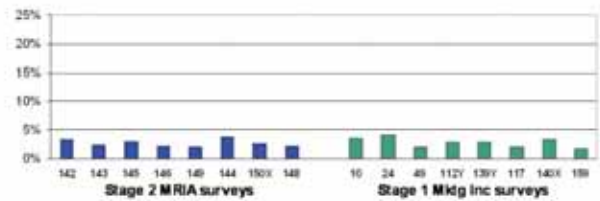
Three accuracy checks were planted in the questionnaire. The accuracy failure rate is similar in both Canada and the U.S. and also very similar across the different Canadian panels. The failure rate for two or more errors is relatively low (3% on average) which is encouraging and suggests that most panelists do read the survey questions.

### Accuracy Checks

	Canada 16 surveys	U.S.A. 18 surveys
Failed to follow instructions (Select "Strongly Disagree" for this row)	12%	12%
Inconsistent Responses on Reversed Scales		
-- Standard of Living	4%	6%
-- Price/Brand	5%	7%
Failed at least 1 of 3	17%	20%
Failed at least 2 of 3	3%	n/a

### Accuracy Checks by survey

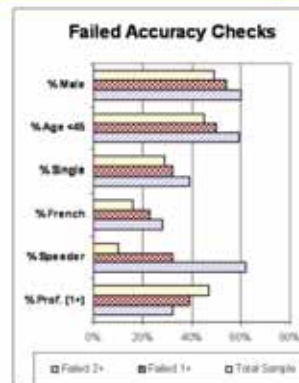
Failed 2+ Accuracy Checks



No significant differences among panels

Panelists who fail the accuracy checks are more likely to be male, under age 45 and French speaking. Not surprisingly, they speed through the survey faster but are not as likely to be a "professional."

### Who is failing on accuracy?



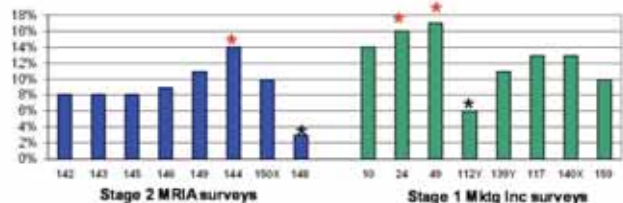
More likely to be

- Males <45
- Francophone
- and too fast
- but not a "professional"

For the purpose of comparative analysis, "speeders" are identified as the fastest 10 per cent of the panelists. There is some significant variation on speeding among the panels and, again, panel 148 stands out with the lowest level of speeding.

### Speeders – the fastest 10%

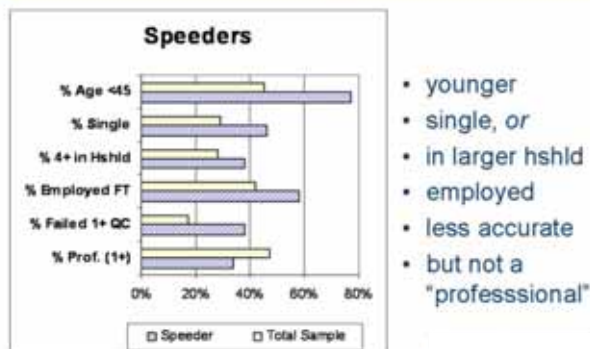
Speeders - Fastest 10%



Median interview length 18 min  
Fastest 10% <11.3 min

Speeders are more likely to be younger, single, living in larger households, employed and less accurate. However they are less likely to be a professional respondent.

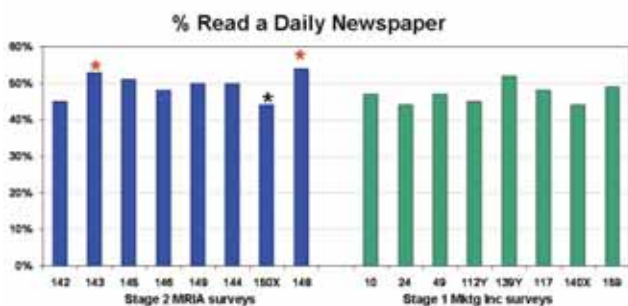
## Who are the Speeders?



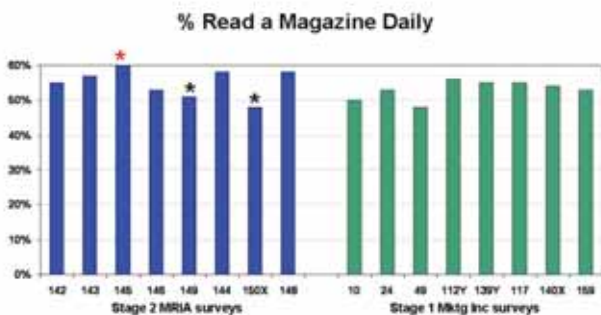
### Attitudes and Behaviours

On media exposure, all panels are roughly in the same ballpark with a bit of volatility on Newspapers and Magazines. Panel #148 sticks out being more likely to listen to radio but less likely to watch TV – perhaps consistent with its more upscale profile.

## Media Exposure - Newspapers

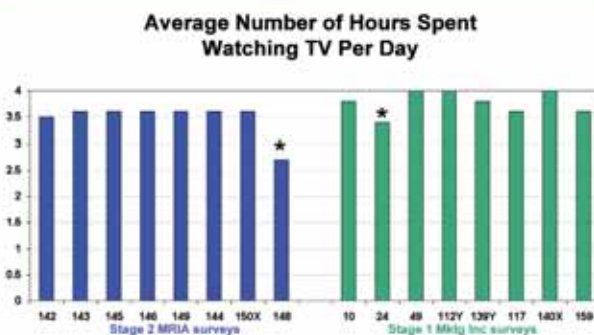


## Media Exposure - Magazines

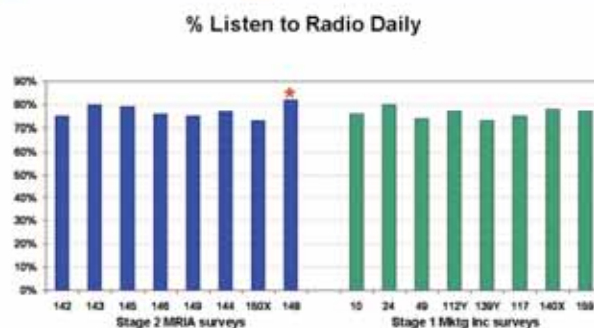


Over a hundred separate items measuring attitudes, lifestyle and purchasing were measured in the survey. For the demographically balanced panels, the differences on these measures were small and not likely to result in materially

## Media Exposure - TV



## Media Exposure - Radio



different decisions in ad-hoc situations. Panel #148 responses occasionally differ in keeping with its more upscale profile.

It is also of interest to know why people say they join a panel. Earning money, rewards or incentives is the most popular reason for members of all panels with the exception of panel #148 (whose members do not identify a single main reason).

## Why do they participate?



### Conclusions

Are Canadian panels interchangeable? Probably not for repetitive tracking. While most differences (among the

demographically balanced panels) were minor, some were statistically significant and would present problems from wave to wave. However, for stand-alone ad hoc surveys, it appears that different panels can be expected to lead to the same decisions, provided recruitment and panel management practices are similar and there is reasonable demographic quota control in managing the sample.

Should we be concerned about professional respondents? Possibly. This study confirms other research indicating that professional respondents generally take more care when answering surveys. However, these respondents are more downscale than the general population and appear to have lent this bias to all of the stage 2 panels (except panel 148, which had very few professional respondents).

Among all the panels, 148 portrays a different, more upscale demographic profile, with fewer professional respondents, and it comes closest to the “true” representation of the adult population. Its deviation from the other panels on many aspects may well be a result of its use of recruitment and panel management methods which are apparently different from the other panels – further highlighting the significance of these factors on the composition of any panel.

We have only scratched the surface of this data set, and more analysis will be undertaken. As the next step, MRIA’s Research and Development Committee will follow up with the participating panels to gain further understanding of their recruiting and management practices, to see whether this helps to explain some of the findings noted above.

**MRIA R&D Committee**

- Trish Simmie (chair)
- Don Ambrose
- Peter Chan
- Cam Davis
- Derick Gray
- Gary Halpenny
- Steve Rosenblum
- Ivor Thompson
- Don Williams

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# Love and Betrayal in Canadian Retail

## (And the Ten Little Things That Can Make All the Difference)



Why do service experiences get high ratings even when the service provided doesn't affect the quality of customers' decisions? According to a recent retail study by Hay Research, it's the 'soft' emotional elements that are critical.

**Al Hay, CMRP**

Imagine you are waiting for the steeped tea at Tim Hortons and the service person, noticing that you are getting fidgety, smiles and offers you free baked goods to keep you happy. Or suppose that the car battery you bought at Canadian Tire turns out to be so badly damaged that it ruins your car's starter motor, and Canadian Tire replaces both the battery and starter motor free of charge, with their sincere apologies. Or you discover that the nice lady who assisted you in the hardware store had already finished her shift 45 minutes before and was just happy to help out. Or how about this one: A pharmacist wants to make sure you are taking your new medication in the right way, so he makes a special trip to your home after work to deliver your prescription personally.

These are some of the high points in our study of people's best (and worst) service experiences in Canadian retail. They're nice stories but, frankly, a little underwhelming – certainly not the highly dramatic and unusual stories we hoped for. (The exception, perhaps, was the pharmacist, who deserves an award!) When we asked almost 2,000 people online about their best and worst service experiences, we were expecting to get some pretty juicy stories – stories worthy of a *CSI*, perhaps, or *Grey's Anatomy*, or a *Survivor* (“How I Survived Walmart”). What we got, instead, was more of what you read above – nice little anecdotes, perhaps, but hardly groundbreaking.

What was going on? We were about to shelve the whole project when someone came up with an interesting thought: Maybe we have everything reversed. Maybe we are looking for those big, dramatic events because we need something big to match the size of our emotions. You know – how a little encounter can leave you thrilled or

fuming. But it's actually the other way round. Maybe the events themselves are rather ordinary in comparison to our emotions. We build the events up in our minds so they appear to warrant the heated emotions we experience.

We thought this was a very interesting idea. So we decided to continue. Our point of view had, of course, changed: it was no longer about the shocking service events that leave us delighted or fuming, but about the minor, almost forgettable little incidents that do basically the same thing. After all, when you think about it, it's a wonder we care about those little service encounters at all. What's the big deal about ordering a hamburger, or buying some wood screws or lawn chairs? But, truth be told, in the course of the few seconds or minutes that a service encounter lasts, that anonymous service person is transformed into that “nice young man who was so friendly” or that “snotty young girl who should know better; I'm going to report her.” So we decided to continue with our project and ask why.

We proceeded by conducting an online study in which we asked respondents to report on those extreme service experiences which made them feel particularly good and believe that their business was especially important – or those which made them feel particularly bad and believe that their business was unimportant. By dialing up the emotional content in this way, the emotional aspects, we thought, would become more evident. And they certainly were. So this article is about the ten little things we found that can really make a big difference.

### The Invisible Customer

What I'm about to show you is part of a much larger study of 4,000 Ontario switchers we examined across eight

categories of retail through online research. (Switchers were defined as individuals who had switched their most often visited retailer in one or more of eight retail categories in the previous three months.) In all, people told us about 1,200 great experiences and 800 awful ones.

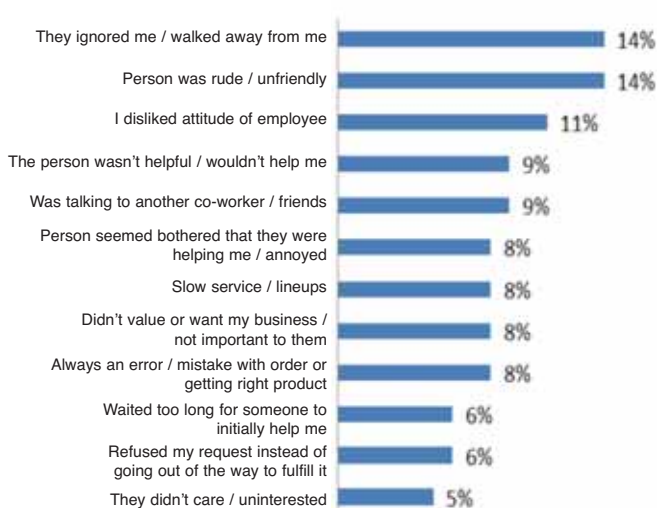
Since the coding of these responses tends to remove the emotional content, we offer a short verbal “collage” of what they said, first of all, about their truly awful experiences:

*I was left waiting for fifteen minutes at Walmart, twisting in the wind. ... As an (elderly) woman I was ignored while the sales clerk tended to a young couple. ... They were cold: no smiles, no thank you, no “Have a good day.” ... The employee stood and watched me struggle to get out of my wheelchair to reach for something at the top shelf. ... I’m a waitress and, at McDonald’s even, I can’t get waited on. ... Employees were busy chatting about Friday night; they ignored me; I felt insignificant and unimportant. ... They acted as though I wasn’t there ... were like robots, no expression or feeling, no conversation ... no pleasantries, no thank you. ... They treated me like a kid. ... The cashier looked at all the food in my cart and said, “I don’t get paid enough for this.” (There’s lots more.)*

Coded, the actual responses looked like what is presented in Figure 1.

**Figure 1: Worst Experiences**

One of the Worst Service Experiences I’ve Had / They Made Me Feel I Was Unimportant to Them (n=822)



Note how the coded descriptions seem so humdrum and familiar. The actual reading of these 800 or so awful experiences, however, gives you a very different flavour. You can see to what extent people’s emotions were being aroused when a service person ignored them, walked away from them, talked over their head, made them feel invisible or

like an imposition, or just made them wait.

As we reviewed all these comments, something else began to really stick out: people were reading body language into all this in a big way.

*Sighs, shoulder shrugs and stiff-backed walk ... no smiles ... looked pissed-off ... did not acknowledge me ... would not look at me ... spoke slowly and rolled her eyes ... I’m an imposition ... never even looked at me ... left me hanging ... nonchalant, couldn’t be bothered ... blew me off ... no expression. (Again, there’s lots more.)*

It seemed as though there was a dimension of reaction that was being hinted at but not treated seriously (and probably under-reported) by the respondents themselves – that is, body language and the search for signals of recognition and respect. We had to conclude that not being acknowledged as a person had an immediate psychological effect. A sense of personal importance – or its loss – was being triggered. So looking at these highly negative cases gives us insight into what “not having one’s business valued” actually means. The root of it seemed to be the lack of acknowledgement of the person as a person.

But perhaps not all felt this way and this type of response was confined to a small group. As Figure 2 shows, females and younger folks (those under 35) did show some slight increased sensitivity, but the more important finding is that all tended to respond this way. (Note that there was little variation by education and income.)

**Figure 2: Proportion Mentioning Key Negative Codes by Major Demographics**

	“Ignored me / walked away from me” %	“Person was rude / unfriendly” %
Overall (822)	14	14
<b>Gender:</b>		
Male (329)	10	13
Female (493)	18	15
<b>Age:</b>		
18 – 34 (208)	18	17
35 – 49 (217)	12	15
50 – 59 (206)	13	10
60 + (191)	11	9
<b>Household Income:</b>		
Under \$50k (213)	15	14
\$50k – \$99k (286)	12	11
\$100k + (167)	14	16
<b>Education:</b>		
No university (520)	13	15
University grad (298)	16	13

### What the Great Service Experiences Reveal

So much for the really bad experiences. But what about the positive ones? What can the really great service encounters show us? Well, among other things, they reveal what happens when recognition and personal acknowledgement of the individual are in place. Note that the top two mentions in Figure 3 – “they were pleasant/courteous/polite/friendly” and the “person went out of their way to assist me” – are clearly about this sort of personal affirmation.

However, the third and fourth mentions – the “person explained alternatives/recommended options” and the “person was informative/everything was explained well” – are clearly more rational in character, since they assist the customer in making wiser choices. But as we go down the list of codes in Figure 3, we discover that there are many others of this “soft” kind, like the first two – taking time with the client, welcoming/greeting him or her, listening, smiling, showing interest in him/her as a person.

## The emotional elements – those that make the individual feel important and appreciated – become critical to achieving very high scores in the service experience.

**Figure 3: Best Experiences**

One of the Best Service Experiences I've Ever Had / They Made Me Feel Really Important (n=1186)



So we asked, “What actually makes an experience a 10 and not a 7?” To do this, we grouped all the main codes in this study into two macro-categories: mainly emotional attributes (the “softer” areas) and mainly professional ones (the “harder” ones). The emotional ones were those that related to the service experience itself; the harder ones were about professionalism – being efficient/quick, being informative, and answering questions well, for example. So our question was this: “To make a 7 experience a 10, do you have to add more of the hard stuff or the soft stuff?”

**Figure 4: Net Shift in Total ‘Emotional’ and ‘Professional’ Comments**

	“10” (201)	“<8” (92)	Gaps
“Emotional” areas (net)	70%	45%	+25 pts
“Professional” areas (net)	81%	66%	+15 pts

The answer, as you can see in Figure 4, is both. But the important qualifier is that *you have to add comparatively more of the soft, emotional stuff.*

So why does a service experience get a better rating when the actual quality of the decision isn't being affected? We concluded that the emotional elements – those that make the individual feel important and appreciated – become quite critical to achieving these very high scores.

It shouldn't be surprising, therefore, that if you want to make an experience a 10 instead of just a 9, you have to

dial up the emotional level even more – as Figure 5 suggests, by going out of your way, by greeting people when they enter or leave the store, or by finding other ways to make them feel important or valuable.

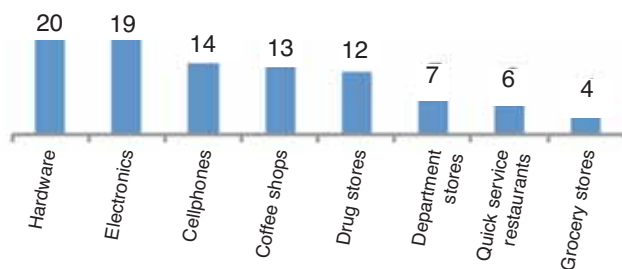
**Figure 5: Shifts in Key Emotional Areas**

	“10” (311)	“9” (322)	Gaps
Person was helpful / person went out of their way to assist me	38%	28%	+10 pts
Welcomed or greeted / greeted when left store	13%	6%	+7 pts
Make me feel important / valuable	8%	3%	+5 pts

### Ontario's Best and Worst

So who are Ontario's best and worst retailers in terms of customer experience? Who are the charmers and the also-rans? Before we reveal our findings, we need to quickly address one other issue. Our larger study of 4,000 switchers in Ontario revealed that one retail sector in particular stood out in terms of the importance placed on service reasons. That sector was hardware (see Figure 6).

**Figure 6: The Weighted Importance of Service in Eight Retail Categories**  
(The percentage weight of “service” in a switch)



- smiling
- listening closely to customers
- making eye contact
- greeting customers in a cheerful way
- using their name
- showing interest in their individual stories
- being willing to spend extra time with them
- being willing to go beyond the usual expectations for them
- treating them as friends
- treating their requests as being of real importance.

So certain types of retailers – especially hardware stores and electronics stores – tended to be at the top of people’s list when asked to think about those great, and not-so-great, service experiences. Home Hardware, Home Depot, Shoppers Drug Mart, and Metro topped our top-of-mind list of overall mentions. But what really matters, of course, is not the absolute counts but the ratios – how many good mentions for each bad one.

These seem obvious. But what is less obvious, as we have argued here, is that these should make such a big difference. And so, the potential for triggering feelings of love and betrayal does appear to lie just beneath the surface of even the most casual and ordinary of service encounters. It’s easy to discount our feelings, just because these service encounters do seem so ordinary.

**Figure 7: Best Ratios**

The Extremes of the Service Experience: Ratios of Volunteered Highly Positive Experiences to Highly Negative Ones	
<b>Top Tier</b> (Positives exceed negatives by better than 2:1)	
<b>Second Tier</b> (Positives exceed negatives by about 2:1)	
<b>Third Tier</b> (Positives about equal to negatives: Ratio of about 1:1)	
<b>Fourth Tier</b> (Positives less than negatives: Ratio of less than 1:1)	

As you can see in Figure 7, Home Hardware was doing an excellent job, eliciting almost five positive comments for every negative one. Home Depot, Shoppers Drug Mart, Metro, Rona, and Loblaws were next on the list, with two positive comments for each negative one. Down towards the bottom were the also-rans – Sears, The Bay, McDonald’s, and Future Shop – all with less than one positive mention for every negative one.

**Ten Little Things That Can Make a Big Difference**

So those actions that signal to customers that they are truly acknowledged and valued as persons are critical. Based on our research, these actions are as follows:

This article is taken from supplementary questions asked in the company’s Switching Dynamics™ retail study, a new, regular, syndicated study of 4,000 retail switchers, conducted online several times a year.

*Alastair Hay is president of Hay Research International, a full-service research company based in Toronto. He holds a BComm and an MA in philosophy. From 2000 to 2002, he served as standards director of MRIA (then PMRS). For the past decade, he has taught marketing research at the University of Toronto, Scarborough campus. Al may be reached at [ahay@hayresearch.com](mailto:ahay@hayresearch.com)*

## In Conversation with Mitch Joel

Mitch Joel, president of the Twist Image digital marketing agency and blogger at *Six Pixels of Separation*, talks about the power of blogging, its democratization of publishing, its evolution, and the importance of passion.

**Interviewed by  
Aaron Davies**

**Hello, Mitch Joel, blogger extraordinaire. First question: Why blog?**

Blogging is that tool – one of a few (free) ways – that allows anybody with a thought, idea or story to put it down in the written word for the world to read and share. It's more than just publishing in the digital channel. I believe the reason that people work together with someone is because they like the way that person thinks. Suddenly, you have a platform by which anyone can share their thoughts.

**Do you think that's a little bit idealistic, that is, sharing your thoughts with the world? For most, the blogosphere is a rather lonely world.**

No. It is what it is. We've come to a very weird moment in time. Prior to blogging, anyone who wanted to have any semblance of credibility about how they think had to deal with a gatekeeper, whether it was a newspaper, magazine, radio station, or whatever. The digital platform, however, allows anyone to share their thoughts in text, instantly and for free, with the world. We've never had a platform like this before, and it's a really powerful thing.

**Is blogging only effective for those companies or individuals who already have audiences? Let's face it, the average person who starts a blog has a very small audience, if they have one at all.**

I don't think so. If you are strategic in how you set it up, in terms of creating a niche for yourself, I don't see that to be true at all. I think blogging is lonely when people have expectations that they're going to start a blog and become the next TMZ. But in general, I just don't think it's the case.

**So what would be a strategic way for a newbie to set up a blog? And let's say this newbie is a small business that's never blogged before, and the owner is skeptical that the blog is a worthwhile endeavour.**

The answer is that there is no answer, and that's part of the point. You have to come to blogging with a couple of prior things: (1) You need enough passion for wanting to share how you think. (2) You have to have a passion for writing. (3) You have to have a passion for the industry you serve and the people who are active in that circle.

You need to have certain foundations rather than an attitude of "What is this going to do for my business?" In fact, that's almost the wrong question. You have to think more strategically: Is there a way for me to build my brand or business through some level of content marketing that I might be good at producing? What would be my relevance? What would be the pulse of my audience? You have to have at least the desire to do it. It's not going to work if you just have the attitude of "What's this going to do for my business?"

One of my book chapters, "In Praise of Slow," points out that blogging is a very long and slow process. I love doing interviews like this, because people look at me and say, "Wow, look at this guy and everything he's doing." Meanwhile, I have been doing this since 2003. That's about 2,500 blog posts of five to six hundred words a day. Very slow. I am the furthest thing you will find to an overnight success. There is an overall marketing mix to it. What do you want to do in paid media? What do you want to do in content media? Blogging is just one of many different tools.

**Would you say that, for businesses, blogging is about engaging customers in a dialogue rather than hard-selling them? I'm thinking of how Lululemon uses its blog.**

There is a desire in that kind of company to be evangelists. If you look back to the early days of my agency's blog, it was a real precursor to the fact that no major media outlet would have been interested in a small company like

mine. We had barely any employees or clients, but the blog was about how we think. I had a background as a journalist and figured that I should use that background to communicate with the world about who we are and what we are about. So it's a different spirit of how we could potentially grow this business. It's not for everybody, although I do think people with opinions should share them.

**How has blogging evolved since you started doing it in 2003?**

Back in 2003, it was very raw and visceral. It didn't matter if your spelling wasn't right or if it was a one-sentence blog post. People were experimenting. It was exciting. I had never seen it before.

It's kind of like music. You have the old indie punk guys. Then you transition into kind of corporate rock, where people play around with the format and give it a little bit of an edge. Then you have classical music, which is sort of strict, has a certain tone, and has a certain cadence. And if you look at the world of blogging, it's like one million different flowers have bloomed around those three basic formats. You have the people who are more visceral and raw. Then you have those that are more rock 'n' roll, which are in the majority of blogs; they have a special flavour, something unique about them, but it's not exactly corporate. Then you have the corporate blogs, which really do follow that strict structure. Look at TMZ and those mainstream platforms that are blog-driven: they look very similar to traditional media.

**How has the popularity of microblogging impacted the more traditional blog? There are a lot of people who don't have the patience to read beyond 140 characters anymore.**

First we blogged; then we went to images with sites like Flickr, and then to video with YouTube. If you look at

the transition at that level, you can see that writing words is really hard. Shooting a video is a lot easier: turn on your webcam and blog away. Then you have Twitter, with 140 characters, and it becomes easier than traditional blogging. It's even a lot easier than shooting a traditional video.

As the technology improves, you start seeing a transition towards easier functionality. I think that blogging is in the midst of an amazing renaissance of its own. As a blogger you have to have a passion to write, because there are other things that you can do.

**It seems like you kind of have to blog just for the sake of it, without any expectations that there'll be any kind of tangible payoffs. Blogs can also tell people who are potentially interested in you, or your services, what you are really about. As you said, it develops over time and will benefit the blogger in a unique way.**

I agree. In the end, it's about finding your real voice, about becoming more astute and connecting as you go on.

**Blogging is still a very public exercise. Do people have to sort of edit themselves in order not to offend any people in a way that may come back to bite them? Do they have to put on diplomatic masks over their true selves?**

I think there are people that do that, but there are also people that don't. There is everything from one side to the other and in between. For sure, there are moments when I might be more careful about the type of content that I'm writing, especially in terms of how it might affect some of my clients vis-à-vis their competitors.

**Can mainstream business bloggers really risk putting out something edgy or potentially controversial? Are the more raw forms of expression better suited to the punk bloggers or to the big celebrities who are sitting at the top of the heap and say whatever they want? Are mainstream business folk**

**basically limited in the way that they express themselves?**

I don't think so. Blogging is a democratized platform. Only certain people within a person's sphere feel the same way he or she does. There will be others within the sphere who don't care for it. The idea is that my blog is the place where I'm going to share my own way of thinking. If anything, blogging is the democratized notion of publishing. You don't necessarily want to publicize every unfiltered thought that runs through your head. If your idea runs contrary to what you really want to do, don't publish it.

**Some companies might be interested in blogging but have no personnel qualified or available to write those posts. The next best alternative would be outsourcing that task to an agency. What are your thoughts on that?**

There are a couple of roads companies like that could take. They might just say that blogging is not right for them. That's very possible: they just don't have the culture and wherewithal to really drive it through. Then there is another possibility, one that many companies are using: they are bringing in outside writers – writers with a lot of passion, to blog for them. So long as it is transparent who they are and what they represent, it will work. Those bloggers can be the companies' so-called voice from the street.

**Is there anything you can think of that market research professionals should know about blogging?**

When people ask me about the power of blogging, I always say that what makes human beings so amazing is that we are like snowflakes: no two are alike. Everybody has a different perspective, and we have to create what is real, what is authentic. My digital marketing blog will never be yours. If more people embrace that authenticity and leverage the platform to use it as a candidate story journal

where they think critically about their business, I think more people will be surprised about the power of blogging.

**On that note, my final question: How does a company know for sure if its blog is succeeding or not? Is there any way to measure it?**

I'm not trying to be evasive, but it all depends on how you define success. For some, success will be about a bunch of people coming to read the blog. For others, only the comments they get define success. For some, success will simply be getting noticed at the chamber of commerce meeting by someone who has read their blog. Some will be happy because they get exposure and work from their blog. So my message is really this: It's not how you know that your blog is successful. It's more about spending time on the front end and figuring out what message you want to use to gauge how you are successful. You need an upfront strategy that defines your meaning of success. And in the process of engaging in your blog, you are constantly referring back to those benchmarks of success that have been defined.

**It seems like we've covered a lot of ground today, Mitch, and you've been very generous with your time. Thank you very much for the interview. We will be following you closely in the digital world.**

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Marketing magazine dubbed Mitch Joel the "rock star of digital marketing" and called him "one of North America's leading digital visionaries." In 2008, Mitch was named Canada's Most Influential Male in Social Media, one of the top 100 online marketers in the world, and was honoured as one of Canada's Top 40 Under 40. Most recently, he was named one of iMedia's 25 Internet Marketing Leaders and Innovators in the world. You can reach him at [mitch@twistimage.com](mailto:mitch@twistimage.com)



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## A Conversation with Andrew Laing, President of Cormex Research

One of Canada's leading media content analysts talks about the challenges of measuring social media as opposed to traditional media, and takes aim against the widespread misconception that social media can't be measured using human-based coding.

**Interviewed by  
Kevin Hare**

**Measuring traditional media has been a practice in market research for a long time, but when and how did you first start measuring social media? Did you see this as an opportunity and go for it, or was it something that your clients were demanding?**

I'd say both. Our clients are senior-level communicators with large organizations. Whether they are managing an issue or crisis, orchestrating a marketing initiative, or building relationships with stakeholders, they are being forced to take social media into account. They've used Cormex Research to measure their effectiveness in the traditional media space, so now they want us to do the same thing for social media. Senior leaders are used to the format, measures and language of the Cormex reports, and so staffers now want us to produce parallel reports.

As a company, we saw it as undiscovered country: providing human-based coding and analysis that can include social as well as traditional media. It's a niche that differentiates us from the many social media analytics out there now; they tend to exclude traditional media (which is still important and integrated at many levels with social media) and only provide data based on computer-generated algorithms.

We've been providing social media analysis for the last three years. In our first year, it accounted for less than 4 per cent of revenue, but last year it was closer to 10 per cent, and we have projects in the pipeline such that it should account for at least 15 per cent of sales by 2011. Our goal is to have at least half our business based on social/digital media within five years.

The way things are headed, it may come even sooner than that.

**What are some of the challenges of measuring social media versus measuring traditional media? Is there any skepticism about it?**

One challenge is the question of audience. When we measure traditional media, we base our findings on estimated audience reach, applying formulas and prescribed audience demographic databases like NADbank and Nielsen. That way, we can give a relative weight to the front page article in *The Globe and Mail* compared to a brief mention in the arts section of the Antigonish *Casket*. Traditional media, with all its shortcomings, was brilliant in delivering to advertisers a known audience at a regularly scheduled time. That's the biggest problem with

analysing social media: no audience (or more exactly, a valid, reliable, commonly agreed-upon way of knowing how big it is). By its nature, social media defies an idea of audience.

Other challenges are the fact that social media doesn't necessarily use proper names (try tracking "Bell" but limiting it only to the telecom company, and you'll see what I mean), and the idea that geographical location isn't always known or applicable.

Of course, the other big challenge is volume. We are used to managing a lot of volume, coding more than 15,000 news items a month for our clients – hence our corporate motto on a large sign over our door: "Cormex – where the news comes to die." But traditional media, by its very nature, is limited by time, space and other factors. Social media is not limited, and volume generally can be very high and subject to much more intense peaks when a big story hits.

However, the problem of volume, in my view, is overstated. Last fall, we tracked social media commentary about swine flu for one client. We currently have one client that is tracking all Canadian social media commentary about telecommunications services – that is, Twitter, blog and forum posts about any company, on any subject, from the new Samsung Galaxy to net neutrality to Netflix service availability. Apart from porn, is there anything discussed more on the Internet than cellphones? We provide the client with a daily report plus dashboard, based on data that runs on a 24-hour lag. True, our analysis is not in real time, but it is certainly current and actionable within a corporate structure.

**In terms of volume, I would think that there is an enormous amount of social media out there. How much is available to measure? Is there anything you can't or won't measure?**

In terms of types of social media, we measure everything – forums, blogs,

Twitter and YouTube, to name just the biggest. We can't measure what are largely personal conversations between individuals, which includes most of what is posted on Facebook. That's something most researchers should recognize about what they are seeing from firms such as Cormex, Sysomos, Radian6, or others engaged in social media analytics: that they are measuring a limited and skewed idea of conversation – that is, something that is intended for public consumption.

In terms of variables, there isn't that much of a limit, either. Because we mostly use human coders to generate data, we can track more complex variables, such as the presence of reputational messages, the sources of information, comments on consumer hot-button issues, or certain initiatives undertaken by the client.

**What are you able to tell about what is being said in the blogosphere when measuring it? Positive? Negative? Tone manner? How have your clients used this information?**

Tone is important and we track it, although to measure quality, we normally create an index that incorporates other variables such as source (level of corporate-generated activity), recommendations, presence of hot-button issues, etcetera. Our clients use the information primarily to evaluate the effectiveness of whatever communications strategies they have in place, as well as to provide a clear picture, to everyone within an organization, of the company's social media profile relative to competitors or other benchmarks.

Effective communications planning begins with understanding what is, exactly, the public profile of an issue, event or organization. Our reports are designed to answer the simple questions, for example, "Is the tone of our coverage improving?" "What are our top issues?" and "Who is responding/not responding to our key messages?" Simple questions, but ones I've seen debated around the

boardroom table until the pizza gets cold. Our reports are designed to give managers answers so they can get on with planning strategy and tactics.

**What should research buyers know about measuring social media that you think they might not currently know?**

There is this misconception out there that you can't measure social media using human-based coding because there's too much volume and it would be too expensive. I think this misconception has arisen because most vendors today are IT-based; they don't offer human-based coding, so buyers think it's not an option. In reality, a company doesn't need to change how it measures its public profile just to fit the computational linguistic programming skills of the social media monitoring company. I believe social media is a conversation generated by people, for people. So if you want to know what is being said, you should have it read, coded and analysed by people. The important consideration is the quality of the data you need or want. Evaluate your needs, and then engage in something that works the way you want it to work for your organization.

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*Andrew Laing is president of Cormex Research, which he has built, over the last twenty years, into Canada's leading media content analysis company. A pioneer in introducing standards and measures for corporate communications in this country, he has developed ongoing media measurement studies for hundreds of Canada's top organizations, including RBC Financial Group, Pfizer, the Ontario Ministry of Health, Concordia University, and the CBC. He has a BA from the University of King's College, an MBA from Royal Roads University, and a PhD in communications from York University.*

# *In Memoriam*



## Dr. Michael Antecol

Dr. Michael Antecol, Vice President of TNS Canada for Western Canada, passed away suddenly on December 29, 2010.

With both in-depth and practical experience in both the US and Canada, Michael's practice areas included media research (particularly local TV news), advertising, marketing, social marketing, young consumers, technology, telecommunications and energy. He was also the Study Director for our syndicated Consumer Confidence Index which has been quoted extensively from coast to coast in the national press.

Michael had an accomplished academic career, including a B.A. in Political Science at York University and a LL.B. from Osgoode Hall Law School, an M.A. in Journalism from the University of Western Ontario, a Ph.D. from the School of Journalism at the University of Missouri and a Post-Doctoral Fellowship at Stanford University.

All of those who knew Michael were immediately impressed with his vibrant personality and drive, as well as with his determination to embrace innovation and creative thinking. He never hesitated to go the extra mile for clients and colleagues alike. His success at building a solid and growing Vancouver practice and at establishing a close-knit, strongly motivated team is widely recognized.

Michael will be greatly missed at TNS Canada both personally and professionally.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael Ennamorato".

Michael Ennamorato  
Managing Director, TNS Canada

# PEOPLE AND COMPANIES IN THE NEWS

- In this section of *Vue*, preference is given to newsworthy items including appointments, promotions and personal news (births, deaths).
- To read more news online, or to submit your news, simply fill out our online form at [mria-arim.ca/PEOPLE/People.asp](http://mria-arim.ca/PEOPLE/People.asp).
- The *Vue* editorial team reserves the right to select and edit your submission for appearance in *Vue*.
- MRIA is neither responsible for the accuracy of this information nor liable for any false information.

**Ipsos Omnibus Division** continues its commitment to offering clients the most representative survey on the market with the addition of cell phone dialing to their telephone omnibus. The Ipsos U.S. Express Telephone Omnibus now offers cell phone dialing, as well as Spanish interviews every week at no additional charge. Using the U.S. Telephone Omnibus, Ipsos was one of the only national polls to correctly predict the exact results for the 2008 election – Obama/Biden (53%), McCain/Palin (46%), and Other (1%). To learn more about the 2011 Ipsos U.S. Express Telephone Omnibus, contact [Chris.Deeney@Ipsos.com](mailto:Chris.Deeney@Ipsos.com)

The **SAPOR 30th Annual Conference** will be held in the Research Triangle area in North Carolina from October 5–7, 2011. The call for papers and further details about the conference will be announced this spring – visit the website to learn more about SAPOR: <http://www.southernassociationforpublicopinionresearch.org/index.htm>

Global market research firm **Synovate**, one of the top four custom research companies, today announced that it has opened an office in Geneva, Switzerland. While Synovate has had staff in Geneva for the past several years, new opportunities have led the company to invest in a full-service operation there. With its new office in Geneva, Synovate now has offices in 63 countries.

**Matrix Research Limited**, an experienced provider of data collection and analysis services, is proud to announce a partnership with **iComp Consulting Inc.**, a leader in providing consulting services to regulatory bodies and designing continuing professional development tools. Multi-Source Feedback, also known as a 360O assessment, has become popular in the health care and regulatory industry as a competency assessment tool. Matrix Research has partnered with iComp to deliver competency assessment services to Canadian health professionals' Colleges as an integral component of their mandatory Quality Assurance Programs. Contact Leanne Worsfold at iComp: (905) 556-0347 or [lworsfold@icompsconsulting.ca](mailto:lworsfold@icompsconsulting.ca) or visit <http://www.matrixresearch.ca/PARTNERSHIP/partnership.php>

**GfK Custom Research North America** today announced the appointment of **Angelina Villarreal, Ph.D.**, as **Vice President, Multicultural Research**. In this new role, she will partner with other multicultural experts from each of the company's business units to develop, implement, and measure forward-thinking marketing research strategies for the fast-growing Hispanic, Asian-American and African-American consumer segments. For more information visit [www.gfkamerica.com](http://www.gfkamerica.com). Follow at [www.gfkinsights4u.com](http://www.gfkinsights4u.com) or on Twitter @gfkamerica.

**John Visser** and **Jeff Karry**, co-founders of OpenVenue e-Research Solutions (acquired by Research Now in 2007), will be leaving the business on January 1, 2011 for new horizons. We

are delighted to pass the torch to a group of highly competent managers who have joined us during the past 10 years. Many thanks to our clients, colleagues, and friends with whom we've had the privilege of working along the way. We look forward to crossing paths in the future!

In 2011, **ESOMAR** will launch **Research World Connect** the online platform of our global market research magazine. We aim to drive discussion and debate with articles written by those at the forefront of the industry. With this increased online offering, we will produce six printed issues in 2011. Read more at [www.esomar.org](http://www.esomar.org)

**MRA's Annual Conference** is on June 6–8, 2011 at the Omni Shoreham in Washington, DC. To register go to [www.mra-net.org](http://www.mra-net.org)

**ESOMAR CONGRESS 2011 IMPACT** – REsearch REloaded  
Amsterdam / 18–21 September  
Call for Speakers - Deadline for synopses: February 11, 2011  
[www.esomar.org](http://www.esomar.org)

The **Mobile Research Conference** being held at The May Fair Hotel in London 18–19 April 2011, is the must-attend annual event for brands, agencies and academics interested in engaging consumers and capturing real-time feedback through mobile phones. Mobile, along with social media and online networks, represents the latest frontier for market research. Join other fearless pioneers and industry leading lights for MRC 2011 and discover how to engage respondents, extract insights for product innovation and optimize marketing activities. Sign up now at <http://www.mobileresearchconference.com> and receive alerts on all news concerning MRC 2011, programme updates, or submit a proposal to speak at the event yourself!

In 2011, **ESOMAR** will launch **Research World Connect** the online platform of our global market research magazine. We aim to drive discussion and debate with articles written by those at the forefront of the industry. With this increased online offering, we will produce 6 printed issues in 2011. Read more at [www.esomar.org](http://www.esomar.org)

**John Ball**, COO of Ifop North America is pleased to announce several promotions within the firm. **Darko Rakin** who heads up the Consumer and Business division has been promoted to Senior Vice President as has **Ann Christelis** who becomes Senior Vice President and general manager of our Healthcare division. Also in our Healthcare division, we are pleased to recognize **Dima Ostrikov**, **Sarah Cohen**, and **Marianne Fillion**, all of whom have been promoted to Director. Congratulations to all! [john.ball@ifopna.com](mailto:john.ball@ifopna.com)

Interested in sponsoring People and Companies in the News in 2011?  
Contact [amgabriel@mria-arim.ca](mailto:amgabriel@mria-arim.ca)

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## NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Toronto, Ontario, January 5, 2011

Notice is hereby given that the Annual General meeting of Members of the Marketing Research and Intelligence Association (MRIA) will be held as follows:

**Monday, March 28, 2011**

6:30 p.m. (local time)

Intercontinental Toronto Yorkville Hotel  
220 Bloor St. West  
Toronto, Ontario

All members-in-good-standing of the Association are encouraged to attend the AGM. An Agenda for the meeting will be communicated to members in the near future.

Visit [www.mria-arim.ca](http://www.mria-arim.ca) for more information.

By order of the Board of Directors  
Carol Wilson, CMRP  
Secretary-Treasurer

## AVIS D'ASSEMBLÉE GÉNÉRALE ANNUELLE

Toronto, Ontario, le 5 janvier 2011

Avis est par la présente donné que l'Assemblée générale annuelle des membres de l'Association de la recherche et de l'intelligence marketing (ARIM) se tiendra comme suit :

**Le lundi 28 mars 2011**

18 h 30 (heure locale)

Intercontinental Toronto Yorkville Hotel  
220, rue Bloor ouest  
Toronto, Ontario

On encourage tous les membres en règle de l'Association d'assister à l'AGA. L'ordre du jour de la réunion sera communiqué aux membres sous peu.

Visitez [www.mria-arim.ca](http://www.mria-arim.ca) pour obtenir de plus amples renseignements.

Par ordre du conseil d'administration  
Carol Wilson, PARM  
Secrétaire-trésorière

# FORGOT SOMETHING?

Could it be renewing  
your MRIA membership  
for 2011?

In 2011, MRIA is taking several steps to innovate and adapt to enhance its value proposition to members:

- The new Online Research Committee is developing a “mark of quality statement” for the online research sector
- Social Media will be expanded to become an essential communication tool with members
- More one-day workshops and conference offerings to provide insight and networking opportunities
- All 12 CMRP Core courses will be offered online, on demand and at a reduced cost, by the end of 2011
- A new 2012/2014 Strategic Plan will be developed in 2011 using the insight gained from the 2010 Member Value and Benefits survey.

**To accomplish all of this and more, we need your ongoing support.**

Support MRIA by renewing your Corporate and/or Individual membership(s) for 2011 and by encouraging your colleagues, clients and/or suppliers to do the same.

## NOW is the Time

to renew. Don't risk losing access to valuable member benefits and discounts.

Visit the **MRIA Portal TODAY** at [www.mriaportal-arimportal.ca](http://www.mriaportal-arimportal.ca)  
to renew your membership for 2011.

For more information, contact MRIA at [membership@mria-arim.ca](mailto:membership@mria-arim.ca)



## QUALITATIVE RESEARCH REGISTRY (QRR)

In accordance with federal privacy laws, MRIA's Qualitative Research Registry (QRR), or Registre de la recherche qualitative (RRQ) in French, was created to provide an ongoing, user-friendly vehicle for tracking those who do not want to be contacted or should not be contacted for qualitative research studies.

**QRR is a comprehensive do not call list** of those who have recently participated in qualitative research studies, those who have asked not to be contacted further, and those felt by recruiters and moderators to be best served by not being contacted. These respondents are marked as "do not call" in accordance with established MRIA Standards.

All field and full-service companies are encouraged to submit a list of their qualitative respondents for entry into the QRR system each month, including those who do not wish to be contacted.

Participating firms will receive monthly updates of respondents to be screened from qualitative recruitment samples. QRR works effectively to increase the quality and integrity of the qualitative research process, by serving as a control to ensure respondents are not contacted more frequently than is necessary.

However, the ability of the system to function effectively is directly related to the co-operation received from firms who provide recruitment services. If you are a full service research firm or field supplier that is currently participating in the Qualitative Research Registry program – thank you very much and keep up the good work!

If you are not currently participating, please get involved! If you are interested in submitting to QRR, please visit the MRIA website at [mria-arim.ca/QRD/QualResearchRegistry.asp](http://mria-arim.ca/QRD/QualResearchRegistry.asp) for further explanation and guidance on how to submit qualitative research participants' names, along with the required electronic forms.

### QUALITATIVE RESEARCH REGISTRY SUBMISSIONS SHOULD BE SENT TO: [QRRQ@mria-arim.ca](mailto:QRRQ@mria-arim.ca)

Submission templates and payment forms can be found at [mria-arim.ca/QRD/QualResearchRegistryForms.asp](http://mria-arim.ca/QRD/QualResearchRegistryForms.asp)

### THE FOLLOWING COMPANIES HAVE SUBMITTED NAMES TO QUALITATIVE RESEARCH REGISTRY FOR SEPTEMBER 2010:

#### ATLANTIC

OPINION SEARCH

#### ONTARIO

BARBARA C. CAMPBELL RECRUITING  
CONSUMER VISION  
DAWN SMITH FIELD MANAGEMENT SERVICES INC.  
NEXUS RESEARCH  
OPINION SEARCH  
QUALITY RESPONSE  
RESEARCH HOUSE INC.  
RESEARCH PROFESSIONALS  
TANN RESEARCH  
VALYRA RESEARCH  
I & S RECRUITING

#### QUEBEC

CRC RESEARCH (QUEBEC)  
MAYER, BOURBONNAIS & AUBE  
OPINION SEARCH  
RESEARCH HOUSE INC.

#### WEST & NORTH

OPINION SEARCH  
RESEARCH HOUSE INC.  
SMARTPOINT RESEARCH INC.  
SYNOVATE  
TREND RESEARCH

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#### Rules of Conduct and Good Practice for Members of the Marketing Research and Intelligence Association (2007), Section C Rules Specific to the Conduct of Qualitative Research:

20. Recruiters should provide accurate data to the Qualitative Research Registry, where such exists, on a consistent basis and check all respondents against the Registry.
21. Moderators buying recruiting services should give primary consideration to recruiting agencies which submit to the Qualitative Research Registry, where such a service exists, on a regular and ongoing basis.



## 2011 EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

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COURSE TITLE		CITY	FINAL REGISTRATION	COURSE DATE
403-Advanced Qualitative Marketing Research Techniques	MCP 20	VANCOUVER	February 14	February 28
COURSE TITLE		CITY	EARLY BIRD REGISTRATION	COURSE DATE
Moderator Training: Basic	MCP 60	TORONTO	February 23	March 23-25
Selling Marketing Research: Sharpen Your Business Development Skills	MCP 20	CALGARY	February 24	March 24
402-Advanced Analysis Techniques	MCP 40	TORONTO	March 2	March 30-31
303-Marketing Management for Researchers	MCP 40	EDMONTON TORONTO	March 14 March 16	April 11-12 April 13-14
403-Advanced Qualitative Marketing Research Techniques	MCP 20	OTTAWA HALIFAX	March 31 April 7	April 28 May 5

MCP = Maintenance of Certification Program

## Advance Your Career Through Online Education Offerings!

**Measuring Brand Equity** – recorded webinar is now available for purchase!

Complete these Core courses at the time convenient for you, without having to leave your desk!

- 201-Marketing Research Design: An Applied Course
- 202-Questionnaire Design

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Pass an online challenge test for any of these Core courses and gain credit for it towards your CMRP designation:

- 101-Introduction to Marketing Research
- 201-Marketing Research Design: An Applied Course
- 202-Questionnaire Design

Register today at the MRIA Portal!

For more details or to register online at the MRIA Portal, visit our website at [www.mria-arim.ca](http://www.mria-arim.ca)

## Why Research Grads Should Challenge the CMRE

David MacDonald, CMRP



For the past ten years, I've had the great privilege of sitting on the Advisory Committee of Georgian College's Research Analyst Program (RAP), and I am currently acting as chair of that committee. In my time, I've seen many students complete their coursework, undertake internships, and launch careers in the research industry. Whether they started on the supplier side or the buyer side, many have seen their careers progress and find themselves asking what they should be doing next to move ahead in the industry.

When the CMRP designation was first launched, there were three routes to obtain it. Those with fifteen or more years of experience could apply to have it granted to them under a grandparenting process, if they met specific requirements. Those who didn't meet the grandparenting requirements had the option of completing MRIA's core curriculum and writing the Comprehensive Marketing Research Exam (CMRE) or, if they had eight or more years of experience, they could elect to challenge the exam directly after taking the ethics course only. More recently, MRIA agreed that, in recognition of the quality of the coursework and training provided by the post-graduate Research Analyst Program at Georgian College, graduates would be permitted to challenge the CMRE after just two years of work experience. As an employer, I can speak only of my experience with RAP graduates; however, similar post-graduate

programs at Algonquin College and the University of Georgia have since been recognized by MRIA.

Often, I'm asked why RAP graduates should obtain the CMRP designation and why they should wait two years to write the exam. First, the process of studying for and writing the exam will reinforce things they have already learned and expose them to additional concepts and approaches valued by MRIA. Chief among these is internalizing MRIA's *Code of Conduct and Good Practice*, which every MRIA member should be familiar with but CMRP holders understand more deeply.

Second, obtaining the CMRP after RAP demonstrates that graduates have mastered the most rigorous research training and been tested to the highest standards, thereby arming them with the best practice tools and skills, as well as the confidence to apply them effectively.

Third, with the CMRP comes the requirement to pursue Maintenance of Certification Program (MCP) credits. Whether through courses, seminars, industry events, or the writing of columns like this one, the MCP ensures that researchers continually upgrade their knowledge and skills.

Together, all three of these benefits help demonstrate that CMRP holders have made a commitment to building long-term careers in research.

From an employer's perspective, the designations of RAP graduate and CMRP together are highly valued. Like most other MRIA organizations that have hired RAP grads, we at

Envionics have been greatly impressed by their skills training, energy, and productivity. Those who have acquired the CMRP designation as well have found their careers advance further and faster, as they have demonstrated that they are able to take on greater responsibilities sooner. Our RAP-CMRPs tell us that they feel more confident in leading research design, have a better understanding of the pros and cons of methodological approaches, and are clearer in their analysis and in their communication of findings to clients.

For these reasons, we actively encourage our RAP grads – and all employees – to challenge the CMRE and acquire their designation as soon as they are eligible.

The bottom line is that the CMRP makes a demonstrable difference. Recent grads who are serious about advancing their careers should plan to write the CMRE as soon as they can. Employers serious about attracting high-calibre talent should seek those who have earned the CMRP designation.

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*David MacDonald, CMRP, is the group vice-president of Custom/Financial Services at Envionics Research Group. He is the chair of the Advisory Committee of the Georgian College Research Analyst Program, and he has recently joined the Certification Advisory Committee of MRIA. David can be reached at [david.macdonald@envionics](mailto:david.macdonald@envionics) or (416) 969-2814.*

## FIELD MATTERS – FIELD MANAGEMENT GROUP

### Recruiting Respondents through Social Media

Virginie Roux

With social media becoming more and more important as platforms for conducting market research, what about recruiting research participants through these new media? What are the pros and cons? Are we recruiting well-targeted quality respondents or individuals who are predisposed to participating in research and don't constitute a true representation of the target audience?

In terms of pros, there is the ability to target people through sites and pages where those individuals seek information or meet to discuss and share their experiences. There is also the ability to communicate directly and immediately with people for whom the topic or issue is of interest and relevance. In certain instances, social media recruitment can also be quite cost-effective compared to more traditional methods. All of which make the online recruiting of research participants very appealing.

On the negative side, respondents may know the topic and have preconceived ideas as to how to qualify. Despite reminders, incentives and follow-ups, it is entirely up to the respondent to reply to a request or to ignore and delete it. There is, as well, the concern of false identity and responses. Social media recruitment can also potentially limit the pool and the variety of individuals that can be reached.

Despite the cons, there is definitely a place for recruiting research participants through social media. A combination of

recruitment methods is likely still the best approach at this stage. Of course, by the time we have all of the answers to these questions, there will probably be a new avenue through which we'll be looking to find our next respondents.

## QUAL COL

### Blogs: Research beyond the Existing Content

Lindsay Porter

Blogs are created for multiple reasons, with the overarching aim of giving people a voice. And this voice is heard in the content that is generated by each blogger. Social media have yielded a vast territory from which to garner data – user-generated content. However, there is much more that lies beneath the surface of this content, and it proves to be useful to qualitative market research.

While most market research is concerned with analysing the existing content generated by bloggers, exciting opportunities for deeper insights arise if we look past the content and to the process by which this content is generated. Looking at the process of reflection that occurs during blogging allows for the discovery of that which lies beyond the rational and grants us access to the emotional territory that governs thoughts, opinions and behaviours.

*Reflective* writing or blogging is based on having a heightened level of awareness about one's thoughts, feelings, attitudes and behaviours. While not all blogs are deemed to be reflective, methodologically we can guide our respondents to be reflective within a blog-like atmosphere, whether we choose the exercise to be private or

allow it to be open (fostering a sense of community and discussion).

This process of reflective blogging has been adopted by several academic institutions to encourage a learning environment that uncovers deep-rooted thoughts on particular experiences, and enhances the learning experience because of this forced higher awareness. Similarly, reflective blogging can be applied as a qualitative methodology to yield those nuggets of information, motivators, and true expressions of unmet needs that clients can leverage to implement successful marketing strategies.

## CI CORNER

David Lithwick & Enrico Codogno

**Dear CI Corner:** A sales rep left one of our competitors a year ago to join us. She had not signed a non-disclosure agreement (NDA), thereby presenting us with an opportunity to ask questions about her former employer. Any suggestions?

Also, another rep recently joined us, but he did sign an NDA when he left. Can I still press him for information? Should I? *Opportunist*

*Dear Opportunist:* To your second question, two words: Walk away. It's not worth compromising him or yourself.

To your first question, here are some tips:

Assume the rep will be on her guard, figuring that if she tells you too much you will wonder how you can trust her with sensitive information. So avoid asking too many questions.

Don't ask questions one after another. Sprinkle them into the discussion.

Don't make your questions obvious. Ask about other competitors as well as her previous employer.

Test her accuracy by asking questions to which you know the answers, comparing her responses to what you know. If she is way off, then she is likely to be so for other information.

Ask, "What is your opinion?" or "What is your best guess?" instead of trying to nail down a specific answer, especially when it comes to something that is far off or vague.

Have another person sit in on the same discussion with you.

Ask the same question more than once to see how consistent she is.

Keep questions to what she would know. In her enthusiasm, she may overstate things that are beyond the scope of her knowledge.

If she mentions something really captivating, ask yourself, "Is this what she heard, or is it her opinion?"

Assume the rep will be nervous and eager to please. So compliment her on some of her responses. Doing so will encourage her to talk more.

## B2B REPORTER

### Do Virtual Conferences Have a Future?

Ruth Lukaweski

I attended my first virtual conference three years ago. The technology was quite primitive, and the content wasn't much better. Recently, however, I made an effort to attend two virtual conferences and was pleasantly surprised. The format and technologies have improved; they are easy to access, for most people; and the content quality was quite high.

Based on my recent experience of these two conferences – "The Art & Science of B2B Marketing" and "Unveiling Marketing Research's Future Online" – it seems to me that virtual conferences have a very bright future.

The typical virtual conference appears to have four main venues:

- (1) the auditorium, where live and on-demand presentations can be viewed;
- (2) the expo hall, for sponsor and presenter virtual booths;
- (3) a networking centre, where participants can post personal profiles, including an avatar; and
- (4) a resource centre, where conference presentations and related materials are posted.

Other interesting features include vCards, which can be exchanged; networking resources, including group or personal chat opportunities, as well as social media tools such as Twitter and LinkedIn; and a personal "briefcase," which stores a record of all attendee conference activities.

The best feature was that these virtual conferences were both *free*, which was great, considering the quality of the content.

The B2B *blog of the month* is at <http://arketi.com/blog>, by the Arketi Group, a digital PR and marketing firm focused on B2B products and services.

## THE INNOVATION ACCELERATOR

### There Is Magic in Thinking Big

Margaret Imai-Compton, CMRP

The saying goes that you are what you eat. It's also true that you are what you think.

If you think small – and most people do – you stay small. You keep yourself in the same comfort zone, doing the same things, without remarkable growth or change because you limit yourself to conditioned patterns of thinking.

You get to choose your thoughts, so if you change them up and THINK BIG, something magical happens.

Thinking big is not about imagining the possible; it's about imagining the *near impossible*. It means you can be outrageous and let your imagination soar. Doing so will allow you to stretch, and to believe in the power of your big thoughts.

Thinking big is about giving yourself permission to be expansive, to resist the internal censors that say, "This can't be done" or "It's not the right time." Consciously and mindfully put those restricting thoughts aside, and start with "What if ...?" Immediately, you've changed small thinking into big thinking.

For example, imagine that you had the original dream of putting a man on the moon. Consider this idea from the "small think" and the "big think," and you come to understand how NASA achieved multiple moon landings.

Thinking big also means going big. That means taking the next step. It may feel risky, but challenge yourself to put your big thought into action, even if it's just to make inquiries or start an information search. It may feel insignificant, but you've now injected action into your big thought.

Thinking big does not require special training or expensive tools. It simply means that you act on what Walt Disney knew all along: "If you can dream it, you can do it."

## THE COURT OF PUBLIC OPINION

### The Year in ReVue: The Best of Times, the Worst of Times

Ruth M. Corbin, CMRP

The Law Society of Upper Canada recently sponsored year-in-review presentations by leading practitioners on intellectual property disputes that were heard by courts and regulators in 2010. Seven cases incorporated survey research and related marketing evidence.

Among the highlights of 2010 was the advancement of a trade-mark case to the Supreme Court of Canada, featuring expert marketing opinions and survey-based opinions by various professionals. Historically, it has been quite rare for trade-mark cases to attract the attention of the Supreme Court. However, the last ten years have

seen more such cases than any other ten-year period in Canada's judicial history.

The 2010 case in question was about the trade-mark "Masterpiece Living" used in association with retirement residences and related services. The trade-mark had been registered by Ottawa-based Alavida Lifestyles Inc. Alberta-based Masterpiece Inc., also operating in the retirement residence sector, had sought to expunge Alavida's registration, on the grounds that "Masterpiece Living" was confusingly similar to Masterpiece Inc.'s previous use of the trade-marks "Masterpiece" and "Masterpiece – the Art of Living," among others.

While the case is being deliberated by the court, it is imprudent to offer an interpretive view of the issues. But interested *Vue* readers may wish to spend a fascinating two hours watching the presentations to the Supreme Court by four outstanding lawyers, including one intervening in the case on behalf of the International Trade-mark Association. The webcast of the hearing is available at <http://www.scc-csc.gc.ca/case-dossier/cms-sgd/webcast-webdiffusion-eng.aspx?cas=33459>.

Among the lowlights of 2010 was a challenge by the Federal Court to the

survey data submitted by one of the parties in connection with a dispute about the MARLBORO cigarette trade-mark. The case may be accessed at <http://decisions.fct-cf.gc.ca/en/2010/2010fc1099/2010fc1099.html>. The judge in that case observed "the unfortunate possibility" of "dishonest interviewers inventing data." Clearly, this invites all of MRIA to consider how to reinforce public confidence in survey research.

## CLIENT-SIDE INSIGHTS

### Hey, Check Out My Blog

Kristian Gravelle

The Internet is an immense repository of information. It serves to inform us, connect us, entertain us, and so much more. Part of its magic is in how easy it is to post something and provide the world with access to it.


Blogging is just an infinite use of the vast resource that we call the Internet. And it can be powerful. Through their ease of use, blogs have helped to inform us on issues, interests and goings-on in the most reclusive corners of the world. They can also be quite influential in shaping attitudes, behaviours and, yes, the marketing of products.

Increasingly, organizations are turning to the blog and the blogger to help them get their message across. Some are successful, and some are not. The difference between success and failure relies on a company's ability to research the key influencers in the blogosphere, their following, and how closely the platform of those influencers overlaps with the company's message.

Researching and executing against a strategy that will incorporate the blogosphere can be tricky. Key points to consider while executing a communication strategy include

- understanding the size of the following and where it is geographically
- researching beyond content and ensuring alignment with the key message
- being transparent about what your intent is
- having a plan to measure impact.

People have always had many things to talk about, and there are always nuggets of insights that can be captured and actioned against. We are in the infancy of leveraging the Internet both as a source of insights and as a tool to communicate our messages. The potential and success lie in how effectively we can harness, measure and communicate.



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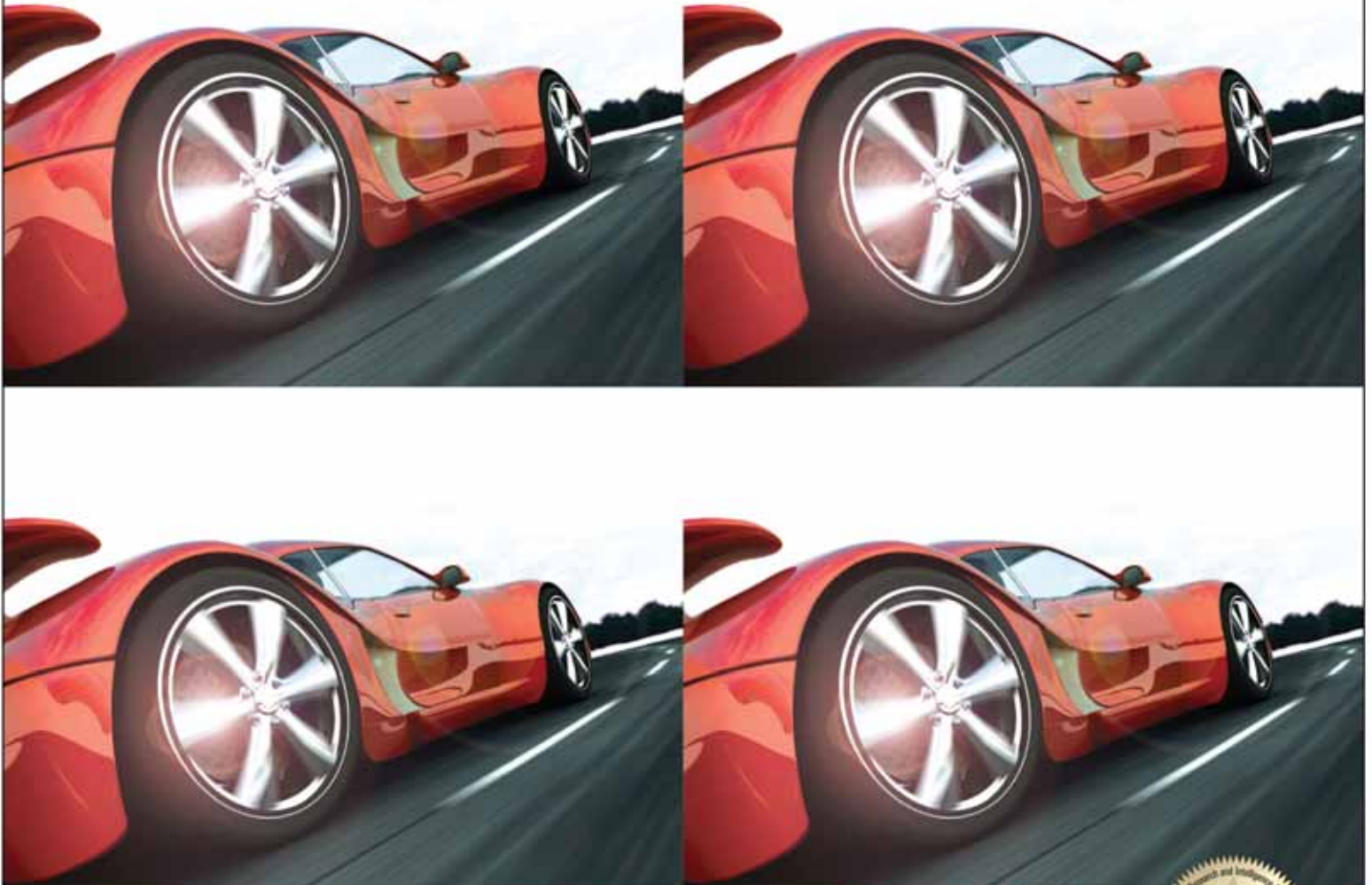


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