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Title / Authors

Internet Use, Welfare and Well-Being: Evidence from Africa / Jeffrey James

Abstract: Traditional consumer theory assumes that welfare is derived at the point where goods are purchased. More recent theories however argue that what matters is dependent on what happens after goods are purchased. Such information though requires surveys that are specifically designed for the purpose. Accordingly, Internet use data are few and far between in developing countries. Recently, however, such data have become available for eleven African countries and my intention in this paper is to use them to assess welfare more realistically across the countries in question. Among the questions asked are: do the patterns of use favor one set of countries over others or are the observations more random in character? Which use mechanisms are most important across the sample and why? How do these results compare with those of a developed country such as the USA?

Mobile Response in Web Panels / Marika de Bruijne & Arnaud Wijnant

Abstract: This paper investigates unintended mobile access to surveys in online, probability-based panels. We find that spontaneous tablet usage is drastically increasing in web surveys, while smartphone usage remains low. Further, we analyze the bias of respondent profiles using smartphones and tablets compared to those using computers, on the basis of several socio-demographic characteristics. Our results not only indicate that mobile web respondents differ from PC users but also that tablet users differ from smartphone users. While tablets are used for survey completion by working (young) adults, smartphones are used merely by the young. In addition, our results indicate that mobile web respondents are more progressive and describe themselves more often as pioneers or forerunners in adopting new technology, compared to PC respondents. We further discover that respondents' preferences for devices to complete surveys are clearly in line with unintended mobile response. Finally, we present a similar analysis on intended mobile response in an experiment where smartphone users were requested to complete a mobile survey. Based on these findings, testing on tablets is strongly recommended in online surveys. If the goal is to reach young respondents, enabling surveys via smartphones should be considered.

Left Feels Right! A Usability Study on the Position of Answer Boxes in Web Surveys / Timo Lenzner, Lars Kaczmirek, & Mirta Galesic

Abstract: The literature on human-computer interaction consistently stresses the importance of reducing the cognitive effort required by users who interact with a

computer in order to improve the experience and enhance usability and comprehension. Applying this perspective to Web surveys, questionnaire designers are advised to strive for layouts that facilitate the response process and reduce the effort required to select an answer. In this paper, we examine whether placing the answer boxes (i.e., radio buttons or check boxes) to the left or to the right of the answer options in closed questions with vertically arranged response categories enhances usability and facilitates responding. First, we discuss a set of opposing principles of how respondents may process these types of questions in Web surveys, some suggesting placing the answer boxes to the left and others suggesting placing them to the right side of the answer options. Second, we report an eye-tracking experiment, which examined whether Web survey responding is best described by one or another of these principles, and consequently whether one of three layouts is preferable in terms of usability: (1) answer boxes to the left of left-aligned answer options, (2) answer boxes to the right of left-aligned answer options, and (3) answer boxes to the right of right-aligned answer options. Our results indicate that the majority of respondents conform to a principle suggesting placing the answer boxes to the left of left-aligned answer options. Moreover, respondents require less cognitive effort (operationalized by response latencies, fixation times, fixation counts, and number of gaze switches between answer options and answer boxes) to select an answer in this layout.

Reports and Communications

Perceptions on the Legality of Sexting: A Report / Kimberly A. McCabe & Olivia C. Johnston

Abstract: In many cases in today's world, sexting has replaced sexually explicit letters or messages and one time sent through the postal service. However, whereas mail traditionally involved one sender and one recipient, sexting can involve multiple parties, is a common activity for teens, and can be considered illegal. This report was an attempt to document users' knowledge of sexting and their recognition of illegal activities. Results indicated that regardless of age or sex, individuals capable of sexting were aware of the legality and illegality of the action. However, females generally held a more narrow view of sexting in that if the sexting involved children as the victims of the sexually explicit image and not the recipient then the action was considered illegal. Through research reports such as this one, awareness of the illegal possibilities of sexting is exposed.

Ontological Considerations when Modeling Missing Data with Relational Databases / Claude Rubinson

Abstract: SQL's use of nulls to indicate missing data in relational databases has been criticized as violating the relational model. In this paper, I review this critique and two popular recommendations of resolution. The first is to retire SQL's multivalued logic and replace it with a conventional binary logic. The second is to revise SQL's implementation of multivalued logic so that it can recognize tautological propositions. I argue that underlying this debate is an ontological disagreement about how to properly model missing data and, more generally, social reality. I demonstrate that the relational model provides useful tools for modeling different types of missing data in different ways and,

furthermore, offers a useful foundation upon which to conduct social research, one that supports both variable-oriented and case-oriented analysis.