



Overcoming online complexities reaps research rewards

Sydney, October 28, 2009: A joint research paper focussing on the difficulties of presenting complex information to consumers in online research has received high accolades, winning the award for 'Best Paper' at the recent AMSRS National Conference.

The paper, presented by Brian Fine from The ORU and Con Menictas from AMR Interactive, both STW Group companies, examines what researchers should consider when the real world situation or product being tested online is extremely complex. Using health insurance products as a model case study, the paper presents a means of overcoming this challenge, and how to improve the quality and standard of results gained from online participants.

Rather than the common practice of over-simplifying information, the paper discusses a way of presenting survey participants with intensive and intricate information through practice sessions of conditioning, as Brian Fine explains:

"Survey participants typically experience fatigue when processing and responding to complex information," he said.

"So we found the most effective approach was to 'condition' participants beforehand, sensitizing them to a series of information processing tasks set at a higher level of complexity than would be needed for the actual survey immediately following."

Fine and Menictas also applied a 'Best-Worst' approach with simple tasks to achieve lower variability across the segments researched.

"Our research found the conditioning process enabled respondents to spend more time evaluating the subsequent choice tasks, making for a far more considered response," said Fine.

"The benefits of this process translate directly to increased robustness in modelling consumer behaviour, in markets comprising products that are laden with intense and complex information.

"Now companies with extremely complex products and services also have a way of gaining far greater insight into consumer preferences and behaviour."

The ORU and AMR are part of the STW Group, Australia's leading marketing content and communications services group

Ends.

For more information contact:
Natelle Ball
STW Group
Ph: 0408 005 545