Online Research – Acceptability and prevalence

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Online Research is currently a much discussed research tool which meets increasing interest. Nevertheless, the use of different internet services for research purposes is very controversial. Like all other information sources, internet involves various advantages and disadvantages. Online Research is especially characterized by very dynamic developments in its technology. The necessary generation of new tools and methods is very restrained and is inhibited due to the uncertainty about their enforcement and acceptance amongst the customers as well as the respondents. Thus, the dissemination of this tool is very hesitant and meets with suspicousness. For the time being, the internet is most of used as an investigation tool; primary research is mainly conducted about the internet use behaviour itself.

The department of marketing has conducted a survey about this topic, in the course of which market research institutes as well as research managers from different companies have been asked about their acceptance and willingness to use Online Research. The results show that Online Research today is mainly used in lines of business related to the Internet as well as target groups with a certain affinity towards the internet. As far as the market research institutes are concerned, methodological problems affect the overall acceptance and dissemination of Online Research. An exception are Online Panels that already today feature promising possiblities of usage. Overall, the results show that Online Research has the potential to win recognition as a valueable research tool in the long run. Whether this will be a complementary or substitute tool regarding other methodologies remains to be seen.

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