

Market Research is currently going through a transition phase with very little innovation having happened in the last decade or two. Efficiencies have definitely been created with online and CATI playing a prominent role during this period. However no real true innovation has made a major impact in mainstream MR. Many new techniques have got quite a lot of exposure and airplay but none have been sustained and been universally accepted yet. Of the more prominent innovations around, Mobile research has largely till recently been restricted to smart phones and Neuro MR is still in its infancy.

Staying with Mobile MR, the method and technology has been around for a while now with solutions available and in use across the world, but they either are dependent on very sophisticated smart phones or use SMS based campaigns which has very limited depth when it comes to any deep diagnostic market research. Mobile Application based MR however would open it to the general public and use handsets existing in the general population already. This would not only make the user / respondent more accessible but also have a major impact on data delivery and also cost as not hardware investment on the part of agencies and suppliers would be involved.

Leaving our homes we take our wallet/purse, keys & of course our mobile phones. Even when we return home our wallets and keys have parking spots but the mobile may have multiple points – for charging or simply moves with you. Having said that, it is important to view Mobile Research in the right perspective. Traditional research tools like F2F/Online/CATI clearly will always have their respective advantages and will be favoured over other methods depending on the application. However there will be a few areas in MR that will be favourable for Mobiles and will have advantages over other methods. This will also force marketers and researcher to focus on the issue at hand; and for maximum impact restrict the applications output to the core only. For any deeper understanding other methods will come into play and Mobile MR will always work in conjunction with traditional methods. This paper highlights these areas and the reasons why they will retain their appeal over other methods.

1. **Tracking Studies** – any kind of tracking, especially diary based mobile tracking methods will score over more traditional methods. This is because all the other methods measure consumption / perceptions at a given point of time & have a certain level of past recall always built in. Even if the diary frequency is everyday, most respondents always fill the dairy only once a day, typically at the end of a day, while using a mobile the user can fill the diary regularly throughout the day on the go.
 - ✓ **Consumption Tracks** – Any consumption track, especially those for beverages, snacks and impulse products, where the consumption is often not planned or happens on the fly would favour mobiles. A dynamic data collection tool using the user's Mobile as a primary data collection point almost like following a respondent and recording their consumption throughout the day.
 - ✓ **Brand Tracks** – Any tracking which monitors imagery, awareness, recall, switching etc is ideally monitored continuously throughout the day, for a week or as defined.
2. **Shopper / Location based Research** – a buzz word amongst both retailers and manufacturers, and often current MR methods often falls short of what the plan is. As often getting natural instant responses / reactions to stimuli at a store setting is always hard to either observe or simulate.
 - ✓ **Mystery shopping** – un-accompanied mystery shopping is one of the best way to evaluate customer service & evaluating if store based campaigns are working as planned. With the mobile element added one can added photographic, video in addition to the task given. Also often the best inputs are got while observing a respondents facial expressions while they are about their business doing the mystery shop. However this also often compromises respondent reactions as rarely do they act naturally with a researcher accompanying, prompting or pointing at things. The

mobile allows making a self video summarizing a mystery shop ensuring there's no respondent – researcher interaction throughout the project allowing for the best unfiltered responses and experience.

- ✓ **Display Audits / Store checks** – Based on the objective respondents would be able to give visual feedback through the camera/video recorder of their phones monitoring and enhancing display campaign effectiveness.
- ✓ **Customer Satisfaction / Events** – The quickest non intrusive feedback during events are ideal for satisfaction surveys within closed spaces using mobile technologies. The mobile would allow the respondents to give honest feedback instantly without having to fill forms / answer phones or be obliged to give responses at gun point.

3. **Mobile Metering & Multi-Media Consumption Monitoring** – One of the reasons mobile has not had as great an impact as it ought to have by now is the lack of real verifiable data on usage, consumption and demographic profiling of mobile users. The below two mobile solutions would address this to a great extent.

- ✓ **Mobile monitor** – This tool is an application embedded in a mobile of a user and can be used to track their usage pattern of their handset and also covering a large spectrum of what they do, when they do it on their phones, be it gaming, voice calls, browsing, applications used, etc. This monitoring is non invasive and will run in the background without effecting the user once embedded.
- ✓ **Multi-Media consumption** – With the active participation of the user, their mobile handset would continuously record their dealings with media they come across in order to measure their impact. This could cover multiple spectrums TV, Print, Outdoor, Indoor, In-Cab, Banner, flyers, and any other form of media they come in contact with throughout the day. If they are recording it throughout the day it gets as close to the real thing as possible as users are always getting a cross media blitz. The mobile media monitor has the advantage of capturing the impact of multiple touch points simultaneously.
- ✓ **Social Media** – Social media tools like Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Blogs, RSS, etc have all expanded rapidly to mobiles throwing up new challenges and opportunities for research.

4. **Qualitative Research** – allows and requires more creativity and free flowing inputs; Mobiles can ideally be exploited by the respondents to add the dimension of mobility to the equation.

- ✓ **Mobile TPV (Text, Photo & Video) Blogging** – besides allowing respondents to blog their thoughts and opinions, mobile blogging has the added advantage of also adding photos and video recordings from the phone to one's posts. The main advantage here over online blogs in addition to allowing Text, Photo & Video from a single point is that mobile allows blogging to take place on the go, anywhere – anytime without any cumbersome equipment and people to follow (i.e. videographers, camera, video cameras, etc).
- ✓ **Ethnography Studies** – Mobiles are also ideally suited to track the behavior of respondents for ethnography studies. This is very similar to the diary tracking application with the added flexibility for the user to give open / unstructured feedback so the researcher gets as rich data as is possible.

Like the internet was all the rage in 2000 and slowly fulfilled its potential within the next 5 years, similarly 2005 was the year Mobile technologies got a lot of airplay and the slow but sure potential of the mobile is being realized in 2010. I see Market Research being one of the big beneficiaries and adopters of Mobile technologies in 2010 & beyond. With more and more innovation like Augmented Reality and QR codes added to the mix, interesting times ahead.