

An excerpt from

## Mobile MR: Hope or Hype?

by Leonard Murphy

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It's no secret that I am a believer in the future of mobile research. In 2008 I recognized that the pace of technology adoption for mobile was going to force a massive shift in how brands engage with consumers, and that trend meant that market research would have to follow suit. I guess you could say that I was an early adopter re: mobile hype.

The truly interesting thing about mobile is that it, like the internet in the first part of the new millennium, is not just a communications channel but also creates an opportunity for a whole new way to conduct research due to the devices themselves. *The medium dictates the mode.* The idea of simply migrating the online research model to a mobile platform is certainly part of the equation, but it's a boring one. Mobile allows us a level of creativity, immediacy and engagement that has been rare in the world of insight collection.

OK, so that is why I am a fan, but what about the industry as a whole? Well, it looks like folks are finally getting it. We may all be drinking the same kool-aid here, but I think mobile as a major new approach for insight collection has switched from hype to hope. The rest of this post will be about why I think we've reached the tipping point.

In recent days we've seen a plethora of news releases that validate these findings as well. Yesterday Research. broke the story that iPhone app-based research platform Thumbspeak has partnered with Nielsen Mobile to help the media research giant recruit for its behaviour tracking panel while giving it the option to collate additional attitudinal data through surveys of Thumbspeak users. When the largest research company in the world, especially one that makes a big chunk of its revenue by collecting data from large representative samples of consumers embraces a method like this, you know it's time to pay attention!

Thumbspeak is just one example of this burgeoning market though, as well as only one of the ways this channel can be used. Mobile surveys and tracking are the tip of the iceberg;

**Gongos Research** is taking a best-of-both-worlds approach and is creating mobile MROCs! I recently had a chance to chat with Greg Heist, VP, Research Innovation & Technology at Gongos about the potential of mobile research methods. I was immensely impressed by his grasp of the technology, creativity, and overall hunger to revolutionize the process of market research. Plus, he's a darn nice guy, which really made the conversation a pleasure!

Rather than recap what we talked about, here is an excerpt from Greg's blog that will give you a sense of how Gongos is re-inventing market research.

*Recently, Facebook began publishing statistics about its user base. I want to highlight some of their statistics about mobile and talk a bit about what these facts point to about the future of online research communities.*

*The first is this: There are more than 100 million users currently accessing Facebook through their smartphones on a monthly basis. This represents approximately 20% of all Facebook members. Now, think about this statistic for a moment: To me, this implies that people are already comfortable with the concept of participating in an online community via a smartphone. With numbers of this magnitude, we're not talking about a "fringe element" or something that only early adopters do. Nope. When over 100 million people are doing something, it's clearly something that has mass appeal.*

*Perhaps even more compelling for a researcher is this: People that use Facebook on their mobile devices are twice as active as non-mobile users. Simply put, smartphone users are far more engaged than their non-mobile peers. This makes a lot of sense, since it's much easier to steal a snapshot or update your status "as it happens" when all you need to do is pull your phone out of your pocket.*

*But, the story gets better. Projections show that within 12 months more people will be buying smartphones than feature phones. This tells me we are quickly reaching a powerful tipping point that will have ramifications for the research industry for years to come.*

*Despite not having a fully-functioning crystal ball, I'm lucky enough to be paid to foresee major trends in consumer behavior, and figuring out what it means for marketing research. In doing that a couple of years ago, our mobile research strategy was born. Embracing the two megatrends above led to the launch of i°Communities mobile for iPhone and iPod touch.*

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Gongos is part of a growing category of market research suppliers that are leading the charge in defining what market research will look like over the next decade. I fully expect others to emerge as well, but until then they and other pioneers of the new techno-cultural world we live in will help blaze the trail for the rest of us.

So there is the evidence of why I think mobile MR has crossed over from hype to hope. We're seeing broad adoption from suppliers and clients, projected increases over the next 24 months, and players that are delivering both data collection technologies as well as access to a global population of respondents. It's time to get ready folks; this rocket is about to launch!

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