Envisioning the Survey Interview of the Future

SURVMETH 895
SURV 699

Winter/Spring 2012
Thursday 10 – 12:30

Instructor: Frederick Conrad
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Course Description

This seminar will explore how emerging communication technologies might shape the survey interview of the future. First we will consider four phenomena studied in the social sciences that provide a framework for assessing the potential impact of new technologies on survey data: conversational grounding, satisficing, social presence, and deception. Then, with these ideas in mind, we will explore four technologies that seem promising for survey data collection: speech dialogue systems, video mediated communication, animated agents (a.k.a. virtual humans or embodied conversational agents) and mobile, multimodal data collection. Finally we will discuss the emergence of a fundamentally alternative approach to self-report data produced in interviews: analysis of social media content for evidence of public opinion and behavior.

The course presupposes familiarity with the growing literature on cognitive aspects of survey methodology and on modes of survey data collection; SURV/SURVMETH 632 and SURV/SURVMETH 623 are prerequisites unless permission is obtained from the instructor.

Readings

One textbook will be required for class:


The other required readings can be downloaded from the University of Michigan Ctools web site for the course.
Course Requirements and Grading
Grades for the course will be based on:

- Present/summarize one of the weekly readings in about four classes (30% of grade).
- Four short papers, in which the student will design a study to fill some gap or resolve some problem with each topic. The four papers will also serve as the basis for in-class presentations (60% of grade, 15% each).
- Participation in class discussion demonstrating understanding of the required readings (10% of grade)

Schedule and Reading Assignments

Week 1 (January 5) Introduction to course and organizational meeting

Week 2: (January 12): Conversational Grounding


Week 3 (January 19): Satisficing


Week 4 (January 26): Social Presence and Deception


**Feb 2: No Class**

**Week 5 (February 9): Video Mediated Communication**


**Week 6 (February 16): Student presentations**

**Week 7 (February 23): Speech Dialog Systems**


**March 1: No Class, UMich SpringBreak**

**Week 8 (March 8): Student Presentations**
**Week 9 (March 15): Animated/Embodied Agents**


Lind, L. H., Schober, M.F., Conrad, F.G. & Reichert, H. (under review). Why do survey respondents disclose more when computers ask the questions?


**March 22: No Class, UMD Spring Break**

**Week 10 (March 29): Student Presentations**

**Week 11 (April 5): Mobile Multimedia**


**Week 12 (April 12): Social Media**


**Week 13 (April 19): Student Presentations**