LEVERAGING NEW TECHNOLOGIES FOR UNDERSTANDING
ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIORS

An Online short course sponsored by the Joint Program in Survey Methodology

January 31 - February 11, 2022

COURSE ABSTRACT

New technology development and survey methods enhancement have powered survey research for more than 75 years. Never before, however, has the proliferation, complexity, and growth of technology been as expansive and rapid as seen today. Smartphones and tablets, social networking, and “Big Data” offer researchers with an array of potential new techniques and approaches for the collection of behavioral, attitudinal, and related data. This includes new modes for administering surveys; adjunct data collection techniques which could augment survey data; and, in some instances, approaches that could replace traditional self-reported surveys with more real-time, electronic data capture. This course provides an innovative look at various emerging data collection technologies used by researchers and how these are (and may) be used to evolve survey research to the next level. The course will cover four broad areas. First, a framework will be provided to help assess and categorize new technologies and their impact on data collection. Second, we will examine current and potential future uses of new technology devices and platforms. Current applications, known best practices, and cautions will be discussed for a range of new data collection platforms, including smartphones (for surveys, GPS, and visual data collection), Internet-based data capture, and leveraging social network platforms (surveys and other forms of information). Third, we take a deep-dive into the uses of smartphone and social media technologies, both as modes of conducting traditional surveys as well as data collection vehicles in their own right. The final section of the course examines some of the impediments to research and development of new technologies within the field of survey research and provides some guidance on how such tools can be developed, tested and deployed in a more efficient and effective manner.

WHO SHOULD ATTEND

People with a working knowledge of survey research methods will be assumed. No knowledge of Mobile or Social Networking technologies or any particular software package is necessary.
THE INSTRUCTOR

Michael W. Link, Ph.D. Michael W. Link, Ph.D. is Vice President for the Data Science, Surveys & Enabling Technologies (DSET) Division at Abt Associates. With more than 30 years of experience in the field of data collection, Dr. Link is a past President of the American Association for Public Opinion Research, 2014-2015. His research efforts focus on developing methodologies for confronting the most pressing issues facing survey collection and data science, including use of new technologies such as mobile platforms, mixed-mode surveys, social media, and other forms of Big Data for understanding public attitudes and behaviors. Along with several colleagues, he received the American Association for Public Opinion Research 2011 Mitofsky Innovator’s Award for his research on address-based sampling. His numerous research articles have appeared in leading scientific journals, such as Public Opinion Quarterly, International Journal of Public Opinion Research, and Journal of Official Statistics.

CLASS STRUCTURE

The course will be in an online format from Jan 31 to Feb 11, 2022. Participants will have online access to the course packet (slides) and to the recorded lectures. The recorded lectures will be divided into eight sections (four sections per week) of roughly one hour each. Participants can watch the videos at their own pace, with a recommended viewing of one session per day for each of the four days (Monday – Thursday). Live group online discussions are scheduled for Friday 02/04/22 and 02/11/22 from 12:00 pm to 1:30 pm.
These sessions will be used to discuss questions that came up over the week when watching the videos. Students will have the opportunity to submit their questions in advance.