

RESEARCH CODE OF CONDUCT

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ALEX FLOWERS, CO - DIRECTOR

REVIEW

Flow Associates Directorate is charged with reviewing the Code annually or as frequently as needed to determine whether changes are warranted.

ARTICLE I – RESPONSIBILITY TO RESPONDENTS AND PROSPECTIVE RESPONDENTS

Each of the 42 Principles listed below should be considered to begin with “Flow Associates will...”

GENERAL CONDUCT

1. Treat respondents with respect and in a professional manner.
2. Protect the rights of respondents, including the right to refuse to participate in part or all of the research process.

Researchers must respect the bounds of cooperation set by respondents, who control the parameters under which information is given. In practice, this means all of the following:

Respondent agreement to participate in research must be obtained upfront, rather than after the fact.

Consent must be granted freely, without coercion.

Consent may be withdrawn by the respondent at any point during the contact.

Consent must be granted expressly for participation in any subsequent studies.

An explicit opt-out request for any future contact or participation at any point during the process will be honoured.

All reasonable precautions are taken so that respondents are in no way adversely affected as a result of their participation in an audience research project.

Exceptions: In limited circumstances of passive user data collection, no opportunity may exist for respondents to refuse to participate.

See Principle 11 for further considerations.

3. Influence no respondent's opinion or attitude through direct or indirect attempts, including the framing or order of questions.

During screening, prequalification or other qualification procedures and data collection, great care must be taken to source and collect information impartially so that research results accurately reflect reality.

Exceptions: Projects intending to determine how opinions can be manipulated such as message testing.

4. Protect the privacy of respondents. Keep confidential all information/data that could identify respondents to third-parties without the respondents' consent. If such permission is given, it must be documented and the data may be used only for the purpose to which the respondent has agreed.

Exceptions: Respondent identification information may be used or revealed:

In customer satisfaction research, where the express, expected results of all parties is that the client or client's agent will receive the information for follow-up and the respondent has given permission for subsequent contact.

In processing the data and merging data files.

To append client or third-party data to a survey-based data file.

In social listening research where usernames and user-photos are an unavoidable component; and
or

In compliance with a court order or other demand from a legal authority.

5. Proactively or upon request identify by name the research organisation collecting data.

PURPOSE OF USE

6. Obtain consent from respondents prior to utilizing their data in a manner materially different from that to which the respondent has agreed. Our full GPDR statement is available at <https://www.flowassociates.com/gdpr-policy/>

7. Ensure that respondent information collected during any study will not be used for sales, solicitations, push polling or any other non-research purpose.

Commingling research with sales or advocacy undermines the integrity of the research process and deters respondent cooperation. In addition, the possibility of harm from data sharing – such as health insurance companies adjusting an individual's costs based on information disclosed about their health behaviours or financial companies denying someone credit based on their propensity for online shopping – are the focus of growing public debate about Big Data and data brokers. Respondents should be assured that information shared in a study will only be used for research.

TRANSPARENCY

8. Make factually correct statements to secure cooperation, including for database/sample development, and honour all promises made to respondents including but not limited to the use of data.

Exceptions: In limited instances, bona fide research projects may require, as part of their design, that respondents remain unaware of specific details such as in message testing. In such cases, upfront instructions to respondents should be truthful and furnish as much information as possible for a respondent to provide informed consent and they should be fully debriefed upon conclusion of contact, when applicable.

9. Ensure that respondents are informed at the outset if an interview or discussion is being audio or video recorded and obtain written consent if the recorded interview or discussion will be viewed by a third-party or reproduced for outside use.

The requirement for consent must be requested of the respondent if it is their specific interview or discussion that will be subject to the audio and video recording. State laws that apply to monitoring or recording may also require consent from all parties subject to the audio or video recording.

10. Not represent non-research activity as research.

Conducting commercial or political activities under the guise of opinion and n research undermines public trust in the profession and erodes the goodwill that makes research possible. Members will never represent non-research activities as research studies. These non-research activities include, but are not limited to:

Questions whose sole objective is to obtain personally identifiable information (PII) about respondents whether for legal, political, direct sales, private or other purposes.

The compilation of lists, registers or databanks of names and addresses for any non-research purpose, such as in canvassing or fund raising.

Industrial, commercial or any other form of espionage that could cause harm to an individual or organisation.

The acquisition of information for use by credit rating services or similar organisations.

Sales or promotional approaches to the respondent.

Engagement or interactions with people involved in observational research, such as in social media.

Members will ensure that information collected during any bona fide research study will not be used for any sales, solicitations or push polling after the fact.

11. Provide respondents with clear notice and choice about participation when passively collecting data for research purposes from non-public sources or places, where the respondent would not reasonably expect information to be collected.

Notice and choice to the respondent is a necessary component of the survey research process. Notice must be provided in a clear and meaningful manner and at the time which the respondent provides data to the researcher. When appropriate, passive user data collection should remain unobtrusive and not interfere with people's lives.

Definition of Passive User Data Collection: Passive user data collection may involve observational or tracking-based research such as:

Web tracking (including but not limited to: Flash, QuickTime, cookies and JavaScript).

Manual entry into a historical profile after a conversation, email or online chat with a customer service representative.

Certain forms of observational research such as mystery shopping, social media listening or certain ethnographic protocols.

Exceptions: Clear notice and choice about participation is not necessary in any of the following scenarios:

For collection of online information for fraud prevention and validation purposes.

In limited commonly accepted research practices, where offering notice and choice would unnecessarily burden and confuse the respondent, such as the practice of inferring gender in a telephone survey interview from the respondent's voice quality.

Paradata and administrative data from research projects for quality and accuracy purposes, such as data that is captured as part of the administration of a survey or piece of research. For example, capturing the amount of time a respondent takes to complete an online survey or recording the number of attempts it takes to contact a telephone respondent. These are collected as a matter of process or for quality assurance.

12. When collecting data, maintain an internal do-not-contact database as a complement to requests made by respondents for future communications and participation in audience research projects.

13. Collect personally identifiable information (PII), including email addresses, whether actively or passively, only with respondent's awareness or permission.

Protection of PII is enhanced by gathering only information relevant to the specific research project being conducted. Researchers should tailor methods and measurement to collect only personal data necessary for the success of the project.

If respondent identity could be deduced merely from participation in a study itself, even without PII attached, respondents must be made aware of this possibility when cooperation is initially sought.

PII is defined as any information about an individual maintained by an agency or business, including but not limited to:

Any information that can be used to distinguish or trace an individual's identity, such as name, social media usernames and user photos, personal website addresses, date and place of birth, mother's maiden name, biometric records or social media comments that are so unique as to be individually identifiable via a Web search.

Any other information that is linked or linkable to an individual, such as medical, educational, financial, and employment information.

Researchers may use respondent PII for purposes of maintaining the integrity of the data processing operations, such as matching respondent records from separate files, including appending client to

third-party data to a survey-based file. In those cases, PII will be replaced with surrogate identifying codes, untraceable to individual respondents, upon completion of data processing operations.

In maintaining respondent privacy, members must comply with all applicable laws, regulations, ordinances and existing policies and terms of use requirements in which the PII is obtained or collected. This means consulting with appropriate legal counsel and staying current with existing and proposed legislation and regulation affecting the profession.

14. Compile, maintain and utilize Internet samples of only those individuals who have provided their permission to be contacted for audience research purposes and those who have a reasonable expectation based on an existing business relationship that they will receive invitations for audience research purposes.

TECHNICAL COMPLIANCE

15. Consider data privacy a fundamental part of planning and the research process, and maintain a clear, concise and easy to understand privacy or terms of use policy that describes the ways respondent data is collected, used, disclosed and managed.

Privacy of respondents should receive consideration at the highest levels by individual audience researchers and companies so that every employee in the business understands how they are responsible for protecting respondents' confidential information.

A respondent privacy policy must be established prior to any contact with respondents and should be comprehensive, covering all respondent information, under all conditions, all the time, with potential exceptions anticipated and planned for. The privacy policy should address data retention and disposal issues as well.

Additionally, privacy policies should be stated plainly, minimizing jargon, and be understandable by the public without a legal or research background. Policies should be easily accessible by online and offline means and available not only at the time cooperation is sought, but upon demand at any time after data are gathered.

It is important to detail exactly how personal information may be used, and then adhere only to stated uses. Any additional material use or change in use of PII requires specific, advance written or recorded approval from respondents.

The privacy policy should include a contact mechanism; ideally a phone number, email or Web address containing contact information, and a mailing address to which questions or comments may

be submitted. All feedback should be acknowledged upon receipt and replied to, as necessary, as soon as is feasible.

Online surveys must include access (such as via a link) to a privacy policy.

Fundamental data privacy planning includes:

Implementing industry standard physical, technical and administrative safeguards to protect respondent data.

Limiting data collection to information necessary to inform research question(s).

Limiting data usage to those purposes communicated to, or that might be reasonably expected by respondent.

Informing respondent of the possibility for re-contact for follow-up.

Retaining data in as anonymous a form as possible while maintaining data integrity.

Establishing reasonable limits to the time data will be retained before disposal.

Disposing of data safely and securely.

16. Take special care and adhere to applicable law when conducting research with vulnerable populations, including but not limited to children.

Specific laws and regulations govern research among these groups, and it is incumbent upon audience researchers to ensure compliance obligations for all vulnerable populations are met, regardless of any specific interviewing method or response technology in use.

Research among children requires knowledge and adherence to unique precautions that apply to all respondents under the age of majority, i.e. minors.

Other vulnerable groups include but are not limited to:

Elderly/aged persons

Cognitively impaired persons

Prisoners

Patients or others with medical issues

17. When having the responsibility of creating products and services for use by respondents, provide products and services that are safe and fit for their intended use, are labelled in accordance with all

laws and regulations, and provide the means to make the respondent whole should problems arise, in part by including emergency contact information.

ARTICLE II – RESPONSIBILITIES TO CLIENTS AND VENDORS

18. Honour legal obligations and practices and pursue alternative dispute resolution in good faith regarding disagreements with business partners prior to litigating those disputes.

Work must be performed as specified in the agreement with the client. Changes to work specifications, project plans, etc. may not be made without the express permission of the client.

19. As with the commitment to respondent privacy, maintain trusted relationships with clients and research sponsors by keeping confidential all sensitive or proprietary research techniques, methodologies and business information. Maintain the confidential identity of clients and research sponsors.

Exceptions: Information may be revealed in compliance with the request of a legal authority or when clients or research sponsors provide written consent to disclose their identity.

20. Induce or engage no research partners, vendors or clients in any unacceptable activity or practice as stated in the Code or any activity or practice that is prohibited or illegal under any applicable laws, regulations and ordinances.

21. When conducting secondary research, inform clients of the source of secondary research and not misrepresent it as primary data.

Secondary research (also known as desk research) involves the summary, collation or synthesis of existing research rather than primary research, where data is collected from, for example, research subjects or experiments.

The term is widely used in medical research, legal research, and in marketing research. In a audience research context, secondary research is taken to include the re-use by a second party of any data collected by a first party or parties.

Sometimes secondary research is required in the preliminary stages of research to determine what is known already and what new data is required, or to inform research design. At other times, it may be the only research technique used.

A key performance area in secondary research is the full citation of original sources, usually in the form of a complete listing or annotated listing.

Secondary sources could include previous research reports, newspaper, magazine and journal content, and government and NGO statistics.

22. Be granted prior approval, if all or part of the work on a project is to be combined or syndicated with work for other clients, or if the same is to be subcontracted to another entity outside the researcher's organisation.

23. Avoid any conflict of interest, real or perceived, in accepting work from multiple clients, particularly clients in competing or similar markets or lines of business. If any conflict of interest – real or perceived – exists, the member will notify all parties of the conflict and obtain acknowledgment of the conflict and written confirmation to proceed.

Accepting work from competing clients does not automatically present a conflict, provided that project resources are never commingled and confidentiality is fully maintained. It is imperative that researchers establish safeguards to keep each client's data separate and protected from others at all times.

24. Ensure that research conducted is the property of the commissioning party or client(s). At no time may such research be shared with other entities without the express written permission of the original client(s).

25. Provide detailed written or verbal study instructions to those engaged in the data collection process.

Accurate data can be obtained only when all parties to the research process are committed to quality. Principal investigators must ensure that staff involved in sampling, fieldwork, data processing, analysis and other facets of a study receive appropriate, detailed instructions so that operations are completed as planned. Documentation should be created and preserved at every step of a project so that subsequent investigators can understand and replicate study findings.

26. Ensure that business partners, their employees and subcontractors involved in the data collection process take reasonable precautions to ensure that no conflict of interest, real or

perceived, exists based on the simultaneous participation of a respondent in multiple studies without obtaining explicit permission from the sponsoring client(s).

27. Ensure that all research materials provided by the client, or generated as a result of materials provided by the client, remain their property unless otherwise stipulated in a contract or other work agreement.

28. Ensure that all project materials be retained or disposed of upon the expiration of the research activity as agreed upon based on the contract or work agreement with the client.

29. As time and availability permit, afford the client(s) the opportunity to monitor studies in progress to evaluate research quality and adherence to work agreements, and inform clients of quality control procedures in place upon their request.

30. Offer guidance to clients as to the appropriateness of the methodology being employed and sample selected to the fullest extent possible on each project.

Laypersons often do not have the necessary knowledge or experience to conduct research or to properly interpret data and recommend courses of action based upon that interpretation. Members must educate clients and the public in the proper methods and execution of audience research, and use of research findings. When researchers are made aware of instances in which clients are improperly interpreting or otherwise using research, a professional duty exists to advise the errant party in the proper understanding or application of the data.

31. Provide business partners sufficient detail and transparency as to the objectives and design of a research project in order for them to gauge the appropriateness of their participation.

32. Respect that all information contained in an interviewing facility, sample provider or similar database, or held by an independent recruiter, is the sole property of those entities and are not to be acquired for any business purpose without express written consent of the owner.

Observe all licensing or use restrictions imposed by database or facility owners. Under no circumstance will a member retain possession or make use of database information outside the scope of the original agreement.

33. When using a purchased sample, comply with obligations under law and the requirements and limitations placed on data usage by data owners, including list brokers, database compilers and sample providers.

Common sample requirements and limitations include but are not limited to these examples:

Submission of questionnaire documents when requested.

Limitations on use of sensitive material including data on children, medical conditions and financial information.

Other areas deemed sensitive by the list provider or owner.

Not using sample or lists for any purpose other than legitimate research purposes.

Holding household and personal data contained in sample information in the same strict confidence as collected survey data and using it only for the purposes of stratification, selection or control of survey sample or in tabulation of aggregate results.

Ensuring that information derived from the sample will not be used for individual marketing efforts, i.e. no marketing action can be taken toward an individual respondent as a result of their survey information or participation as a survey respondent.

34. Calculate research metrics such as incidence, performance measurements such as response rates, error measurements such as sample margin of error, and other formulas according to commonly accepted industry practices.

35. Inform clients at their request of archiving, storage, and technical security procedures, as well as software name, producer and version being utilized for their work (if a data processing company).

ARTICLE III – PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES

36. Build public confidence in audience research.

Audience research is able to exist as a profession because society values the functions served by researchers, and trusts that research will be performed with transparency, integrity and responsibility. In order to maintain that trust, researchers must never act in ways that abuse public confidence in the profession.

37. Report research results accurately and honestly.

During data analysis and presentation of findings, researchers must strive for objectivity so that the data “speak for themselves.” Such objectivity need not preclude the formation of researchers’ own opinions or recommendations regarding findings. Instead, objectivity means that researchers analyze data impartially and let their opinions and recommendations be guided by the results of those analyses, rather than tailoring analyses to support preconceived agendas or biases.

Additionally, regardless of method, researchers should include in the report, or provide upon request, the following minimum information:

Identification of the research organisation and sponsoring client for which the project was conducted

Objectives of the research

Dates on which data were collected

Sample – All sample-based research (qualitative and quantitative) should state parameters of the sample design employed. These include information on:

Population of interest

Probability or non-probability design, with specifics on selection method, such as simple random, multistage, etc.

Estimated population incidence of sample elements or segments

Sampling frame and estimated degree of population coverage

Sample size

Cooperation and or response rates, as appropriate

Margin of error on the total sample and key segments of interest (for probability designs)

Weighting

Type and calculation of any weighting scheme used for sample balancing and or population projections

Procedure/Data Acquisition

Recruitment method, including respondent contact protocols and selection procedures

Sample questionnaires, discussion guides, stimulus materials, etc.

Analytics

Description of unit(s) of analysis

Data cleaning procedures

Mathematical or statistical computations or tests of significance (as applicable)

Specifics by Mode

Methodological limitations

38. Never falsify or omit valid data at any phase of a research study or project.

The success of business decisions depends in part upon having accurate information about the environment in which businesses operate. Professional audience and market researchers serve an invaluable function by gathering and interpreting marketplace intelligence and must never misrepresent, falsify or omit valid data at any phase of the research process.

39. Provide appropriate disclosure of methods for all research released for public or media consumption.

Disclosure of methods statements as appropriate to include:

The method of data collection used

The date(s) of data collection

The sampling frame

The sampling method

The sample size

The calculated margin of sampling error

40. Not misrepresent qualifications, experience, skills or resources in the performance of research.

41. Honestly characterise the impact of research methods and methodologies to clients, vendors and other stakeholders.

42. Avoid any discussion of or participation in any action to eliminate, restrict, or govern competition among businesses serving the industry.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A – MODE-SPECIFIC CONSIDERATIONS

DATA MINING

PROPRIETARY VS. PUBLIC DATA

For proprietary data, permission must be obtained for initial access to data records; and each desired instance of release of PII. In contrast, although no permission is needed to access public records, researchers should still obtain individual respondents' permission before releasing PII, even when that information is in the public domain. In cases where obtaining permission is impossible (such as deceased respondents), only details already available publicly may be published. PII obtained through means other than public sources, and subsequently merged with public information, may not be published without respondents' express written permission.

COPYRIGHT

Researchers should seek appropriate legal counsel on the suitable use of published social media data. Although social media records may be available publicly, they are not necessarily in the public domain and may be protected by copyright. Unlicensed access may or may not be permitted under fair use doctrines, and care is recommended in exploring this still-evolving area.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media data may comprise either private or quasi-public records. Researchers analyzing social-media should follow particular data mining guidelines depending on the private or quasi-public nature of the specific information sampled, while also observing any requirements stipulated by the data provider.

GEOLOCATION TRACKING

Passively tracking respondents' locations is an activity that spans several modes of contact (such as cellular/wireless connections for both voice and data; landline telephone; cable or other IP-based infrastructure, etc.). At present, this remains a controversial area which is open to extensive scrutiny and public sensationalism. As a result, and considering evolving laws, Flow Associates recommends opt-in as the best practice.

MYSTERY SHOPPING

Flow Associates considers mystery shopping a legitimate form of research when it is employed for visitor-satisfaction purposes; that is, to determine likely customer perceptions and needs. It is not considered audience research when it is used for non-research purposes, such as identifying individuals for disciplinary actions, falsely elevating sales by creating a demand for products or services that does not really exist in the marketplace, or obtaining personal information for non-research purposes.

TELEPHONE

Telephone-based interviewing is governed by several sets of regulations, which may differ for landline and mobile numbers.