

Qualitative and Quantitative Research

Citizen portal for delivering government services

Project outline

A Commonwealth Government Department coordinates the operation of several large service-delivery agencies. The Department wanted to investigate the public's views on a proposed web portal: a single point which would provide service information and update clients' personal information to many agencies.

The Department needed to understand clients' views on:

- Giving and getting information over the internet
- Where clients currently sourced information
- What would need to change to make clients happy to give information over the internet
- What information they currently provided to other agencies and service providers over the internet
- The portal's layout and content.

Research Strategy

The Department wanted to collect feedback through an Australia-wide survey of current clients, who included Medicare card holders and claimants, parents or guardians and families, people looking for work, people studying or training, the self employed, people with illness, injury or disability, carers, pensioners and the aged.

In order to create an effective questionnaire for web deployment, a number of focus groups were conducted in different locations around Australia. Different client profiles were chosen for each group, eg elderly people, those on government income support, people with younger families and those seeking crisis or emergency support.

The Department assisted in developing the focus group discussion guide, and ASR recruited focus group participants through its experienced group recruiters.

Key findings were used to develop a web questionnaire which contained images, rated questions and free text questions. A national permission-based email name provider generated 100,000 email invitations with unique logins, and respondents were given an incentive for completion.

The required quota (4,000) was achieved within a single day, with a sample that was representative of the Australian population on most demographics.

Outcomes

Results, including demographic differences, were presented to the Department. The findings identified the best ways of communicating with clients, the issues that needed to be addressed in convincing them to use the web, and the proportion of clients that would readily use the web to conduct transactions with the various agencies involved.

“ Using the web for cost-effective social research ”