

## **Survey Dissemination Strategy: Reddit**

### **Overview**

Reddit is a free social media website known as “the front page of the internet;” users share and discuss advice, stories, links, news, and vote on submitted content. A post’s visibility is increased or decreased through voting.

### **User Makeup**

- Approximately 90% of users are under 35 years old (Bogers & Wernersen, 2014).
- There is disagreement over the gender distribution of users with several studies showing a majority male users and newer studies showing near equal representation (Bogers & Wernersen, 2014).
- Controlling for age, Reddit users are relatively representative of the U.S. population. (Barthel, Stocking, Holcomb, & Mitchell, 2016) but tend to lean politically liberal.
- About a third of users have an annual income under \$30,000USD (Barthel, Stocking, Holcomb, & Mitchell, 2016).
- About 60% are White and 10% Black non-Hispanics, 14% Hispanic, and 13% other (non-Hispanic).

### **Advantages and Disadvantages**

#### *Advanges*

- Reddit’s structure enables fast and free participant recruitment with very few bureaucratic loops to get through to post.
- Shatz suggests that Reddit recruitment is best leveraged as a supplementary strategy “in order to allow researchers to overcome some of the limitations of current sources, and avoid the issues associated with sample overuse” (p.543).

#### *Disadvantages*

- There are very few published articles where Reddit was used to recruit participants so it is difficult to assess its efficacy as a source for recruitment.
- Participating in online communities may require researchers to understand the rhetorical situation in each subreddit to gain the trust of users.

### **Studies that used Reddit**

- Shatz recruited participants for a learning study by identifying subreddits (specific topic forums) to their study; about 70% completed the survey and 83% of those responses were valid responses. Our current survey has a 50% rate for valid responses.
  - In Shatz study (2017), a similarity in Cronbach’s alpha and more traditional alphas reflects a positive indication of the reliability of data sourced through Reddit.

That said, Shatz notes that the length of a survey may play a role: “studies that require a more extended interaction, Reddit may not be a viable source for recruitment” (p.542) Since our survey is one-and-done, this is unlikely to be an issue for us.

- Workman (2014) used a qualitative, questionnaire-based survey of Reddit users on gender and “safe spaces,” posting twice, 5 days apart in a popular forum focused on women’s issues. Responses were quick at the start of posting and then slowed with over a 1000 respondents (42% valid) during 9 days.

### **Suggested Strategies**

- Post the survey and a bit about us in the following subreddits
  - [r/NYCapartments](https://www.reddit.com/r/NYCapartments)
  - [r/NewYork](https://www.reddit.com/r/NewYork)
  - [r/NYC](https://www.reddit.com/r/NYC) and [r/NewYorkCity](https://www.reddit.com/r/NewYorkCity) both say no studies or surveys however we can message the moderators and explain that we are NYC-focused.
  - [r/Brooklyn](https://www.reddit.com/r/Brooklyn)
  - [r/Bronx](https://www.reddit.com/r/Bronx)
- Share findings to build trust with users and increase the likelihood they respond to the survey (most likely a later survey since we are in the middle of F23 dissemination now.

### **REFERENCES**

Barthel, B. Y. M., Stocking, G., Holcomb, J., & Mitchell, A. (2016). Nearly eight-in-ten Reddit users get news on the site. Washington, DC: Pew Research Center.

Bogers, T., & Wernersen, R. (2014). How ‘social’ are social news sites? Exploring the motivations for using Reddit.com. In iConference 2014 Proceedings (pp. 329–344). Retrieved from <http://doi.org/10.9776/14108>

Workman, H. (2014). Formation of safe spaces in gendered online communities: Reddit and “the front page of the Internet.” (Master’s thesis). Texas Christian University, TX. Retrieved from [https://repository.tcu.edu/bitstream/handle/116099117/4558/Workman\\_tcu\\_0229M\\_10510.pdf?sequence.1](https://repository.tcu.edu/bitstream/handle/116099117/4558/Workman_tcu_0229M_10510.pdf?sequence.1)

Shatz, I. (2017). Fast, Free, and Targeted: Reddit as a Source for Recruiting Participants Online. Social Science Computer Review, 35(4), 537-549. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0894439316650163>