Envisioning the “survey” of the future: new roles of technology in face-to-face interviewing

Femke de Keulenaer
Gallup Europe

The focus of this seminar is on the role that technology can play in advancing the practice of face-to-face interviewing. More specifically, we will illustrate new ways of using smartphones and tablets during various stages of the data collection process, going beyond solely using these devices as a means to record respondents' answers. We will start by discussing how an application designed for use on a smartphone or tablet can help to construct an area sampling frame and draw a random sample. This application randomly selects one or more square-shaped areas (PSUs) in a municipality and samples a pre-defined number of points/locations in each PSU; each point is then “reverse geocoded” into an address and uploaded to the interviewer’s device. At this point, the device becomes a direct assistant to the interviewer; e.g. interviewers can use built-in maps to navigate to the exact location that they have to locate. The second part will address issues related to collecting paradata and interviewer quality control. All aspects of the interviewer’s task – locating addresses, completing contact forms, randomly selecting a respondent in each household etc. – can run via an application on the interviewer’s smartphone or tablet. In other words, a large amount of paradata will be (automatically) collected and will be almost instantaneously accessible to the fieldwork managers, offering new possibilities for responsive survey design. The paradata collected will also offer additional possibilities for interviewer quality control (e.g. via a built-in GPS locator and time stamps automatically attached to each step).