**Guidance on Crowdsourcing based research**

Crowdsourcing recruitment and data collection methods have become a permanent fixture in academic research that provide an inexpensive and rapid means to reach many potential respondents to collect data. From a scientific viewpoint, the increased costs of face-to-face household surveys in the United States makes web-based surveys more attractive.

**Applicability to research:** Crowdsourcing based recruitment and subsequent data collection methods range mostly from observations to interventions and survey/interview procedures. Researchers frequently use online platforms such as Mturk, YouGov and Prolific.

**MTurk:** Amazon describes MTurk as, “a marketplace for work that requires human intelligence.  The Mechanical Turk service gives businesses access to a diverse, on-demand, scalable workforce and gives workers a selection of thousands of tasks to complete whenever it’s convenient.” This platform is beneficial to researchers due to the diversity of the subject population. Researchers are allowed access to a large population of volunteers for research studies.  Researchers can generate a HIT (Human Intelligence Task) that gives MTurk users a Title and description of the online task that includes the amount of compensation users will receive and the amount of time it takes to complete the task/s.  Because MTurk is being used primarily as a recruitment site, researchers have been routing users to links for their online survey that are housed at different online survey software platforms such as Qualtrics, Survey Monkey, Google Forms, etc.  MTurk grants pseudo-anonymity between researchers and participants by having a third party (Amazon) overseeing payments (compensation) to participants. There is a potential risk of bots taking the surveys. Please visit [MTurk’s Acceptable Use Policy](https://www.mturk.com/acceptable-use-policy) and [Amazon’s privacy notice](https://www.mturk.com/worker/privacy-notice). Incorporating MTurk in research study and things to consider –

* Recruitment –
  1. The title of the study and the description of the HIT should be included as it will appear in MTurk.
  2. Provide compensation information and amount of time required to complete a task.
  3. Include a clear description of the task participants are asked to do (i.e., writing, watching videos, vignettes, etc.).
  4. Mention and describe screening procedures if any. It would be critical for researchers to make clear if participants are being paid for the time it takes to complete the screener or not.
* Informed consent - Recommendations on adding explicit statements to fully inform the subjects

1. If you agree to participate, please note that the data you provide may be collected and used by Amazon as per its privacy agreement. Additionally, if you are not currently located in the United States [if limiting the study to subjects in the U.S.] and/or are under the age of 18, please do not complete this [survey/HIT].”

**Prolific:** Prolific is a crowdsourcing platform that was specifically designed for academic research. Prolific stores information about participants, include participants’ demographic information. Please visit Prolific’s [Terms and Conditions for Researchers](https://www.prolific.co/assets/docs/Researcher_Terms.pdf), [Researcher Help Centre](https://researcher-help.prolific.co/hc/en-gb) and [Privacy Policy](https://www.prolific.co/assets/docs/Prolific_privacy-policy.pdf).

**YouGov:** YouGov is a global online community, where millions of people and thousands of political, cultural, and commercial organizations engage in a continuous conversation about their beliefs, behaviors, and brands. These represent all ages, socio-economic groups and other demographic types which allows us to create nationally representative online samples and access hard to reach groups, both consumer and professional. Please visit [YouGov’s Terms and Conditions](https://today.yougov.com/about/terms-combined/#/privacy) page.