

The Eyes on Cyber Life

By Akosua Albritton

By now, web and mobile users know there's no escaping advertising. With advertising comes consumer/market research to ensure the right message gets to the desired customer. There is a sea of online market researchers studying the blogs, tweets, clicks, and texting of online users.

Some agencies are familiar faces to media consumers, while others, consumers will be surprised that they are in the game. Take Neilson.com--the agency known for making an average household a "Nielsen Family" by installing a monitoring box to the television—is still keeping a pulse on consumer behavior—now in cyber space.

Neilsen boasts having "approximately 10 million consumers in 100 countries participating in their research". Neilsen.com website claims the organization "studies the use of 181 million blogs, social networks, and other media". That other media includes brick and mortar retail, TV, mobile, and web. The organization's ace card is NeuroFocus™. It is a worn device that "measures brainwave activity and eye tracking", so their clients know what wording, colors, and designs stimulate particular brain regions and result in making purchases.

Experian, one of the three largest credit reporting bureaus, leveraged its global store of consumer and business information to offer marketing services or "consumer insights" to their clients. These insights are accessed through Hitwise™ Hitwise Mobile™, Hitwise Audience Viewsm, Simmons LOCALsm and Simmons National Consumer Studiessm. All three Hitwise branded services are fueled on "the daily activity of 10 million consumers located in over 50 countries across six continents on one million websites." Talk about statistical excess.

United Sample or uSamp was an online research firm from its inception. The founders Gregg Lavin and Matt Dusig tag uSamp "The Answer Network" specializing in online market research panels. The firm has 12 million survey respondents residing in such countries as Egypt, Kenya, Trinidad, Jamaica, Mexico, and of course, the United States. The panelists give online and mobile feedback.

Since the global panel is their gold, recruiting has high standards. The company recruits through "social media, their global partners, and website publishers". uSamp prides itself in locating "the hard-to-find respondent" and achieving "panel purity". What is panel purity? That is ensuring there are no duplications in email addresses and mobile numbers nor people maintaining multiple identities. Imagine! The things people do to earn pre-loaded debit cards, sales discounts, and merchandise samples.