Jon Krosnick: I think it’s only fair, if you’re going to have proxies answer questions, you ought to let proxies give their blood, too – you know? Just find out their cholesterol level as a little reward.

So, that was, obviously, a nice tour of a very well-developed set of auxiliary measurements. And this is another – next is another look at a set of auxiliary measurements that has many decades of history. As you know, Nielsen has a history of having respondents complete self-administered questionnaires, and they have for a long time.

And Michael Link is going to talk with us about the latest generation of all that stuff.

Michael Link: Actually, given the topic, Jon, I’m not entirely sure. I took this in a direction where we don’t know a whole lot. In fact, when Jon was asking me and gave me the topic of leave-behind surveys, I said, “Hmm, well, first, that’s not ABS; that’s not emerging technologies. But I thank you for the learning opportunity as I delved into this.

It’s something – leave-behind is something that we all intuitively – we’ve done, and we all – I think if I were to go around the room, what we’re going to find out is we each have kind of a different definition of, “Well, what exactly do we mean by leave-behinds?”

Well, let me start with the punch line. What do we know about leave-behinds? Well, a couple of different things. One is that they’re fairly prevalent in practice. But in reality, when you start looking up research on this niche of leave-behind methodology, you don’t find a whole lot to really understand how this is done and how well it works.

Much is known about the components of leave-behind, however. But again, we don’t know much about the methodology itself. So, we know a lot about self-reports; we know a lot about different modes; we know a lot about non-response. But when you look at it within this context, you don’t find a whole lot in the published literature.

Typically, it’s also the province of very large, complex surveys. You don’t find this event – have this type of methodology being used in smaller, mid-sized shops, whether they’re private, or they’re academic. They typically tend to be part of very large, complex data operations. And they’re used for many different purposes, which I’ll go through in just a few minutes.
Last but not least, they come in many different sizes and forms, and where I will take this is they don’t even have to be traditional surveys when we’re talking about the leave-behind themselves. In fact, the growth of some of the new technologies that we have, mobile and online, combined with the fact that we’re getting less and less funding, might make this type of methodology much more attractive for future studies.

So, as Paul Harvey would say, “Let’s turn to the rest of the story.” So, what exactly is a leave-behind, and what exactly is it not? Well, first of all, when I wanted to look this up, I said, “Let me get at least a basic definition.” So, I turned to where we always go, Paul Lavrakas’ Encyclopedia of Survey Research. It’s not in there. There’s nothing in there about leave-behinds, leave-behind surveys, surveys that you’re going to give to somebody afterwards.

So, the question is, if it’s not in there, is it really a concept for us? I guess it is; we’ll continue to move forward. But then I started to look at trying to use all of our various search engines that we have, looking at all of the different – the key journals that we look at, looking at Google, simply didn’t find this term as a focus of research at all. In fact, there was only one, and you had to go back to 1969, where the term leave-behind survey, or any variant thereof, was actually utilized as the focus of specific research itself.

And then I started picking up the phone, asking a few of my professional colleagues, and they also kind of gave me this, “I don’t know what Jon means; I have no idea what’s going on here.”

So, I did what we all do, turned to our social networks these days. Put a call out to all of my friends here at various different places and talked to individuals at each of these, and each of these organizations obviously representing everything from government to large, private, not-for-profits to a number of university colleagues.

So, a lot of what I have here today, that I’m going to present, is more input that they gave me on their experiences and the research. And what we’re going to find is that the research exists, but usually not in published form. It’s lying in – very much like what Brady said, it’s lying in the archives of everybody’s studies, or buried in the appendix somewhere.
So, first of all, what are the characteristics of leave-behinds? Well, a couple of things kinda came to the fore when I was talking to folks. First and foremost, it almost always involves self-administration. Right? You’ve gone through a survey concept, and then you’re going to give this individual a survey; you’re going to give them a task, and it winds up you’re sending them off to do this on their own. So, self-administration is a key characteristic here.

Second, data collection mode is often different than the initial mode, which means we’re in the world here of mixed-mode designs. ‘Cause oftentimes these could be associated first with an interviewer-administered survey, and then you’re handing it off again to self-administered. So, maybe it’s paper in both instances. These days, oftentimes, it’s a CAPI survey, followed by paper, or it’s a CAPI survey followed by something that’s completely different than a normal survey.

Typically, what you’re trying to do is provide additional information to that main survey that you just collected. But it doesn’t always have to be that way. In fact, I’ll show you a major example that we have from the government, where the leave-behind really provides the key data, and the up-front survey is more providing some of the analytic data that’s going to go along with that.

The key thing here, and this is where I really use definitionally how I’m going to distinguish a leave-behind from some other types of things is it’s a task that’s done immediately after the initial data collection period, and you are requested to do this at that initial period, which distinguishes this from a panel survey. It distinguishes it from a follow-on, where you have a set of individuals, after a study, and later somebody says, “Hey, let’s use that group to do something different.”

This is a planned part of the data collection process, but you’re just simply not going to do it when you’re doing that initial data collection.

And nearly always, again, we see that this is part of large complex studies, smaller shops simply don’t do this. Smaller shops seem to just collect whatever data they want at the initial time. They’re not usually using these types of things.

And then again, last but not least, these may involve surveys, but more and more what we’re seeing is that this is involving very
different types of things, whether it’s keeping a diary throughout a week or two weeks, whether it’s using electronic monitoring, whether it’s collecting physical specimens. There are a number of variations and dimensions that this whole leave-behind is taking on these days.

So, here’s the way I – moving forward, this is how I define this concept of leave-behind: essentially a form of data collection that’s self-administered by the respondent and completed sometime after the completion of an initial survey. Pretty broad, but that helps us, again, to figure out what we’re going to include here, and what we’re going to exclude.

So, for example, what would we include in this definition? Straightforward, one is a survey that perhaps you start with face to face. Once the face-to-face is done, you hand them off a paper survey, say, “Please take your time, fill this out, and mail it back into us later.” That’s a classic example of, I think, how this term has been used most often.

Another example, though, might be that you take a phone interview, and your interviewing an individual, and then you say, “Hey, I’m going to transfer you now to an interactive voice response system.” Charles Turner’s done a lot of these types of studies with HIV. Public health uses this quite a bit.

And again, I would argue this is a form of leave-behind, because you’re leaving the main interview, which was with an interviewer, and you’re passing them on, and it’s self-administered in another format.

Another mode then is diaries. We see this quite a bit, where again, you might have a modest-to-large, up-front survey that’s done with an interviewer, and then some form of diary is left behind. It could be a television diary by Nielsen. It could be a physical activity diary. It could be a transportation diary. It could be the expenditure diary, but I think diaries typically fall into this category as well.

Well, what methodologies are excluded then, using this definition? Well, a couple. One, traditional mail surveys or self-starting online surveys, again where that is the main data collection; you’re just mailing out to people. So, this distinguishes the leave-behind from all of the rest of the self-administered formats that we have.
Another example, audio computer-assisted interviewing. A lot of times, again, in a large study, you might have a CAPI interview that’s done. You have a sensitive portion. You give the person the ACASI to go in the other room. They fill out that part. You come back, and you finish the interview. Again, that’s not what we mean here, because that’s all part of that same main data collection.

So, why use leave-behinds? Again –

[Inaudible comment]

Michael Link: Sure.

Female: There’s one thing that I think you haven’t on your list, and I wonder where you would put it. Often establishment surveys can’t finish the interview because not all information is available, and they leave the same question there that was part of the interview with the establishment to fill out. Where – have you come across those, and where are they in your categorization?

Michael Link: So, the question is if you don’t have the right permission, you have to – it would have been part of the main – it would have been part of the main study, but you leave it behind because you need the permissions later. I would argue that that probably doesn’t – that’s a variation here.

But what we’re really talking about here is part of the design. You were going to have an initial data collection, and then you’ve got this other piece that you know you’re going to ask them for at the end, and they have to go off and complete that. That’s more the way I would use it. But again, we’re just kinda creating a definition for discussion here.

So, why use leave-behinds? Again, when we start looking at individuals, when I was talking to them about why they – not only did they have examples, but then why did they utilize this methodology, first and foremost, the easiest thing is, “Well, we wanted more stuff. You know, we have these people, and why not? We need more stuff, and we can’t seem to constrain ourselves to 500 questions. We needed all 800 questions.” And so, expanding the data collection effort seemed to be one of the key things.

Another one that was trying to – they saw it as reduced respondent burden, allowing them to complete a portion of the data collection
on their schedule. So, they had some portion of this that they felt they needed to have the interviewer there, and they wanted to make sure they captured that. But then the rest of it, they didn’t have to keep the individuals there the entire time. They could allow them to finish it off on their own time and reduce burden.

A third one that comes up oftentimes, and I’ve used this example here already, is the privacy issue, where you’re administering sensitive questions, and you’re trying to get less socially-desirable, higher-quality data, and so you allow the individual to utilize a leave-behind format.

Fourth, data quality. Oftentimes this is seen sometimes as more effective than trying to do just a straight-up recall survey, especially if you’re trying to capture multiple frequent events. Again, this is the argument sometimes for using a diary. Why would you use a diary rather than ask individuals to recount and catalog over the phone what they did last month? Because it seems to be that if you give them the diary, and they can keep it, and they keep it diligently, that’s going to give you a better measure than the recall.

And then last but not least, there might be, as we saw from the last speaker, unique information. This might be the only way that you can capture certain types of information. Again, if you’re looking at physiological measures, those types of things, you might have to depend more on a leave-behind than a survey.

So, what does the empirical research tell us again? We know not a lot about those components, as I mentioned before, and the concepts that are associated with leave-behinds, but we really don’t know much about leave-behinds as a methodology. It has not, again, been really studied, or at least published, in the context of that leave behind context.

And again, I looked through a whole lot of various different journals, the usual suspects for public opinion and methodologists, as well as some of the things that my colleagues in public health use.

Even went to Google Scholar, looking at the first several hundred entries, to see if we could find anything on leave-behind surveys. And again, simply didn’t find a whole lot. There were four articles that somewhat mentioned this approach. The one I put up before was the only one that was kind of really focused on it.
So, why the lack of research? Well, a couple of things. My guess is that studies have been conducted, but they’re not described as leave-behinds. And again, I tried to use various different combination to language, but it simply didn’t come up as that.

Public health is probably the place that we would find more of this, because I think this type of thing is done more in the public health realm than anything else.

But if you’re really going to get at this then, we’re going to have to have some pre knowledge of the fact that the study had this design, or you’re going to have to really dig into each and every article to look through the methodology section to see, “Okay, does the methodology fit that?” So again, it’s not an easy thing to research in the way that we do some concepts that are much more easily defined.

Second of all, again, we discussed as a component of a broader study, but it’s not typically the focus. And then last, it can often be viewed as an adjunct to the data, but not the main focus, and hence, the researchers themselves don’t see that as necessarily important to publish. They’re focused on the main pieces of the study that they’re publishing.

And again, you’re going to find these write-ups in their methodology reports, those types of things, but it never makes it out to us and not widely shared.

So, with the lack of being able to look at empirical studies, what I’ve wanted to do is just give you a couple of example studies that folks gave me that I thought kind of highlight the typical – or some of the approaches that are being used these days.

And thanks to David – already went over the HRS and talked about the various design of this being longitudinal, being a very large study. It’s conducted as a panel study. What he didn’t mention, though, is that it does have a very nice, classic leave-behind section to it.

Respondents are left – after the initial interview, respondents are left a booklet, which really looks at cognitive status and psychosocial topics, as well as some things on work and retirement. So again, it’s the classic view of you have the interview. Some of the bioindicators are collected, and then as a leave-behind, there’s a little packet that’s left behind that says, “Please complete this when you can and mail it back to us.”
Why do they do this? When I talked to some of the folks that were involved with the methodology behind this, they said, “Well, there’s two things. One was that they wanted more data. They wanted to expand what they had in conjunction with the face-to-face.

That face-to-face was already taking 140 minutes, and so this became a way of saying, “Okay, well let’s reduce burden a little bit by giving these folks this.” And then also, again, the fact that they were sensitive questions made it a good candidate for the leave-behind.

Cooperation rates in this respect, being calculated as a percent that returned the completed diary divided by – or the completed questionnaire divided by those that were given it – pretty good results, up in the high 80s over the last couple of waves that were done.

While it looks like – while there was a decline, the researchers indicated that this wasn’t due to a declining response rate, but rather to changing the design over those two periods.

Interesting thing is, though, they did have lower rates of cooperation among the usual suspects that we see with all studies, which is Hispanics, blacks. And then, in this instance, those most recently added to the panel tended to have lower rates of return for the leave-behind than others. So, taking – and then more information, you can find that online.

Second example, and this is the one where I talked about the fact that the leave-behind action becomes more the primary data collection than it does the – than it does the upfront interview.

The Consumer Expenditure Survey. This is a panel study that collects information on buying habits of American consumers, looks at things like expenditures, income, consumer characteristics. One of the key things is that it’s part of the revision for the Consumer Price Index, so it’s a very visible, very important government study sponsored by BLS and conducted by Census.

The population focuses on the U.S. households, non-institutionalized. And the panel has two separate sample components. One is a quarterly interview – that’s one set of people; and the other is a purchase diary, and that is a separate set of people.
The leave-behind component is focused on the diary components. And the way that that works, first there is a face-to-face recruitment, and then once the household’s recruited, there’s the administration of a household characteristics questionnaire. This has demographics, household composition, work earnings, expenditures, and those types of things. There is a up front data collection piece.

Then the interviewer leaves behind a diary. It is a one-week diary. It’s meant for entire household, and they are to capture essentially all of their expenses that they have throughout the week. This is food, clothing, all other goods and services purchased. And it’s laid out in the classic grid, day-by-day calendar formats.

Step 3, interviewer comes back at the end of the week, takes the first-week diary, gives them the second-week diary. So, the households actually keep two of these. They again go through that process of keeping the diary for the week.

Finally, the interviewer comes back yet again, picks that up, and then has a closeout interview. So, this is an example where you have essentially two diary leave-behinds, kind of bookended by interviews with an interviewer.

Again, talked to the researchers. Why is it that they utilize this methodology? Well again, they said that they needed to get the detailed activity, and they tried to do this via recall and decided that the recall just wasn’t giving them the granularity of detail that they needed for the diary, that they could get from the diary.

Cooperation rate for this? The most recent one that’s published is from 2009. Just over three-quarters of the individuals returned the diaries. And again, that’s the average across the two weeks. But again, what we see is a story here that we see with all other stories, and we saw with the other one lower rates of participation among Hispanic, black, and younger adult households.

Now, what’s interesting about the CE is that the results that they’re getting so far as BLS is concerned aren’t good enough. So, they have actually been working, for the last couple of years, on a major redesign, something they call Project Gemini, where they’re looking at both the diary and the quarterly interview components. But it’s really the diary that they are most concerned about, this leave-behind.
And the recent panel recommended to them to move from paper to
electronic, using a tablet rather than the paper diary to see if that
would improve data quality, completeness, those types of things.
But they’re also examining other techniques, whether they should
use scanning types of devices, have people keep receipts,
download credit card information, go to outside sources.

So, this is an agency then that’s utilizing a leave-behind
methodology. It seems to get fairly good results. As far as I was
concerned, if I get 76 percent response rate, I’d be really happy.
But this is a gold standard study, and so they’re looking for
alternative ways to improve upon that.

Third and last example then, mentioned in David’s paper as well,
is the NHANES study, the National Health and Nutrition Survey.
This is designed to capture health and nutrition studies for adults
and children across the U.S., conducted by NCHS, my colleagues
at CDC. This study combines multiple interviews, physical
examinations, and some leave-behind components. About 5,000
individuals are done each year in 15 different counties that are
selected.

There’s in-person recruitments, with an initial questionnaire. Then
individuals are taken to these mobile vans – and if you’ve never
seen the NHANES mobile van, it’s a very, very impressive thing –
where the exams are done: physical exams, blood work, a whole
battery of things.

But then, there also is a leave-behind component, and this is very
different than what we’ve seen before. There are two different
things that are asked of. One is urine. They actually have a home
urine kit that is provided. Now, they take urine at the truck itself,
but then they want a secondary urine sample as well. So, they
provide the kit. The tech explains how to do this. Folks go home;
they provide the sample; and they mail this back in.

Now, the second component is a physical activity monitor, and it
has taken various forms over the year. These days it’s a wristband
that’s put on. And again, when they leave, the tech puts on the
wristband. They keep this for a week, and this is measuring, then,
their physical activity, their steps, where they’ve gone, their
motion, and those types of things. At the end of the week, they
take that off, and they send that back. So, again, very different
type of leave-behind than what we’ve seen before.
The researchers ask, “Why do you guys use these?” Kind of three things came up. Again, collecting unique information that they couldn’t have gotten otherwise. They didn’t feel they could get this information through just self-reports.

Reduced burden in the sense that by doing it as a leave-behind, particularly the urine sample, the folks don’t have to come back to the trucks yet again. They can do that on their own and send it back in. And then last but not least, they feel that they can get more accurate data than they can via a recall by using these methods.

Cooperation rates. The most published results, about 94 percent for the home urine, and about 88 percent for the physical activity. So, what we’re seeing with all three of these is – the large, complex studies – again, various different ways that they’re using leave-behinds, and actually pretty decent, I think, cooperation rates in terms of what they’re getting.

Some of the other selected examples, very similar again. This just kind of proves the point that I think a lot of, particularly, the larger shops who are out there doing these types of things. People doing larger studies are using these, but we don’t see them published very often.

GfK does a media consumer study. They administer a big questionnaire again. Then they leave behind a consumer questionnaire that gets filled out later. Kaiser Family Foundation has done something with children, where they interview the children, and then the children are given a two-day media diary.

CDC does something very similar with a slates-related project that they have, where there’s a telephone interview, and then they’re asked – they’re sent something to mail back.

Two that are a little bit different are the last two. One is by the Pew Center. And what this study does is they are interviewing business executives. That’s the main study. But then there’s a major leave-behind that is part – that captures information about the business.

What’s interesting about this leave-behind is it’s not necessarily the business owner or the business executive that does this, but they might hand this off to the finance department, and then to the HR department, and then to the IT department because it’s capturing various pieces of information about the business.
And last but not least is an example from Nielsen on our metered rating service. You could think of this in the same vein, where we recruit a home. We conduct an interview with the household. And if they agree to be part of our Nielsen panel, they actually then get a meter put into their home: one on the TV and another something that’s called the people meter.

And the thing about the people meter is essentially it’s like a remote. And every time they walk into a room, they push a button that says, “I’m here.” And every time they leave, they push a button that says, “I’m not here.” So, there is something that they have to do. They do that for two years. But it’s, again, another form of leave-behind.

So, that segues into kind of the new technology areas. And how might new technologies really change or augment what it is that we’re doing with leave-behinds? Online mobile platforms and mobile platforms being both phones and tablets, and then all of the various different Bluetooth-enabled types of devices that we have out there really are changing the way – the types of leave-behinds that we can utilize.

If you look at online, online provides really easy, relatively inexpensive access at a consistent interface across multiple devices and platforms. And by that, I mean traditional PCs, laptops, tablets, mobile phones, for capturing and transmitting data.

So, you could utilize online very much for leave-behinds, and in a couple of different ways. One, you could have a Web-based survey to augment the initial survey. So, in the old days, we would leave behind a paper questionnaire. These days we can simply leave behind a URL and say, “When you can, please go online and complete the rest of the survey online.”

Electronic versions of leave-behind tools. I’ve mentioned before about BLS looking at taking their diary from paper to electronic. Nielsen, we’re doing the same thing on TV, seeing if we can transfer it from paper to a tablet type of format.

And then we can track and more easily communicate with individuals. When you have online access, you can start sending – you can send messages; you can send reminders; you can see if data’s being entered – things that you could never do before with a paper questionnaire. So, I think it gives a whole new dimension to this idea of leave-behind, whereas before, with paper, people were
very much on their own unless you called them back up by telephone, or showed up at the door as the Census folks do.

Here now, again, if you’re using electronic, you know when data is being entered, or when it’s not being entered, and you can facilitate, I think, more easy communication.

In terms of mobile, mobile platform really offers us a whole range of new things that we can use, not just in terms of surveys, but image collection, audio collection, GPS, app-based entries, Bluetooth, Twitter, the whole gambit of things that are on that mobile phone can be utilized for various different types of data collection efforts.

Examples – again, a leave-behind survey that’s accessible via the Web, but you do it through the mobile phone. You know, Web these days doesn’t mean simply the PC or the laptop anymore. In fact, probably for more folks it means just accessing that through their mobile.

Detailed transportation of mobility studies, obviously, are looking at using this, individuals with GPS. We could find out what routes people take to work, what routes they take to the store, what things they go by.

Audio journals are something that are being used in public health. I ready a study of individuals that did detailed interviews with cancer patients, and then they had them use the audio portion of a mobile phone to be able to record on a daily basis some of their journal activities. And then that information was qualitatively assessed later.

The folks at RTI and other places are working with Twitter diaries, being able to use Twitter as a vehicle for sending information back and forth. And again, pictures, stories, videos, Bluetooth devices, a whole range of things that are mobile-enabled that we can utilize.

And last but not least then, with the Bluetooth – and again, this I think has been much more – our colleagues in the public health side of things have really taken this to the next level in terms of the monitoring types of things that can be done.

Measuring environment hazards via Bluetooth-enabled types of devices, capturing the uptake of medicines. I’ve seen this where individuals have a special type of dispenser for the meds for each week, and you can tell if the meds have been taken or not taken.
Recording blood glucose, blood oxygen, pulse, the whole range of things that we could put down there. But the key thing here is that there are devices out there now that are – that can very readily measure a number of the things we used to depend on recall for that can now be quickly and easily enabled, that can be used as leave-behinds in the studies that we have.

So, what are some of the areas that are ripe for investigation in this particular field? A couple of them. What are the lessons that can be drawn by focusing on leave-behinds as a distinct methodology? Or are leave-behind approaches so unique that you really can’t generalize them? That, to me, was one of the questions. Is that one of the reasons why we don’t have anything out there? Nobody really views this as a – everybody’s looked at the components and not so much this is a methodology in and of itself. Is it worth looking at that?

Unit non-response errors, cooperation, compliance, how does this differ from the primary data collection? I think that’s probably the key thing here – right? – is how does this – if you were to use a self-administered questionnaire as the primary device, are there anything different that we would learn about using self-administration as a leave-behind rather than the primary, or are the lessons the same? If the lessons are the same, then we know what’s going on, and we don’t have to go any further.

Which techniques and approaches, obviously, are best utilized as a leave-behind? Do leave-behinds actually reduce burden, or do they make us, as researchers, feel better about ourselves? You know? I mean that, to me, was, when I saw the 140-minute questionnaire and, “Oh, by the way, we’re going to leave you this additional thing,” does that really reduce the burden on the household, or does it just make us feel better that we didn’t keep them for, you know, 200 minutes.

And then influence of having/developing a relationship during the primary data collection, how does that affect the leave-behind compliance and quality? So, that to me was kind of an interesting thing, because that is what you have going on here.

During that initial interaction, you’ve developed a relationship with a respondent. How does that influence the – some of the things that we know about that primary data collection when now it’s in the form of the follow-up itself? Does that interaction carry over or not?
A couple of other areas, in terms of measurement error – are mode effects different in the context of leave-behinds than they are when they’re used as a primary vehicle? Again, it gets back to that if you have a relationship, does that minimize any of the effects – the negative effects that we see when using these things kind of straight up?

Survey data versus data collected by other techniques. I think that, to me, is just a huge area that as we – David kind of brought this up and was doing some of that exact examination here. Is it better to utilize some of these other techniques, or are we underestimating the power of recall and our ability to use better quality questions up front?

Does item non-response differ in leave-behind situations? Is there greater – this is one for Jon – is there greater satisficing in the leave-behind context than in other survey contexts?

And then just your basic data quality issues. How do leave-behind approaches differ, again, from self-administration straight up? Do timing and context change responses that one might obtain otherwise? And finally, compatibility effects, the difficulty of comparing surveys done at different times, by different groups, using different methods – how does that all play into things?

So, again, to kind of wrap things up, what did we learn out of all this? Again, fairly prevalent in practice, not very prevalent as a research topic, or certainly a published research topic. Much is known about the components, but not much about that as a specific methodology.

Province of larger, more complex surveys used it for many different purposes, getting additional information, privacy data quality, unique data collection approaches. Comes in many sizes and forms and may or may not include a traditional survey. And again, the growth of new technologies and the decline in funding I think will make these much more attractive areas in the future.

I will say this, just in terms of my own personal view of if we were to put dollars against this area, where would you do them? I don’t personally feel like the traditional paper and pencil follow-up is terribly worthy of much money. Maybe, you know, a dissertation grant or two, but my guess is that the lesson we learned years ago about self-reports pretty much probably follow on, maybe with some nuances as a lead behind.
Where the real meat and potatoes, I think, is, is in some of these newer types of leave-behinds, these new tasks. Again, they’re not necessarily surveys. Sometimes they’re actually tasks of various kinds that we ask individuals to do. That, I think, puts a whole new spin, a whole new dimension on what it is that we do, and that’s the area that I think that’s probably most right for funding in the future.

So, with that, I’d be glad to take any questions, or simply facilitate discussion.

_Norman Bradburn:_ Norman Bradburn. Just two more examples, one of a different type. One is the survey we were involved in many years ago on honesty, in which the interviewer left behind a rather expensive-looking pen to see whether the respondent either sent it back or contacted there to say, “Oh, you left your pen,” and stuff like that.

So, the class, I guess, there would be things that are left, not to be filled out, but to be done something with, where the behavior is what you’re interested in and some kind of like that.

The other one, which I think we’ll hear about tomorrow is our time sampling, where people wear beepers. And that’s a kind of diary – I mean it’s a version of the diary thing, but it’s – in which people are filling out their experiences about particular – what’s happening at a particular time. Again, it’s more in your new device type things, ‘cause now, with – you can do that a lot more than – it used to be very limited to small things, but now it’s cheaper to do it on something –

_Michael Link:_ In fact, to pick up on that point, we do a number of those studies now at Nielsen utilizing a mobile device. And so, you put the survey, very brief usually – I call this brief, repeated measures, where it’s maybe five or six questions. Where are you at? What are you doing? Who are you with? And one or two other questions.

And like you said, there could be a – you can randomly time this so that either once an hour, or once every couple of hours this pops up; the beeper goes off. You enter the data, and you get multiple points of time over a week, over a month, however long you have individuals keep that. But you’re right, so it’s a whole new dimension to kinda diary information that we’ve collected in the past.
Jennifer: Jennifer Romano Bergstrom from Fors Marsh Group. I have two questions for you. In any of the work that you’ve found, was there anything about incentives? Are people getting additional incentive to do that – the follow-up? ‘Cause I’m kind of looking at this as a recontact almost – right?

Michael Link: Right.

Jennifer: It’s a second survey. Or is that just part of the original survey, and there’s –

[Crosstalk]

Michael Link: Okay, so the question in the back, were there incentives related? The answer is yes. I didn’t get into great detail, but I do know that when we used them, and others have used them, that typically you would use a contingent incentive in that respect. That, “If you complete this task, we will send you something.” Although I think some of these are done without that.

Just like any survey, there’s various forms of this. Sometimes they’re up front; sometimes they’re contingent; sometimes there’s no payment. It really varied by the study.

There was one thing that I did find is that, you know, again, other than the traditional just leaving behind a paper survey, when you got into these other things, everything became fairly unique in terms of the task that was asked, and how people went about it, and the design. So, I think that makes it somewhat interesting.

Jennifer: Mm-hmm. My other question is rather than leave-behinds, what about send-aheads? So, some of this stuff you could send before you actually do the interview.

Michael Link: That could work as well. What would be interesting to me then is I get back to that point about does the relationship that you build during the interview have an impact on the leave-behind? It would be interesting to test if that send-ahead, if you had a – in the absence, then, of that interaction, does that have an effect? I think you just designed somebody’s dissertation here.

Jennifer: All right.

Michael Link: Andy?
Andy Peytchev: I was just wondering, along the same lines, whether something like a multistage design, not sampling but multistage survey design, would be a better fit for a name? Because I’m thinking of a broader set. I mean thinking about addressed-based sample surveys. So, many surveys may want to start with a sampling frame, but the survey that some of the components can only be administered by an interviewer.

So, the first mode may be a paper instrument that you send out. They do it. At the end they provide the telephone number and e-mail address and so on, so the second phase, really, the other part of the survey is collected by an interviewer, which is not that different from what you’re describing, but it’s a more general case.

Michael Link: Now, I would agree with that. So, if you’re expanding on the definition then, it really is that you have some level of self-reported information or self-motivated task that you need the individual to do, whether they do it beforehand, or they do it afterwards, but it’s part of a sequential data collection effort.

It’s not just one of the modes that you might use, you know, if you didn’t get the people in CATI, you’re going to send them mail; that’s a little bit different. This is – you know, like you said, this – maybe you send them the paper up front; they fill something out. A more detailed interviewer comes in to do something, a follow-up or vice versa.

But I agree with you. I think that might be a better description of it. Brady?

Brady West: I think you pretty much touched on this when you were talking about good areas for research in this area, but I think that this is another place where paradata could provide a lot of rich opportunities because there are a lot of unique paradata that could be collected on the leave-behind portions.

For example, who in the household ended up filling it out? How long did the household take? How long between purchasing an item and actually scanning it? Were the data actually collected? I think this is an area where you could use paradata a lot to examine data quality. And I think that’s another possible avenue that could be considered in terms of thinking about the methodology behind these particular components of a survey.

Michael Link: Yeah.
Charles DiSorga: Okay, this is Charles. So, well, you know, it makes me think – I just went through one of these experiences this past week, and that is people coming to my door, handing me a brochure, and asking me to go do something after they left it behind – go out and vote. And so I just raise the issue, and I was also going to talk about the contingent incentive part.

But I want – there seems to be the dynamic of the contract that meeting someone face-to-face and then maybe not do a big interviewer with them, but maybe perhaps introduce them to the study, tell them about a contingent incentive, and then ask them to take the survey on a device, or give them a URL or whatever.

And we just don’t really know, in this time of – because – and I’ll tell you why I think about this. You know, in doing addressed-based samples, I mean I feel like a large proportion of the people who don’t respond to my invitation are just basically throwing it away, and it’s not necessarily the people who are refusing to do the survey.

And there’s something to be said about a person who shows up to your door, if you answer your door, you know, to get a commitment from the individual to do something. I know that sounds awfully expensive, but it would be interesting to know whether or not you can get, if there’s a contingent incentive, you could get individuals to complete a survey online that way, and maybe with a segment of the population, or some targeted fashion.

But that would be an area that I’d be interested in knowing about that social-personal contract you make eye to eye with the household, and then get them to do the survey you want, perhaps online.

Michael Link: Well, even taking that the next step further, which is to add CADY to that, too – right? I kind of struggled a little bit with the definition. If you’re doing a quick telephone screener, just to identify people, and then you’re going to mail them a much more extensive thing, does that fit this mode? It could, yeah, I guess.

And then to your point, Charles, that a lot of the – the Nielsen, you know, with the television diary, the way that works is that if it’s addressed-based sample, if you have the telephone number where we recruit them by phone, and then we send them the diary afterwards, so that’s a leave-behind in that sense. But the other portion, if you don’t, you just mail them directly. So, that’s more of a just straight up, self-administered type of survey.
But you’re exactly right. If you could utilize this technology so that whether it’s face-to-face or CADY, you’re trying to get that interaction up front and then drive them to a Web survey, drive them to some other mode.

Other comments?

Frauke Kreuter: Frauke Kreuter. Just one thing, as I said, was reflecting on David Weir’s measures. And, you know, I mean obviously you probably wouldn’t want to do a saliva/spit leave-behind sample, because you would be immediately afraid that it no longer the same person.

Michael Link: Yeah.

Frauke Kreuter: And I wonder if, for a lot of the examples you’ve collected there, that is also an issue of concern? And if you know of research that has been done to look at information about who is then actually doing that leave-behind part when it gets matched back to the initial survey data, which I think is mostly what is done?

Michael Link: I would actually defer to any of my public health colleagues here. You know, you go to that NHANES example, where you had the one urine sample, and then you’re asking them to do the urine sample later. Yeah, that one certainly somebody else could be providing that. I’m sure there are probably ways to test to make sure that it came from the same person.

Uh-huh? Go ahead.

Male: Certain saliva measures, for looking at cortisol in particular, where you need specific timing of those measures requires sort of leave-behind. And we did an L.A.FANS, and, you know, it’s a problem getting people to respond, and the whole thing about who actually spits into the tubes is—you know, they get the dog to drool into it rather than—

Michael Link: So, that raises some important limits on what you may or may not be able to utilize with this kind of technology—with this kind of approach then, I would guess.

Frauke Kreuter: I think it is—it’s sort of—you know, I mean, any mail questionnaire, we wonder if our household selection—within household selection sort of works or not—right? And there has been research done on that.
But I think there, I mean, okay you could have entirely the wrong person, but it gets – it has a different spin here because you do match it to data that you already collected. And then this could be data from two different people. That’s all, I guess.

_Jon Krosnick:_ Other questions? Comments?

_Male:_ Just a quick one. You mentioned the low return rate on leave-behinds in a lot of instances. And my question is, once you have left something behind, and you don’t get it returned, how successful are efforts, other follow-up or whatever, to convert those reluctant or, you know, however one wants to label them? Is it pretty much a lost cause, after having done an initial interview and then left something behind, or is there a possibility of, from what you’ve seen, of converting some of those that did not immediately respond?

_Michael Link:_ So, a couple of things here. Actually, the examples we saw, I think, had very high return rates. The lowest really was the consumer expenditure diary, which was in the upper 70s. For them, that being a gold standard, they felt that was not high enough. And I do know that they utilize a number of different follow-ups to try to make sure that they’re getting that.

That was kinda to my point of, as we move to electronic things, such as online, and more importantly, probably, the mobile types of things, that technology can allow you to interact with the respondent to a greater degree, in a self-administered environment than we currently have with paper because, again, if you’re getting those data back in real time, you know if they have or have not started the task. And if they haven’t over some certain period of time, you can initiate whether it’s just a popup at first, and you can escalate that to a phone call, and you can escalate that to somebody knocking on the door.

But at least those new technologies, I think, give us some new options for how we might follow up and hopefully get a little bit better data quality.

_Male:_ But that hasn’t been done to very much of an extent so far?

_Michael Link:_ I’m sorry, what?

_Male:_ That kind of follow-up has or has not been done to date?
Michael Link: So, we’ve been – at Nielsen we’ve been testing those types of things with an electronic TV diary. And they seem to work. What’s very interesting, again, you give it to them. They’re supposed to start it on Thursday. You don’t see any entries on Thursday. By noon on Friday, if you haven’t, something pops up. And lo and behold, Friday afternoon you start seeing entries being made.

So, there’s a long way to go in learning those techniques, but I think they’re promising up front.

Jon Krosnick: Okay, thank you, Michael, wonderful.