

#NewMR

Market Research Knowledge Benchmarking Study 2017



Ray Poynter & Sue York

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Executive Summary

This report looks at the state of market research knowledge and the factors associated with higher levels of knowledge. The authors believe that skills are going to be a key driver of the future success the market research and insights profession. The study supports our view that there are specific initiatives (such as attending webinars) that are associated with higher knowledge levels.

This report covers a study conducted globally (in English and Japanese) in November 2017, with 730 market researchers and insight professionals.

Key Findings

People differ in terms of how many market research terms they are familiar with (i.e. able to explain to somebody else). This is not surprising, but it reminds us that when data is presented or reported there will be variations in the knowledge levels of the audience.

Nearly 40% of this sample did not attend a single training session or workshop in 2017. The authors believe this is a real threat to the future of market research.

The data support the authors' view that professional development activities increase knowledge levels, which we believe has an impact on the type, quantity, and quality of work that can be undertaken.

Our key professional development recommendations are that researchers and insight professionals should as a minimum:

- Read at least one relevant article or blog post a month.
- Read at least two business/research/insight related books per year.
- Take part in at least two training sessions or workshops per year.
- Listen to at least two webinars (either live or via recordings) per year.

These should be seen as a minimum, higher levels of enrichment are associated with higher levels of knowledge – but these minima represent a tipping point.

There are benefits in attending conferences, but the authors recognise that this will not be possible for every company or individual.

Next Steps

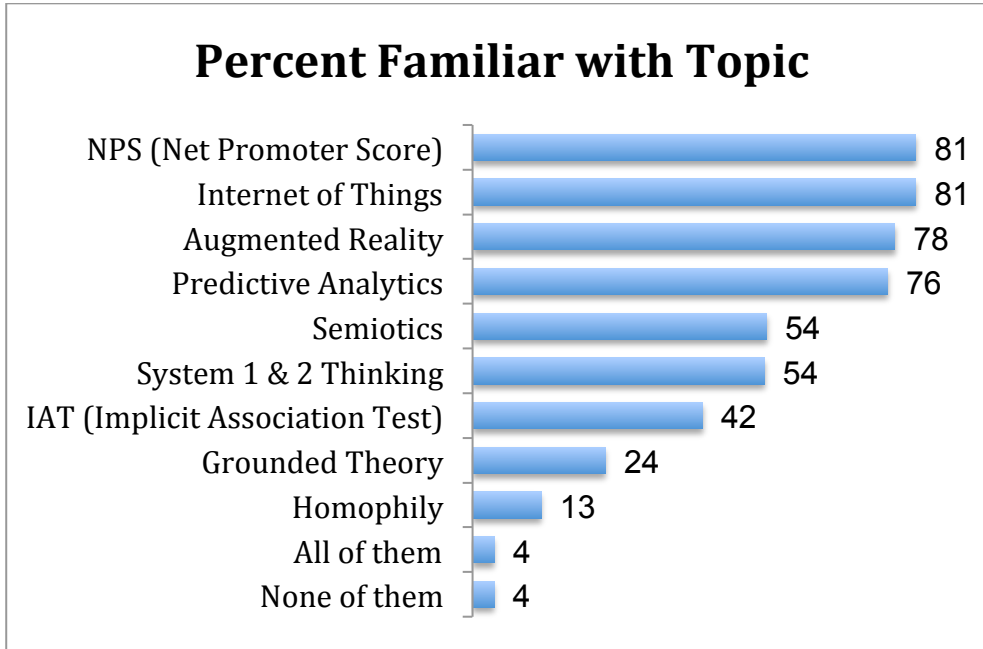
Whilst this project has been useful, there are several ways it could have been improved, and we plan to do that in the next wave. These include:

- Increasing the number of languages (this version was conducted in English and Japanese only).
- Working with a wider range of bodies and organisations to reach deeper into the research and insights industry.
- Improving the survey, whilst maintaining its short length.

If you would like to be involved in the next wave (2018), please contact admin@NewMR.org.

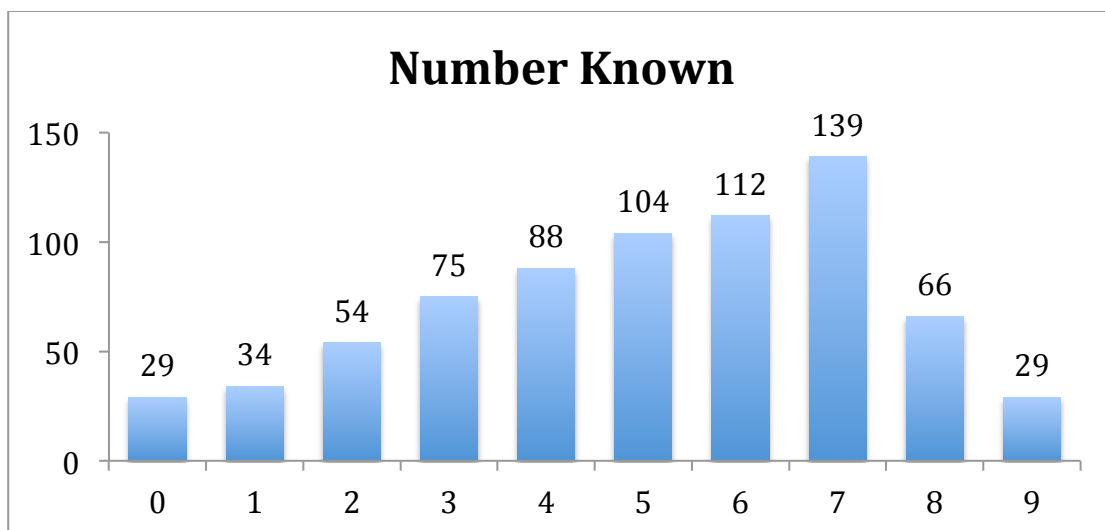
Introduction

This study was conducted via an online questionnaire to create a reference point, or benchmark, for the current state of knowledge of people engaged in the market research and insights profession. The key tool we used for this purpose was a list of nine research-related terms. The survey asked people to indicate which they were familiar with (i.e. they could explain to somebody else). The results for the total sample are shown in the chart below.



The top four topics were widely understood – but of these four, only NPS is very specifically a market research term. Semiotics and System 1 & 2 thinking are familiar to about half of the participants. The bottom three terms are much less known. It is worth noting that Homophily is also not a specific market research term. Just 4% of the sample knew all of these nine, and 4% knew none of them.

In order to make the data more accessible, a 'Number Known' score was calculated, where people who were familiar with nine of the topics scored a nine, through to people who were only familiar with none of the topics scoring a zero. The distribution (showing actual counts) for these scores is shown below.



From this data, it can be seen that just under half (47%) are familiar with six or more of these techniques, and just over half (53%) are familiar with fewer than six of these phrases. Therefore, the participants have been divided into Mavens and Learners, with Mavens being those who are familiar with six or more topics.

Activities Undertaken

Participants in the study were asked to indicate how often they had undertaken specific activities during 2017 (i.e. in the first eleven months of the year). These activities were asked because the authors believe that there is a link between taking part in things like training and webinars and being more knowledgeable about market research. The results are reported in the table below.

% Attended/ Read 2017	Articles/ Blog Posts	Business Books	Webinar	Training Session	Conference
0	5	19	25	38	40
1	3	16	14	20	23
2 to 4	13	39	35	32	30
5 to 9	13	14	17	6	5
10 or more	63	10	8	3	1
Not sure	4	2	0	1	0

Base 728 - 730

For the authors, one of these rows is particularly worrying and surprising. Amongst these participants 38% of market researchers attended no training sessions or workshops in the first eleven months of 2017. Only 42% of participants attended more than one training session or workshop during 2017. If the market research profession wants to move beyond just being suppliers of numbers, then more training is important.

The table shows that 60% of this sample attended a conference in 2017, which suggests that the sample for this study over-represents people engaged with the industry – a factor that should be kept in mind when interpreting the data.

What is Associated with Being a Maven?

The rest of the analysis looks at the factors that increase or decrease the probability of being Maven (i.e. of being familiar with six or more of these terms). The data show that people who do more (e.g. attend more webinars, read more articles) have a higher score in relation to the terms they are familiar with. This does not mean that activity is necessarily driving knowledge, for example interest in the topic could be driving both familiarity and activity.

Age

The table below illustrates the relationship between age and likelihood of being a Maven (i.e. being familiar with six or more of the terms in the study). Note, in this table and other tables, the authors have chosen to only display cells where there is a base of at least 50 people. In some cases this means categories have been combined to achieve this minimum base.

Age	Under 35	35 to 44	45 to 54	Over 54
Maven %	35	43	54	64
Base	195	218	198	114

Not surprisingly, older people tend to know more of these terms. Reasons for this could include:

- a) people might learn more over the years
- b) people who are less interested in market research might be more likely to leave the industry before they reach 45 years old.

The Tipping Point for Activities

The study shows that there are levels of activity that are associated with being a Maven, and we can define the levels that are associated with at least 50% of people being Mavens. We are describing the level of activity that is associated with more than 50% of people being a Maven as the tipping point.

The table below shows three elements for each of the activities examined in this study.

- a) None in 2017 - For example, looking at the last row in the table, amongst the group who attended no training sessions in 2017, only 38% were Mavens.
- b) Tipping Point - The category that resulted in at least 50% of the group being Mavens. In the Training row, this equates to people who attended 2-4 training sessions.
- c) Tipping Point % - The percentage of those in the Tipping Point category who were Mavens. In the Training row, this shows that 53% of the people who attended 2 to 4 training sessions were Mavens.

Category	None in 2017	Tipping Point	Tipping Point %
Articles / Posts read	13%	10 or more	58%
Webinars attended	26%	2 to 4	58%
Business books read	30%	2 to 4	55%
Conferences attended	32%	One	51%
Training sessions	38%	2 to 4	53%

The study indicates that more is best, in every case, more activities were associated with more people being Mavens. The authors believe there is every reason to believe that more of almost any form of professional development is likely to be beneficial. The authors would recommend that employers seek to at least reach the tipping point level for as many staff as possible.

Learnings for Future Studies

In countries where more surveys were completed, the number of topics known tended to be lower (lower than the scores from countries with relatively few responses). The authors believe this is because in countries with fewer responses, the survey tended to reach people highly engaged with the research industry, and who tended to be connected with initiatives such as NewMR and GreenBook. Similarly, countries where participants were using the main language of the country to respond (in this study that meant English or Japanese) tended to have lower scores, which we suspect was also related to reaching a wider audience in those countries.

More work needs to be done to reach non-English speaking audiences, perhaps by collaborating with more trade bodies.

The list of nine key terms chosen to benchmark knowledge were not subject to any prior evaluation. Before the next wave, work will be undertaken to refine this list. For example, there was feedback from Japan that Behavioural Economics would have been a better term than System 1 and 2 Thinking.

Whilst we are reluctant to make the survey longer, consideration should be given to adding the following demographic questions:

- Supplier/Buyer/Other
- English as a first language, English as a second language, little/no English
- Perceived barriers to taking part in professional development activities e.g. time, cost, availability.

About the Authors



Ray Poynter

Ray is a co-author of The Handbook of Mobile Market Research, author of The Handbook of Online and Social Media Research and the #IPASOCIALWORKS Guide to Measuring Not Counting, co-founder of NewMR.org, co-editor of the ESOMAR book Answers to Contemporary Market Research Questions, a content author for the University of Georgia's Principles of Market Research course and is the Managing Director of The Future Place, a UK-based consultancy, specialising in training.



Sue York

Sue is one of the founders of NewMR and Research Strategist who enjoys working at the intersection of research methodology, technology and innovation. Sue is co-author of "The Handbook of Mobile Market Research" and co-editor and curator of the ESOMAR book, "Answers to Contemporary Market Research Questions". Sue is an active member of the market research online community, and is a familiar face on Twitter, where she tweets as @1sue3, mostly about research methods and related innovations.

Thanks

We would like to thank everybody who helped make this project a success, including everybody who shared the survey link, the JMRA, and Tomoko Yoshida and Noriko Kishida for the translations – and everybody who completed the survey.

Study Details

Key Details

730 interviews, collected in late 2017 (between 6 and 30 November), from links shared on social media, via NewMR newsletters, through personal contacts, and via JMRA in Japan. The data over-represents the English and Japanese-speaking world and under-represents other countries.

We believe that the study over-represents people who are more engaged with the market research agency, in particular those who are linked to NewMR, JMRA, and GreenBook – the true picture could be even more concerning.

Countries

The table below lists all of the countries that supplied 8 or more interviews. In total, data was collected from 42 countries. Note, the top three countries (USA, Japan, and UK) accounted for 68% of the data. According to ESOMAR's 2017 Global Market Research Report, these three countries account for 63% of all market research spend.

Country	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
United States	212	29	29
Japan	146	20	49
UK	142	19	68
Australia	41	6	74
Canada	30	4	78
India	22	3	81
Germany	10	1	83
France	9	1	84
Singapore	7	1	85
South Africa	6	1	86
Bangladesh	5	1	86
Mexico	5	1	87
Netherlands	5	1	88
Sweden	5	1	88
Other	46	6	95
Not defined	39	5	100
Total	730	100	100

Regions

In the analysis we looked at three regions, North America (N America), Europe, and Asia Pacific (APAC).

Region	Frequency	Percent
N America	247	34
APAC	231	32
Europe	197	27
Other/NA	55	8
Total	730	100

Age

The only demographic we asked in addition to Country was Age, the data for this is shown below.

Age	Frequency	Percent
18 - 24	20	3
25 - 34	175	24
35 - 44	218	30
45 - 54	198	27
55 - 64	92	13
65 or older	22	3
Not defined	5	1
Total	730	100

Activities

In the table below Articles/Posts and Business Books refer to the number read, the other three columns refer to the number attended.

% Attended/Read	Articles/ Posts	Business Books	Webinars	Training Sessions	Conferences
0	5	19	25	38	40
1	3	16	14	20	23
2 to 4	13	39	35	32	30
5 to 9	13	14	17	6	5
10 or more	63	10	8	3	1
Not sure	4	2	0	1	0
Base	730	730	728	728	728

Mavens

The tables in this section show the percentage of each column that are Mavens (i.e. are familiar with six or more of the terms tested).

Conferences	None	One	2 or more
Maven %	32	51	62
Base	294	170	264

Training Sessions	None	One	2 to 4	5 or more
Maven %	38	49	53	61
Base	277	146	230	67

Webinars	None	One	2 to 4	5 to 9	10 or more
Maven %	26	39	58	56	64
Base	183	104	257	122	59

Articles / Posts	0 or 1	2 to 4	5 to 9	10 or more
Maven %	13	25	44	58
Base	55	93	98	458

Business Books	None	One	2 to 4	5 to 9	10 or more
Maven %	30	38	55	56	59
Base	139	116	287	102	74

Age	Under 35	35 to 44	45 to 54	Over 54
Maven %	35	43	54	64
Base	195	218	198	114

Region	APAC	North America	Europe
Maven %	30	50	61
Base	231	247	197

Questionnaire

The English version of the questionnaire is shown below. The Japanese language version was created by researchers Tomoko Yoshida and Noriko Kishida.

Research Benchmark 2017

1) Which of the following terms are you NOT familiar with? (i.e. you could not explain it to others)

- Augmented Reality
- Grounded Theory
- Homophily
- Implicit Association Testing (IAT)
- Internet of Things (IoT)
- Net Promoter Score (NPS)
- Predictive Analytics
- Semiotics
- System 1 and 2 thinking
- I am familiar with all of them

2) How many conferences have you attended (so far) in 2017?

- 0
- 1
- 2 to 4
- 5 to 9
- 10 or more
- Not sure

3) How many training sessions and/or workshops have you attended (so far) in 2017?

- 0
- 1
- 2 to 4
- 5 to 9
- 10 or more
- Not sure

4) How many webinars have you listened to, so far, in 2017?

- 0
- 1
- 2 to 4
- 5 to 9
- 10 or more
- Not sure

5) How many research or insights related articles and/or blog posts have you read, so far, in 2017?

- 0
- 1
- 2 to 4
- 5 to 9
- 10 or more
- Not sure

6) How many non-fiction books have you read, so far, in 2017?

- 0
- 1
- 2 to 4
- 5 to 9
- 10 or more
- Not sure

7) What is your age?

- 17 or younger
- 18 to 24
- 25 to 34
- 35 to 44
- 45 to 54
- 55 to 64
- 65 to 74
- 75 or older

8) Which country are you based in?

English version: Long list of 203 pre-coded countries

Japanese version: Japan

Other - Write In

9) Are there any topics that you want NewMR to cover in 2018? Please type them in the box.

[Not asked in Japan]

10) Do you have any comments you want to share with us about this survey or topic?

11) Would you like to receive a copy of the results? If so, please type your email address into the box.

Not asked in Japan
