

Which Mode Leads to a Complete? Findings from a Contact Mode Analysis

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Surveyors are increasingly using multiple modes of contact to reach potential survey participants

- More research is needed on which modes of outreach lead to survey completion and how this varies by demographics.
- The National Longitudinal Surveys of Youth (NLSY), which follow respondents' labor market activities and other significant life events over time, is ideal for studying multiple modes of contact.
- Multiple modes of outreach are used to attempt to contact sample members, including phone calls, texting, emailing, mail, in-person visits, and outreach to family members.
- This presentation discusses a contact mode analysis using the NLSY 1979 and 1997 cohorts to determine the most important modes that led to interview completion.

Agenda

01 Background

02 Methodology

03 Findings

04 Conclusion



Background

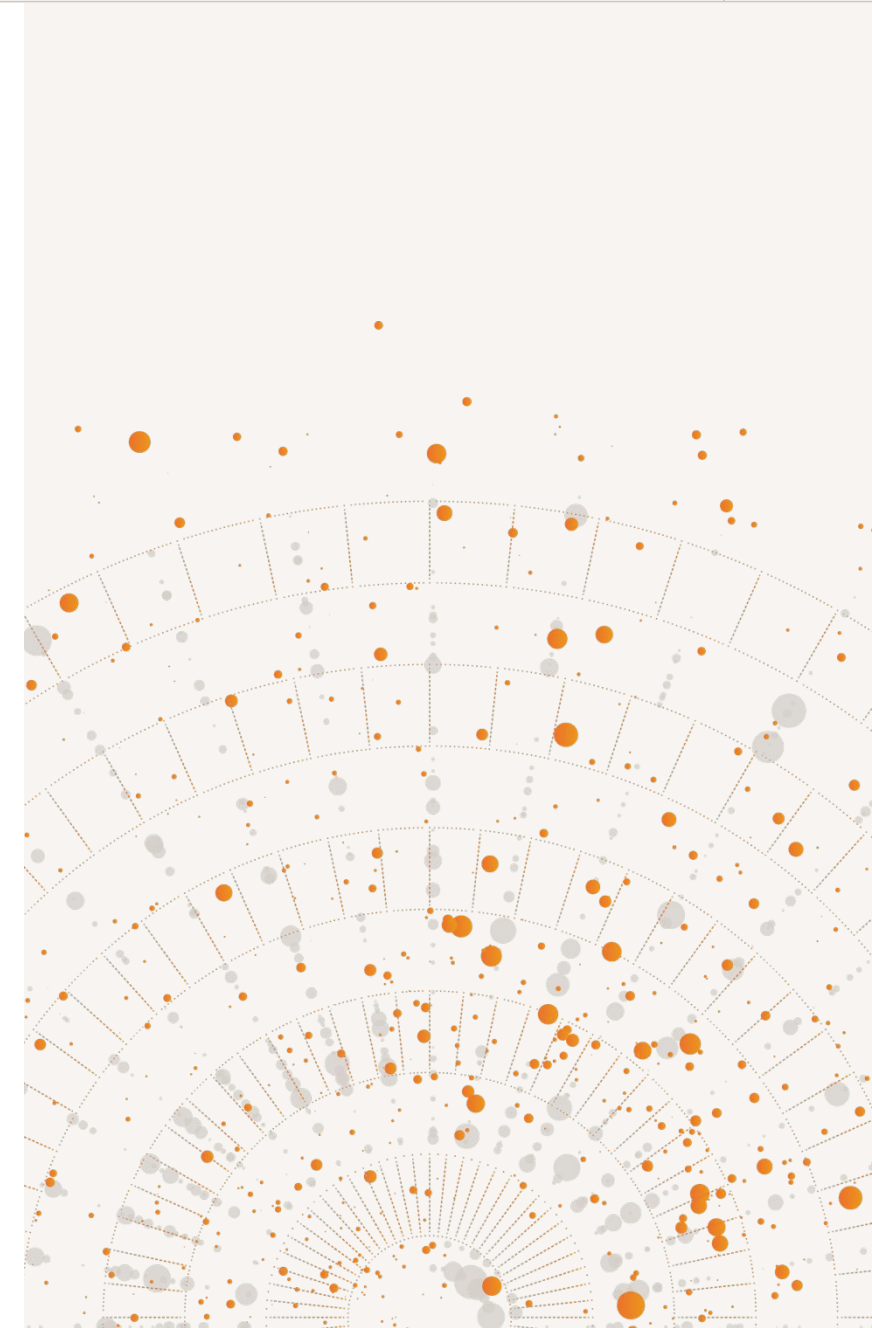
National Longitudinal Surveys of Youth sponsored by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

- **Nationally representative surveys that follow the same sample of individuals from specific birth cohorts over time**
 - The **NLSY79** includes those born 1957-1964; the 31st survey of this cohort is currently in the field
 - The **NLSY97** includes those born 1980-1984; the 21st survey of this cohort just completed
- **One key difference in the cohorts is the use of an “early bird” incentive in the NLSY79 early in the field period**
 - Additional incentive for the respondent contacting us within four weeks of an advance letter being mailed
 - During this time, interviewers are not actively reaching out to cohort members

NLSY79 and NLSY97 contacting strategies

In addition to the NLSY79 early bird, both cohorts use a variety of contact strategies

- An advance letter is sent to sample members along with email, text, and phone outreach.
- Interviewers can also contact respondents via phone, text, email, or mail, based on prior round experience with the respondent, respondent permissions, and other information available.
- Respondents can also be contacted through in-person visits and through reaching out to a relative. This is typically done when interviewers are having trouble reaching the respondent.
- Sometimes, respondents reach out to interviewers first, but this is uncommon.



Methodology

A random sample of 948 cases were selected for coding, stratified by prior round completion history

- Coders reviewed comments and determined which modes were most responsible for interview completion
- Coded primary and secondary mode (if applicable)
- Coded into 8 contact modes: Mail, Email, Text, Phone (outbound), In-Person, Inbound, Relative, Unknown
- Analyzed NLSY79 with and without people who completed during early bird
- An initial batch was triple coded by two senior staff and a research methodologist to identify any discrepancies and formalize a code frame

<i># of cases</i>	NLSY97 R20	NLSY79 R30
Completed 1 round	212	212
1 round out	100	100
2 rounds out	79	65
3+ rounds out	90	90
Total	481	467

Example:

Primary mode responsible for interview completion was **in person contact**

11/16/21

Phone

R answered at [R's phone number]. When I identified myself, he said "no thank you, not participating this year." Made it clear they are not motivated by money, next time talk about the policy importance of interview. May be better if we go out in the field.

03/02/22

In-person Visit

APPOINTMENT SET: in-person visit at [R's address] ... I introduced myself and the purpose of the visit. R was hesitant about participating and kept telling me he is very busy. After some back and forth, R agreed to a phone appointment on...

03/07/22

Text

Texted R at [R's phone number] to saying the following: "Good morning [R's name], this is [Interviewer's name] with NORC. I'm confirming our appointment today at 6pm..."
R text back a "thumbs up emoji"

03/07/22

Phone

Interview completed over phone.

Note: To ensure privacy, all examples in this slide are based on constructed data and do not reflect an actual interaction with an NLSY respondent.

Findings

NLSY97 R20: Rounds Out

Telephone is the most important contact mode

- Most prior round completers (73.6%) did so from a telephone contact.
- Text is the next most important contact mode.
- For less cooperative respondents, relatives, in-person, and to a lesser extent email become more important.

<i>Most important mode of contact</i>	<i>Prior Rounds Completion (%)</i>			
	<i>Prior Round Complete</i>	<i>1 Round Out</i>	<i>2 Rounds Out</i>	<i>3+ Rounds Out</i>
Phone	73.6	46.0	32.9	46.7
Text	12.3	15.0	15.2	17.8
Email	3.8	10.0	13.9	7.8
In-Person	0.5	6.0	13.9	11.1
Mail	0.5	0.0	1.3	2.2
Relative	5.2	17.0	20.3	11.1
Inbound	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Unknown	4.2	6.0	2.5	3.3
Total	100	100	100	100

NLSY97 R20: Sex

Contacting a relative was a more important mode of contact for men than women ($p < 0.05$)

- In-person contact was almost twice as likely to be the most important mode for men than women, but the difference is not significant ($p = 0.18$).

Most important mode of contact	Respondent Sex (%)	
	Men	Women
Phone	53.2	59.9
Text	13.8	15.1
Email	6.3	9.0
In-Person	7.1	4.2
Mail	0.7	0.9
Relative	14.9	6.6
Inbound	0.0	0.0
Unknown	4.1	4.2
Total	100	100

NLSY97 R20: Race & Ethnicity

Black respondents differed in mode importance relative to other racial groups

- Contacting a relative was the most important mode for nearly a quarter of Black respondents, considerably higher than other groups ($p < 0.05$).
- Black respondents were less likely to have texting as most important mode ($p < 0.05$).
- Group differences were less pronounced when including the 2nd most important contact mode.

Most important mode of contact	Respondent Race/Ethnicity (%)		
	Black	Hispanic	Non-Black, Non-Hispanic
Phone	54.3	50.0	59.9
Text	7.8	17.6	16.5
Email	6.2	9.3	7.2
In-Person	6.2	8.3	4.6
Mail	0.8	0.9	0.8
Relative	22.5	9.3	6.3
Inbound	0.0	0.0	0.0
Unknown	2.3	4.6	4.6
Total	100	100	100

NLSY79 R30: Rounds Out

After telephone, early bird is the most important contact for prior round completes

- Nearly a third (30.2%) of prior round complete respondents completed through early bird.
- Telephone was the most important across all groups, followed by text for 2+ rounds out.
- Relative and in-person become more important for less cooperative respondents.

<i>Most important mode of contact</i>	<i>Prior Rounds Completion (%)</i>			
	Prior Round Complete	1 Round Out	2 Rounds Out	3+ Rounds Out
Early Bird	30.2	6.0	6.2	4.4
Phone	46.7	53.0	47.7	36.7
Text	11.3	13.0	16.9	16.7
Email	2.4	5.0	4.6	7.8
In-Person	1.9	6.0	10.8	16.7
Mail	0.0	1.0	0.0	1.1
Relative	3.3	9.0	13.8	11.1
Inbound	2.4	5.0	0.0	3.3
Unknown	1.9	2.0	0.0	2.2
Total	100	100	100	100

NLSY79 R30: Sex

Similar to NLSY97 results, contacting a relative was a more important mode of contact for men than women ($p < 0.05$).

- In-person contact was almost twice as likely to be the most important more for women than men, but the difference is not significant ($p = 0.09$).

Most important mode of contact	Respondent Sex (%)	
	Men	Women
Early Bird	14.0	19.6
Phone	46.9	45.5
Text	14.4	12.5
Email	5.4	3.1
In-Person	4.9	8.9
Mail	0.8	0.0
Relative	11.1	3.6
Inbound	0.8	4.9
Unknown	1.7	1.8
Total	100	100

NLSY79 R30: Race & Ethnicity

Racial differences were less pronounced compared to NLSY97 results

- Non-Black, Non-Hispanic respondents were more likely to complete during the early bird period before outreach began ($p < 0.05$).
- Hispanic respondents were more likely to have email as most important mode compared to Black respondents ($p < 0.05$).

Most important mode of contact	Respondent Race/Ethnicity (%)		
	Black	Hispanic	Non-Black, Non-Hispanic
Early Bird	12.2	11.4	21.5
Phone	48.9	47.9	44.3
Text	18.9	13.6	11.4
Email	1.1	7.1	3.8
In-Person	10.0	6.4	5.9
Mail	0.0	0.7	0.4
Relative	5.6	10.7	6.3
Inbound	1.1	1.4	4.2
Unknown	2.2	0.7	2.1
Total	100	100	100

Comparing NLSY79 R30 and NLSY97 R20

Small differences in the importance of telephone and email

- Email was more important to NLSY97 than NLSY79 ($p < 0.05$).
- Telephone was the most important mode across cohorts but somewhat more so for NLSY79 than NLSY97. This difference is not significant.

	NLSY97 R20 (%)	NLSY79 R30 (% Excluding Early Bird)	Difference
Phone	50.7	55.5	4.8
Text	18.6	17.9	-0.7
Email	8.1	4.6	-3.5
In-Person	7.6	8.1	0.5
Mail	0.8	0.9	0.1
Relative	11.0	8.5	-2.5
Inbound	0.0	2.8	2.8
Unknown	3.3	1.7	-1.5
Total	100.0	100.0	

Conclusion

While there are several consistencies, the importance of mode varied by cohort, completion history, sex, and race/ethnicity

- Telephone was the most important mode of contact, followed by text
- Importance of modes varies by respondents' completion histories, sex, and race/ethnicity
 - Phone outreach was more important for respondents who completed the prior round
 - For respondents who have missed at least the prior round, in-person outreach and contacting relatives were important contact modes
 - Contacting a relative was a more important mode of contact for men than women
 - Depending on cohort, race and ethnicity differences were found for email, texting, and contacting a relative
- Small differences were found across cohort, notably use of email

Thank you.

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