WINE, CHEESE, SCOTCH AND SAMPLE:

KNOW THE SOURCE

IT'S NOT CHAMPAGNE UNLESS...

What do wine, cheese, scotch and sample all have in common? The source makes all the difference.

Sparkling white wine is made all over the world, but the only sparkling white wine that can be called Champagne is from the Champagne region of France.

Under Italian law, "Parmigiano-Reggiano" is the name for cheese produced only in the provinces of Parma, Reggio Emilia, Bologna, Modena, and Mantua. European law classifies the name, as well as the translation "Parmesan", as a protected designation of origin.

On the island of Islay in Scotland, the water is so filled with peat that it runs red out of the tap. The peat bog source of the water is what drives the strong peaty flavor of Islay scotches like Laphroaig, Bowmore and Lagavulin.

In all these places, the source is so important to the flavor that laws exist to ensure consumers get the real thing. In this report, we'll see that the source is equally important for sample.

SAMPLE SOURCES

Market research is intended to inform intelligent decision making by providing accurate information on the marketplace. If your sample source provides you with information that flavors the results so much that they lead to misinformation, then your results are useless.

In other research on research we have demonstrated that river sample and sample coming from people answering questions to get access to gated content (as Google Consumer Surveys does) is often unreliable and unrepresentative.[1]

IS SINGLE SOURCE PURER?

We tested a single source community that was recruited from a loyalty program to see whether a single source community might be more reliable than something like river or publisher sample. We conducted a study using matched samples from our Maru Voice Canada and a very large community recruited from a loyalty program.

The samples were pulled to be representative of the adult population of Canada from Quebec westward, because the loyalty program did not have sufficient sample in Atlantic Canada. We extracted stratified samples with identical quotas for age, education, gender and region. We also weighted the results to ensure the two samples matched demographically.

Maru Voice Canada has been proven representative of the population in a number of ways, including correctly predicting many elections.[2] Its U.S. sister community Springboard America was rated by Nate Silver's 538.com as the most accurate online sample in predicting U.S. elections.[3] It also correctly estimated the U.S. Presidential election popular vote in 2016.

We compared the results on a total of 69 items in the questionnaire, and found the results differed significantly on 45 of those items. This represents two thirds of all the responses we tested.

Comparing the answers for 69 items between two samples, testing for significant differences

Responses that were **Significantly different**

Responses that were **Not significantly different**

Total = 69
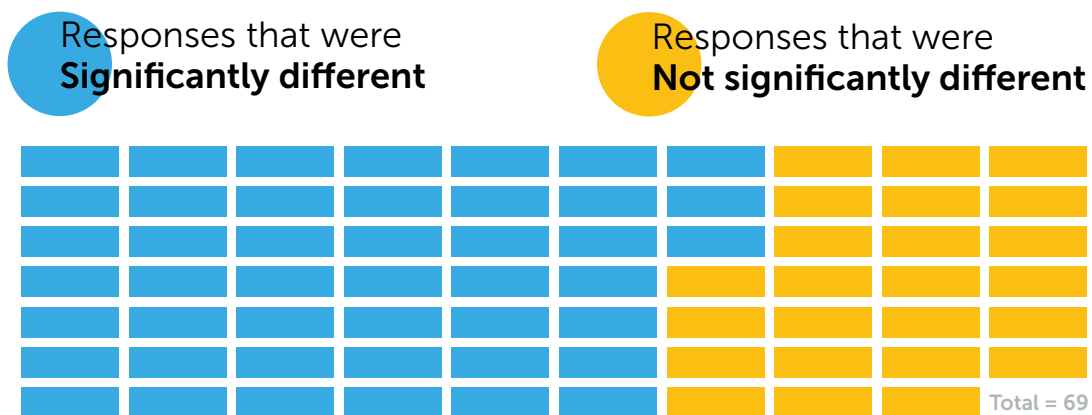
Despite being demographically identical, the people who were sampled from the loyalty program behave very differently. The samples varied significantly on many things, including where they shopped, the technology they own, how much they travelled, whether they had a car, what medical conditions they suffer from, where they travelled, what loyalty programs they were part of, the credit cards they use and the number of credit cards they have.
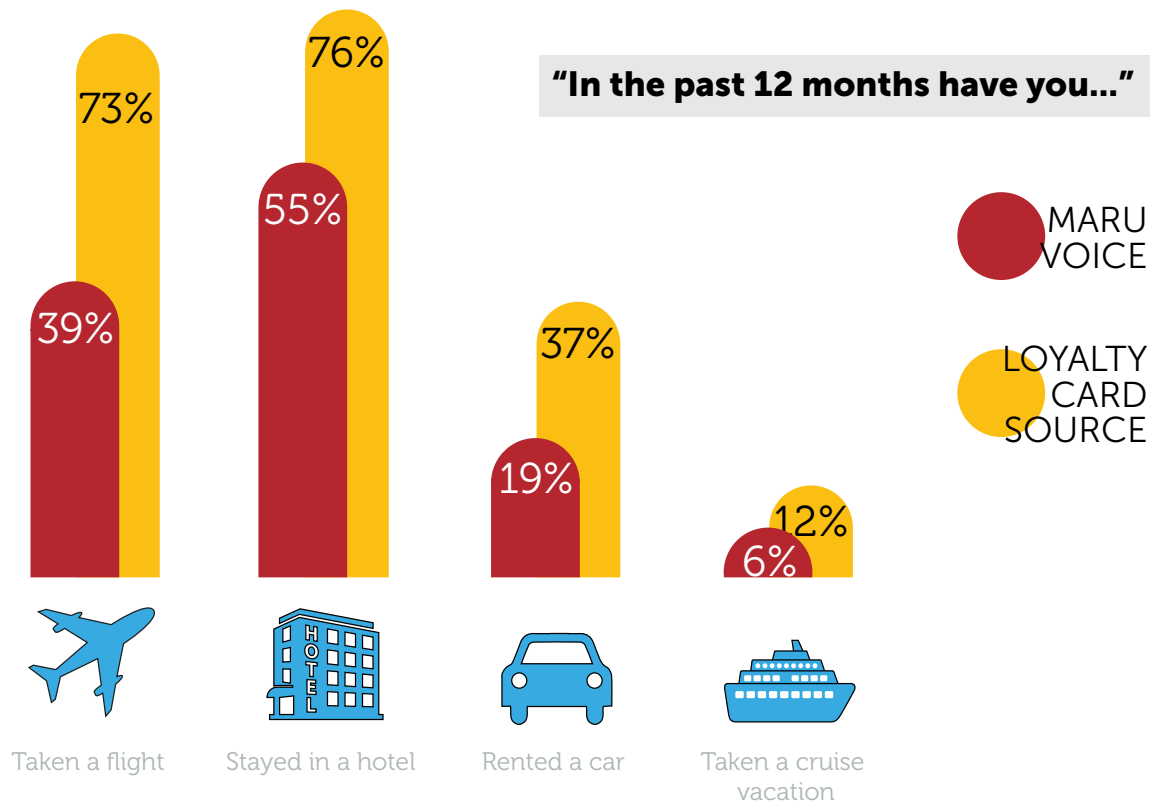
UNKNOWN UNKNOWNS

Some of these differences, like where they bank, the credit cards they use and where they shop can be linked directly to the loyalty program. For example, a member of the loyalty program is more likely to have a credit card that will earn you points for that program. This might be what former U.S. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld might call a "known known." But there are many other differences that would fall into the category of "unknown unknowns" and those, as he put it, "tend to be the difficult ones."[4]

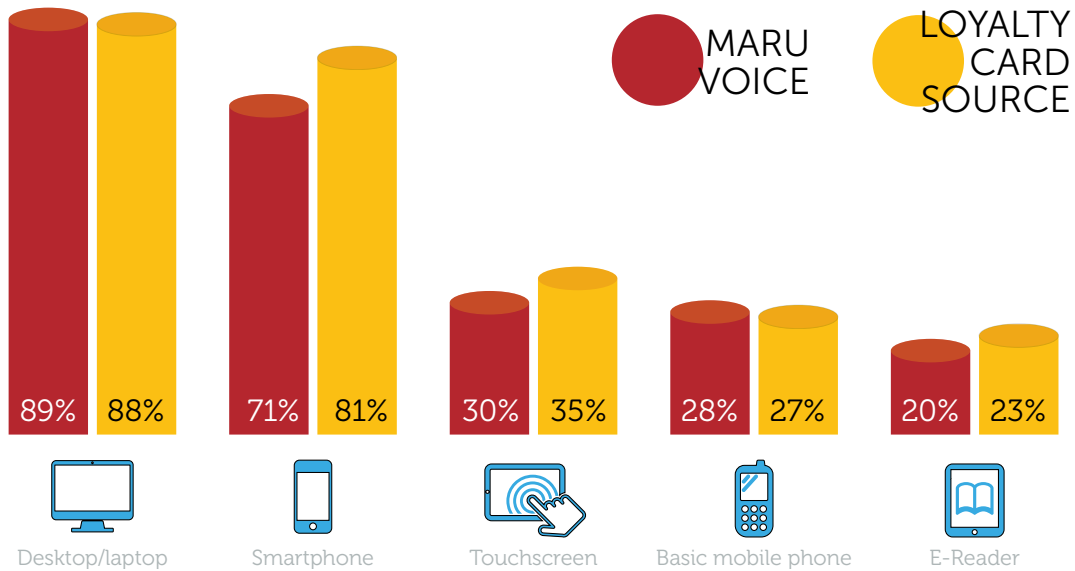For example, there were large differences in the travel habits of those who are part of the loyalty program.

Despite be demographically the same, the people from the loyalty program were much more likely to have been travelling in the past 12 months. This difference might be useful if you were trying to find people who have recently stayed in a hotel or rented a car. But what would be unknown is whether their loyalty affiliation influences which hotels they stay at or where they rent their car from.

And if you were trying to understand how big the market is for cruises, you would not want to measure it using the loyalty sample, because you would overestimate the size of the market by 100%.

Comparing travel habits between the Loyalty Card Source and Maru Voice

"In the past 12 months have you..."

- ● MARU VOICE
- ● LOYALTY CARD SOURCE

	Taken a flight	Stayed in a hotel	Rented a car	Taken a cruise vacation
Maru Voice	39%	55%	19%	6%
Loyalty Card Source	73%	76%	37%	12%

MARU VOICE

LOYALTY CARD SOURCE

| Desktop/laptop		Smartphone		Touchscreen		Basic mobile phone		E-Reader	
89%	88%	71%	81%	30%	35%	28%	27%	20%	23%

Comparing technology ownership between the Loyalty Card Source and Maru Voice

There were other differences that were not so understandable, but are notable. For example, those from the loyalty source were more likely to own a smart phone and a touchscreen/tablet, but were no different when it came to having a computer, basic mobile phone or an e-reader. Why that is, or what the implications might be, are another example of "unknown unknowns."

Even though the samples were matched in terms of life stage, region, gender and age, those who were part of the loyalty program were more likely to own a car and less likely to suffer one or more of 13 common health conditions such as asthma, depression, diabetes, high blood pressure and migraines.

Why these differences exist falls into the category of unknown unknowns.

Do you....?

Own a car

Have a medical condition

MARU VOICE		LOYALTY CARD SOURCE	
86%	58%	81%	47%
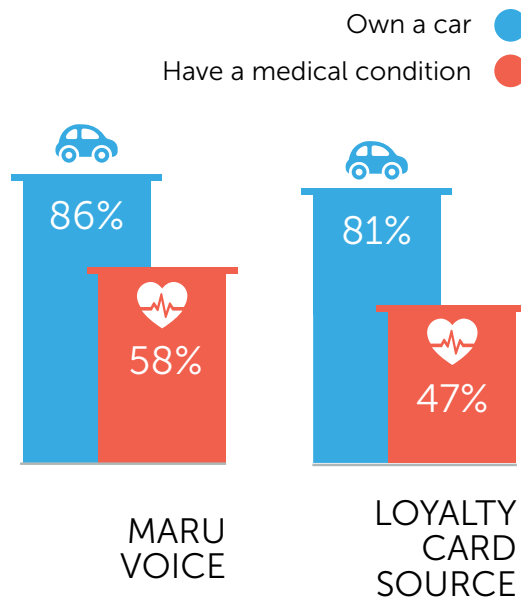
That insight leaves you wondering what other unexpected differences there would be, and what that might mean for the accuracy of the information you would get from this single source sample.

IMPLICATIONS

The source of the sample can have profound implications for its representativeness and the accuracy of the information you receive from that sample. What makes it tricky is that those influences are not necessarily predictable or even knowable.

Maru Voice Canada has built and maintained our community using a multitude of recruitment strategies. No one source has ever accounted for more than a tiny proportion of the community as a whole, and it never will. We ensure our sources are diverse in nature, and are balanced in terms of the type of people we source.

We also continually monitor our results and compare them to gold standards like elections, the Census and Statistics Canada surveys, because we know accuracy matters. We also know that like with wine, cheese and scotch, the source makes all the difference.

The next time you purchase sample, ask about the source and where it was recruited from. It matters.

TO LEARN MORE, CONTACT:
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1   See for example: R. Berger and A. Grenville, Art or Science? The Perils and Possibilities of Survey Sampling in the evolving online world, Maru/Matchbox 2016; R. Berger and A. Grenville, Rivers, Routers and Reality—a test of sample sources, data quality and reliability. Vision Critical University 2015; A Grenville and R. Berger, The Hidden Cost of Cheap Sample—reliability and validity of a content-driven online sample source. Vision Critical University 2016.

2   Angus Reid Public Opinion, Electoral Forecasts since 2007: Angus Reid's record in the U.S. and Canada. 2012

3   Rob Berger, Nate Silver's FiveThirtyEight Cites Springboard America's Polling Accuracy, 2016 Maru/Matchbox.com

4   Donald Rumsfeld There are known knowns Wikipedia, retrieved Dec 20 2016