

# Optimizing Mixed Methods Research for Product Innovation

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## Today we'll be talking about...



Current methodological challenges and practical considerations



Our approach to leveraging mixed methods research to address these challenges



Key takeaways: challenges and opportunities for the future



## **Current methodological challenges and practical considerations**

**Current  
issues and  
considerations  
with...**



**...big data**



**...qualitative research**  
(e.g., ethnography, personas)



**...surveys**

**Triangulating data using  
different methodologies is the  
gold standard but it's rarely  
done in practice**





## Big data hype and hubris

- A lot of attention in recent years focusing on the opportunity presented by ‘Big Data’
- More recently, arguments against Big Data boil down to the idea of ‘Big Data Hubris’ - misunderstanding analysis or giving too much weight to flawed Big Data analytics
- In many cases, Big Data is more effectively leveraged as a complementary signal rather than a stand-alone forecasting tool

**\*Source: Dodson (2014)**





## Big data hype and hubris



## Current practical limitations of personas

- Qualitative methods lack “accuracy” and quantitative methods are “inconsiderate application” of statistical techniques
- Personas are not created from “real data” and rarely developed at the beginning of the design process
- Personas are abstract and impersonal

\*Sources: Laporte et al (2012; Nielsen & Hansen (2014)



## Surveying for growth and the next generation of users

**What did we do?**







**Developed a mixed methods approach to address these methodological challenges**



## Behavioral data

- Developed ‘archetypes’ (e.g., by sign-up, tenure, streaming behavior) in fastest growing markets in each major region
- Created ‘demographic cohorts’ for survey research



## Survey research

Conducted a targeted survey of members, covering:

- Battery of socioeconomic questions
- Range of attitudes, beliefs, behaviors, and user needs/interests



## Qualitative research

- Recruited a subset of survey participants for half day ethnographic sessions
- Led semi-structured interviews, contextual inquiry (where they watch content), and participant observation in social settings

**Illustrative example of our results...**

It's easier for snatchers to snatch your phone and they will just run out of the jeep with your phone.

Philippines



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**Barriers**



**What did  
we learn?**



**Takeaways:**  
**Challenges and Opportunities**



## Challenges

- This mixed methods design involves higher effort, and focusing on behavioral or survey data alone may be tempting, but this approach offers a way to generate more nuanced insights
- Finding the right balance between behavioral data predictions and primary research design can be challenging
- Reducing biases in reporting and visually depicting personas is difficult (Saez and Domingo, 2012) - one approach to address this is by leveraging video assets to tell the research story



## Opportunities

- Growing availability of behavioral data matched by increasingly rapid survey and remote qual methods means this approach can be replicated and scaled efficiently
- Mixed methods approach helped us engage a broader audience by meeting different interests across stakeholders
- Useful, flexible method that is “area” specific vs. project specific - applicable results that are general enough to make product innovation decisions
- Focusing on the most recent members was a good barometer to assess opportunities for future growth in newer markets



**Thank You!**

**Questions?**



Tencent, China