

Making a positive contribution

Greetings and welcome to another edition of Synergie and I hope you are all surviving the ups and downs of the recession. I am very pleased to see the improvements to the website and the introduction of a Forum and blogging facility. I hope members will take advantage of these improvements by posting comments and start some lively debates. My thanks to UK members, Blauw Research, for their kind assistance in setting this up and I am sure it will be a great success in time.

Practical support to business

We are happy to welcome new members from Pakistan, UK and Austria. We continue to reach out to all corners of the world. It is also good to hear news about members co-operating and working together on a day to day basis; it is definite proof that **AIMRI** is relevant and delivers a positive contribution to the market place.

It was once said that our industry is recession-proof, however, in light of the large waves of redundancies within companies large and small and reports of projects being cancelled or delayed I don't think this is the case any longer. Global research revenues were down in Q3 of 2009 across all the world's largest research firms and we have seen an increase in mergers, acquisitions, partnerships and co-operations in both the online and off-line areas as a result of the reduced MR spend.

According to Sir Martin Sorrell he expects revenues to remain flat during 2010. Researchers need to diversify and move into areas of research where they have not been

before. On-line (panel research) is still attracting more and more of the total research spend but this has also experienced a slow-down in its rate of increase and I was surprised to learn recently that the level of activity typically dips sharply in January and February. Difficult times offer scope for new opportunities and creative ideas to offer practical support to business that is also struggling - research and marketing budgets are always the first to be hit.

Researchers who can come up with new ideas AND get them heard in the right places will thrive. Social networks, Facebook, Bebo etc. are becoming the new hunting ground for researchers with new techniques for engaging consumers being employed and whereas initially they were purely arenas for social interaction we will see them soon become monetised and members (consumers) will be earning through their participation. I think we will see a lot more of this in the future. Similarly more business orientated 'social' networks are thriving and offer access to market. We are looking forward to revisiting our discussion on panel research at our next conference in **Rome**.



John Mackay,
Chairman

Next AIMRI meeting

The spring 2010 **AIMRI** meeting for members will be in Amsterdam on Friday, 11 June 2010. The subject will be:

"Surmounting problems in market research"

Sightseeing, restaurants, nightlife and world class accommodations are all abundant for the visitor. The 'Amsterdam' that most people know is the city centre, the semi-circle with Central Station at its core. It corresponds to the city as it was around 1850. Five major concentric canals ring the Old Centre or Canal Belt.



Amsterdam see page 2

Inside this issue:

Amsterdam conference	
Surmounting problems	2
AIMRI Blog & Forum	
How to take part	3
Niche markets	
Review of Munich conference	4 & 5
New members	
Details of five new members	6
Post recession conference	
How will the consumer react?	7
Harnessing social media	
Preview of Rome event	8



Tackling two kinds of problem

The spring 2010 AIMRI meeting for members will be in Amsterdam on Friday, 11 June 2010. The subject will be

“Surmounting problems in market research”

In this meeting we will consider two different types of problems:

- **Helping clients e.g. handling cultural diversity in different markets;** integrating different research methods; contacting hard to reach respondent groups.
- **An opportunity to bring up and discuss the challenges which members face.** Get real time, real life feedback on issues important to you and your business. For example: How to handle the problem employee (or customer). Dealing with financial institutions. How important is it to have a business plan?

Amsterdam

Sightseeing, restaurants, nightlife and world class

accommodations are all abundant for the visitor. The "Amsterdam" that most people know is the city centre, the semi-circle with Central Station at its core. It corresponds to the city as it was around 1850. Five major concentric canals ring the Old Centre; the Singel, the Herengracht, the Keizersgracht, the Prinsengracht, and the Singelgracht, together forming the Grachtengordel, or Canal Belt.

The hotel for the AIMRI meeting will be announced soon.

This will be another stimulating event in an historic environment.

For more information please contact **Richard Chilton** (tel +44 20 8780 3343).



Are research panels the answer?

The spring 2010 AIMRI meeting for members will be in Rome on Friday, 5 March 2010. The subject will be:

“Panel research revisited”

How are panels formed and administered? What are the advantages? Can we be sure that the panel is representative? Can research methods be mixed? Problems with overlapping panels. How to retain the enthusiasm of the panellists?

as the Colosseum, the Forum and the Pantheon. Other popular sights are the Trevi Fountain, the Spanish Steps and the Piazza Navona. At the Vatican City, visitors can visit St Peter's Cathedral and enjoy its fountains, statues and the beautiful dome. At the Vatican Museum, you won't want to miss the masterpieces Leonardo da Vinci and Raphael or the Sistine Chapel.

The hotel for the AIMRI meeting will be the Imperiale on the Via Veneto.



Rome

Rome Italy is one of the most popular tourist destinations in the European Union. Visitors come from around the world to see world-famous landmarks such

This will be another fascinating event in an unique environment.

For more information please contact Richard Chilton (tel +44 20 8780 3343).

2010 Insight Show

The 2010 Insight Show will be on 29 - 30 June and AIMRI will host the International Village - again at Olympia, London.

Those wishing to take part should contact David Mallett - Sales Manager on Tel +44 20 7970 4471 or email david.mallett@centaur.co.uk

A Rolling Annual Plan

In future AIMRI will publish a rolling annual plan for the meetings for members.

Dates and venues (tbc = to be confirmed)

Date	Hotel	Venue	Airport
Fri 5 March 2010	Imperiale	Rome	Rome
Fri 11 June 2010	tbc	Amsterdam	Schiphol
Fri 15 Oct 2010	Mitre	Hampton Court near London	Heathrow

Subjects

For March 2010 the subject is: **“Panel research revisited”**

For June 2010 the subject is:

“Surmounting problems in market research”

AIMRI Blog & Forum

This month sees the launch of the **AIMRI** blog and forum, both of which can be found on the navigation strip at the top of the page on the website www.aimri.net. The forum has been set up to provide members with the facility to start and join in on discussions with each other. We have provided a members only, and non-members forum, both of which are accessible to **AIMRI** members.

To access the forum you will need to sign in as per normal. Unless you are signed in, you will only be able to access the non-member forum.

AIMRI Blog

The blog aims to provide members with up to date news on **AIMRI** and its events. We intend to provide interesting reading material to anyone looking at the site. We plan on updating the blog weekly, so please keep checking - we hope to provide you with a varied and interesting read. This is accessible to members and non members, so if you find a post interesting please let other people know and share the link however you can.

The blog was initiated by Gerry Stacey and is administered by Richard Chilton and myself John Clarvis, and we encourage **AIMRI** members to submit topics to me via email. Given our international membership this should guarantee interesting posts. For a great example please take a look at Rafiq Ullah Kakar's very interesting post on research in Afghanistan.

As well as providing interesting food for thought an interesting steady stream of stimulating articles will drive traffic to the **AIMRI** site, increasing awareness of **AIMRI** as an organisation, and encourage the sign-up of new members.

We have also set up an **AIMRI** Twitter account (https://twitter.com/AIMRI_tweets) to provide updates on

How to take part

- The **AIMRI** Blog and the Non-Members Forum are open to all researchers.
- To use the Members' Forum you will need to log in. Members will be reminded of their usernames and passwords in a note from the Chairman
- Why not get started by commenting (via the Members only Forum) on this article or anything else in this newsletter...?

AIMRI events and blog posts on twitter. By doing this we hope to reach more people, with the aim of increasing traffic to the **AIMRI** Blog.

AIMRI Non-Members Forum

This section is open to both members and non-members. Non members can ask questions about **AIMRI** (such as questions about events, or benefits of membership) and can make requests for quotes. We encourage members to respond to requests for quotes, and add their own requests where help in other countries is needed. We hope that by doing this we can provide a real service to members by driving new projects and encouraging collaboration between members.

The **members only** forum is split into the following sections:

Events – This forum will be used to discuss **AIMRI** events, past and present. We also envision using this forum to organise meet-ups prior to events, and for members to make recommendations of hotels and restaurants for forthcoming events.

Methodology – This forum is for discussing research methods, and asking questions about various methods. By doing this we hope to draw on the collective expertise of our members to improve the experience for everyone.

There is also a **general discussion** area, which can be used to discuss anything that doesn't fit anywhere else.

These are, of course just guidelines for what we expect. Feel free to use the forum as you think appropriate. The forum will be a valuable resource to **AIMRI** members, but only if people contribute and feel that they benefit from using it.

Monthly competition

To reward the members who contribute the most to the forum, every month we will provide them with a free advertising banner at the top of the forum, which everyone who uses the forum (members and non members) can see. We encourage you to check in on the forum and get involved. If you have any suggestions or questions please send me an email (john.clarvis@blauw.co.uk)



John Clarvis,
Blauw Research UK, London



Understanding niche markets

Niches – Now you see them, now you don't

Instead of coming to Munich, of course, I could have turned to Wikipedia to find out how to make money in niches: **“By seeking out smaller segments of larger markets, referred to as ‘niches’, a website can be developed and promoted quickly to uniquely serve a targeted and usually loyal customer base, giving the affiliate a small but regular income stream”**. Obviously niches are business models. No wonder when looking for niches on the web you quickly come across such sites as **“earn money online”**. Leave no stone unturned.

Listening to **AIMRI** friends was, however, a much better idea: The cases presented amounted to a most inspiring session exploring both niches for the research business and niches for our clients. Finding those niches for our clients is finding our own niche!



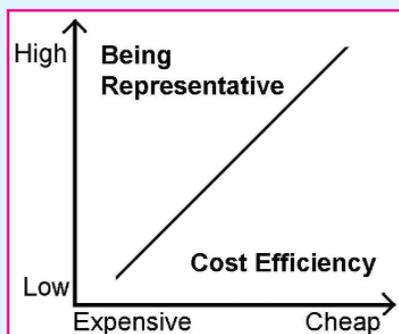
George Head showed us how to sample niche markets in an optimum situation of costs and sample quality, **Peter Bennet, Vicky Kateley** and **Charles Pearson** presented some business cases on how to dig for \$\$ in niches whereas **William Hardiman, Fritz Brandes, Christina Tidics** and **Daniel Lemon** provided down to earth insights into niche markets.

The latter, to my view, not so much illustrated how particular the Swedes are (so they probably think of the rest of the world – but so do we all) but what potential still lies in local markets: The Swedish export hit **‘snooze’** is obviously a goldmine in Sweden otherwise the client wouldn't invest in research to such a degree. The snooze panel furthermore made us eager to discuss panel management with new perspectives in Rome next March.

As with most seminars that appear to deal with quite specific topics I realised also this time that discussing e.g. **‘niches’** will eventually lead back to basic aspects of our profession: Insights regarding business opportunities for our clients are our most important own business opportunities. In this context, the seminar on niches was a most fruitful event as it dealt with these basic challenges from a new viewpoint.

George Head: How to optimise efficiency and representivity

George Head with his presentation illustrated well how research, like any competitive market, is always a compromise between benefits, quality and price: The key is to balance the bias that will occur when recruiting niche samples in most pragmatic ways (**“find them where you can...”**) with a scientific screening process that may be the search of the needle in the hay stack not paid for by anybody. This balance, of course, has to be defined with every project. But don't you have the impression, just as I do, that creative research is certainly not defined by the data source, but nevertheless the data source is not completely irrelevant either?



Peter Bennet: Keywords to discover demand surpassing supply

Peter Bennet elaborated on long tailed keywords and also came up with a most pragmatic definition of **“niche: Something I make or do which others don't”** illustrating the point that niches are business models, far from any given scientific definition. Furthermore niches are nothing but a simple illustration of what we should have known in business all along: Niches are market situations where **“customers (are) willing to pay you more in margin than it costs you to find them”**.



AIMRI meets in Munich - 30 October 2009

A last wisdom from Peter really made me aware again, that marketing wizards like us cannot define a niche (e.g. Kinesiology) without reference to the market. So niches are not defined by our own concepts but by our ability to see potential and to exploit it properly.

William Hardiman made us very much aware of the research potential of niche markets such as private banking. **Fritz Brandes** proved once more and again that the “**success factors for entering specialist B2B markets**” are really the same as anywhere in business: The client’s perception defines what a niche market is. If so perceived then niches account for higher profits and more sustainability. Unlike Fritz, I would not elaborate on the differences between capital goods or services / consumer goods. As shown, **snoozers** are a niche and so are **i-podists**. Maybe with capital goods it is often technical niche features whereas with services / consumer goods communication creates the niche, but the consequence is the same: Also with capital goods technical features have to be communicated convincingly.

Vicky Kateley and Charles Pearson: New insights from consumers in transition

Besides broadening definitions regarding niche segments, particularly the fact that niches are really nothing but the emergence of mass markets, Vicky and Charles made us very much aware that a success factor of niche research relies within the ability to discover the ‘ripples’ of a surge to come. Those ripples are obviously felt well in groups of consumers in phases of ‘**transition**’. Pregnancy and birth are such phases. No wonder niche research found out that e.g. pregnant women are emancipating from being

‘**mediastackers**’ to being ‘**influencers**’ to a much higher degree than other women.

Furthermore, Vicky and Charles very much made us aware, again, that running a panel should reflect the uniqueness of the target group it represents. Looking at how online panels are run you could turn to darkest seizures of cynicism in this context... Finally we heard that the ROI of niche panels can be greatly enhanced if you share the investment with partners. Don’t we forget time and time again that our competitors in one field may be our allies in another?

The Swedes – A real niche or just strange?

To finish things up **Christina Tidics and Daniel Lemon** made us a little more familiar with the world of the Vikings while adapting the niche concept to the world of Swedish consumers. Their presentation of this market of Mio 9,11 consumers made me, a Swiss, a little envious of what the speakers defined to be a niche. In Switzerland we are confronted with e.g. a language niche of some 30’000 inhabitants speaking ‘Rumantsch’, Switzerland’s fourth national language. But then again, it is not the size that defines a niche but its uniqueness.



Hans-Ruedi Hertig,
CBC Switzerland (Bern)

INVISO - Joined AIMRI on 29 October 2009 at Research & Results Exhibition in Munich

INVISO has a wealth of experience in marketing and communication research of more than 20 years. We are centrally located in Northern Germany, with easy airport access, rapid and direct rail links, close to an efficient motorway network. Our agency is structured in two departments, **Field & Service** and **Research & Consult**.

FIELD & SERVICE provides supporting services e.g. in conducting of focus group discussions, workshops or in-depth interviews. Our test studios provide a relaxed, welcoming atmosphere with a total studio size of 900 square metres. **NEW:** Our well equipped Sensory-Lab.

RESEARCH & CONSULT is the partner for the full-service sector. Our repertoire includes all the proven methods in qualitative and quantitative market research. This includes concept design, moderation, analysis, interpretation and consulting. In addition, **INVISO** is one of the few market research agencies in Europe that examines communication processes using instrument-based methods such as eye-tracking.

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New members

Alternative Futures Research

Alternative Futures is a market research consultancy, founded in 2001 and based in Milton Keynes in the UK. We're here to help you look at your business in a different way.

We handle all kinds of market research, including Focus Groups and Online Surveys.

We work across all industries. Our clients are drawn from diverse sectors including travel, financial services, utilities, education, local government, engineering, charities and professional bodies. Please refer to our testimonials to see what our clients think of us.

We work internationally as well as in the UK, helping to identify and test export markets, measure brand awareness and market performance. Recent projects have involved research work across Europe, Asia and the Americas. You may like to see some of our recent case studies.

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DBS Data

DBS Data have been trading for 15 years. As a sample supplier, DBS provide both B2B and B2C sample worldwide. Our in depth knowledge combined with our pooled datasets allow us to provide highly targeted samples across the globe. Our capabilities include providing RDD, lifestyle sample, email panel building and actual data from transactional sources.

Our consumer pool is made up of various contributors that not only provides nationally representative access to most countries, but also allows us to select niche samples such as high net worth individuals, owners of specific car makes and models, investors and individuals by their occupation.

Our B2B file provides access to companies and key decision makers around the globe. Bringing together data from statutory bodies, government departments and local sources, DBS can provide accurate samples that ensures your interviewers are speaking to the correct decision makers.

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International Field & Tab

Established in 2008, International Field & Tab is a competitive entrant in the industry of social, opinion & marketing research. We are an international procurement and project management network offering services in regions including Pakistan (South Asia), Asia Pacific and Middle East.

Our experienced International Coordination team has conducted research in countries including Afghanistan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Nepal and Thailand with the help of local resources. Our team has served many international clients / lead agencies and received many appreciative comments.

International Field & Tab defines its core competency to offer quick, affordable and reliable solutions and works beyond boundaries with happy and repeat clients across the globe. Mr. Mohsin Muslim is the CEO of International Field & Tab. He has approximately 20 years experience and is the Country Representative of ESOMAR in Pakistan. He is on the council of local Marketing Association where he was elected as Vice President in 2006

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Recom Global Field

In today's era of turbulent economies and information overload, it can be difficult to spot what's really happening in your market, and to understand the impact of change on your customers and industry sector.

Whatever you are involved in - products, services or processes - innovation is more important than ever before in today's highly competitive environment.

We provide a multi-skilled approach, employing not just market researchers, but strategists and specialists with both technical and business expertise.

Our approach to market research uses a convergence of techniques based on market analysis, consultancy and competitive intelligence disciplines. This comprehensive approach ensures that we meet the needs of today's demanding clients.

Vienna office:
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Website w: www.recomresearch.com

see also page 5 - new member Inviso GmbH

Post-Recession Consumer 2010, one day conference

23 March 2010, London - Grange City Hotel

**Plus two Post-Conference Workshops on
24 March 2010:**

**Simplicity-Based Messaging Creativity
Workshop**

**Environmental Sustainability Messaging
Workshop**

Many recent consumer trends to emerge from the recession are contradictory; people are trading up in some categories and trading down in others. This complex tangle of trends requires a truly universal consumer perspective to unravel it. The 'Post-Recession Consumer 2010' a new, one-day consumer insight summit organised by **London Business**

Jonny Peacock, Strategic Planning Controller, Premium Spirits and Wine UK, PERNOD RICARD.

Uniquely for a marketing or consumer insight event, the '**Post-Recession Consumer 2010**' Summit also features explanations of what triggered people to reduce drastically their spending, how economic factors affected consumer confidence during the recession and how that will impact consumption from 2010 onwards from leading economists Dennis Turner, (Chief Economist, HSBC) and George Buckley, (Chief UK Economist, DEUTSCHE BANK).

It's yet to be seen whether or not people are going to continue to penny-pinch after the recession and which brands the consumer will trade back up to and why. This Summit is a unique, (and value for money) opportunity to



Grange City Hotel - view of nearby monuments

Conferences, will help marketers and brand owners understand how consumers perceive value and approach different purchases in all areas of their lives.

Using examples from brands and retailers including Marks & Spencer, Phones4U, Body Shop, Pernod Ricard, New Look, Best Western, Mastercard, Aviva and BAA, this one-day Summit will challenge delegates' perceptions of consumer behaviours and help crystallise their brand and marketing strategy after the recession. While brands contend with a 'flight to value' and the deal-conscious consumer, now is the time to review consumer insight across different categories and anticipate how these trends are likely to develop further in the post-recession climate.

The senior level speaker panel includes Susan Aubrey-Cound, Director Of Multi Channel Development from MARKS & SPENCER, Jason Willicombe, Head Of CRM at BAA and

get round the table with other brands to discuss how premiumisation impacts purchase patterns, and how some recession trends can work to your advantage.

How has the recession impacted the brand, and how should brands position themselves for best effect in the post-recession?

For more information, download the full programme and delegate bookings, please visit:

www.post-recession-consumer-2010.com

Members from **AIMRI** receive a 15% discount. Please call +44 20 8920 1400 or email

info@london-business-conferences.co.uk
to claim your discount.

LondonBusinessConferences

Harnessing social media

Today's market researchers constantly hear about the buzz around social media. Social media is now part of the way our clients do business. In a Harris US survey, 51% of respondents said that social media impacted their online transactions and 56% refused to buy from a particular company after reading negative reviews. In another study, 48% of respondents who saw a brand's name on Twitter researched those products on a search engine, and 25% researched the brand's website.

The obsolete perception that social media is only the toolkit of hipster millennials has ended. The fastest-growing group of Facebook members has been adults between the ages of 35 and 65, increasing anywhere from 300 percent to 500 percent according to The Conference Board. Already, clients have discarded the view that Social Media is merely a communication tool. Instead, companies increasingly view it as an emerging platform for direct customer engagement, monetisation of services and brand warfare.



Rome

How can researchers benefit?

Researchers can benefit by knowing how they can practically and logistically use social media research methods for their commercial projects. They can also gain from more information on how to 'sell' clients on social media research services.

Michael Stanat is a Research Executive at SIS International Research and the author of **China's Generation Y: Understanding the Future Leaders of the World's Next Superpower**. In publishing this book, Stanat conducted ethnography and extensive research among China's rising youth generation born between 1980 and 1990.

Stanat previously worked at two AIMRI research firms: CBC Market Research (Shanghai, China) and Feedback Market Research (Dubai, United Arab Emirates). He has travelled to over 60 countries.

Michael Stanat attended the United Nations International School in New York City with an International Baccalaureate diploma in Economics and Anthropology. He graduated cum laude with a BSBA in International Business and Marketing from Georgetown University in Washington, DC.

"**Harnessing Social Media**" presents a framework for how social media can solve specific research activities that researchers face daily. It examines five core research functions that can be supported by social media research, which include:

- uncovering consumer insights;
- discovering unmet market needs;
- monitoring stakeholder opinion and feedback;
- testing niche markets;
- gathering competitive intelligence.

Each research function can benefit from targeted social media approaches and strategies. The presentation explores appropriate methods, websites, examples, steps, time-maximisation techniques, success factors and limitations for the five different market research functions. Emerging websites and new considerations are included to keep researchers abreast of recent changes in this field. Stanat also explores the inherent challenges in this research field. Is social media a long-term

threat to the research firm? What obstacles lay in analysing qualitative data and interpreting communication cues?

Integrating social media methods in research designs

Stanat also touches on the challenges in convincing clients to integrate social media methods into research designs. The presentation provides talking points for researchers to help get clients on-board. These points include return on investment, effectiveness, customer engagement, word of mouth impact and long-term strategic objectives.

Michael Stanat will be speaking at the AIMRI conference in Rome - 5 March 2010.



Michael Stanat,
SIS International Research, New York