

LabintheWild™

LabintheWild™ is a platform for diversifying participation in research for psychology, human-computer interactions and related fields outside of demographics that, while convenient, are often not representative of the global human population. By designing online studies that advertise the opportunity to compare your results to others, intrinsic motivation can replace compensation, leading to participation from over 200 countries and 5 million cumulative study responses without sacrificing the quality of data. In an era reliant on data-driven insights, tools like LabintheWild play a crucial role in understanding human behavior.

What is the Problem?

Research in fields such as psychology, human-computer interaction, and behavioral economics relies heavily on human test subjects. However, a critical assumption underlying these studies—that these participants represent the entire human population—has a significant flaw. Most of these studies recruit participants out of convenience; that is, ones easily accessible around college campuses. This results in survey demographics predominantly comprised of WEIRD participants (White, Educated, Industrialized, Rich, and Democratic), that are unfortunately among the least representative demographics for the broader human population.

To conduct higher quality research, it is therefore essential to reach broader audiences. The internet provides an amazing opportunity for this kind of reach, but using it presents challenges. Existing online platforms for survey data collection such as Mechanical Turk often function by offering compensation to internet users for completed studies. While this is a step in the right direction, the reliability of the data and the diversity of the sample participants still falls short of the desired threshold. Users often prioritize minimizing time spent on a study, leading to potentially unreliable responses. Additionally, the requirement for users to sign up and receive payment in specific currencies limits the global viability of such tools.

What is the Solution?

LabintheWild (accessible at www.labinthewild.org) represents a decade-long effort to attract a truly diverse range of participants—beyond the WEIRD subset—to engage in various studies. The platform's success lies in its deliberate removal of participation barriers and the inherently motivating design of its studies.

The studies on LabintheWild provide personalized feedback to participants. Participants can compare their results to existing data, fostering curiosity about self-perception and performance relative to others. Everyday internet users willingly participate in unsupervised, uncompensated surveys due to this intrinsic motivation. Thanks to this intrinsic motivation,

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Software/Other
Selection of Available
Technologies

Authors

Katharina Reinecke

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LabintheWild can remove many of the barriers facing foreign internet study participants. Participants can engage directly without any registration process. Currency restrictions are also lifted, allowing foreign participants to contribute without needing specific payment methods.

What is the Competitive Advantage?

LabintheWild distinguishes itself not only through its innovative approach, but a robust track record spanning over ten years. Over its first decade of operation, LabintheWild facilitated completion of 5 million surveys, with an average of 1000 clicks per day. Participants spanned over 200 countries and six continents, with ages ranging from minors to 95 years old. In addition to this increase in participant diversity, thanks to intrinsically motivating study design the unsupervised data collected was also on-par with laboratory-collected survey data. The success of the platform was so abundant, that requests from external researchers to add their studies to LabintheWild come once or twice a week.

Through leveraging human curiosity, LabintheWild removes entry barriers and naturally proliferates through social media across national, socioeconomic, and generational borders. By emphasizing a non-WEIRD, diverse participant selection, it ensures data truly representative of human behavior. In this increasingly data-driven world with various AI tools requiring training data, it is essential platforms like LabintheWild exist to provide data truly representative of what it means to be human.

References

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