



Text-to-Web Panel Recruitment: Demographic Differences in Panel Join Rates and Survey Completion Rates

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Background

UNH Survey Center founded in 1976

Developed the States of Opinion Project[®] which includes state-level, probability-based online panels for each of the six New England States

Conducts surveys and election polling in all six states primary & general elections, most notably first in the nation NH presidential primary



States of Opinion Project[®]

Started recruiting in 2017

- Text-to-web surveys
- RDD phone surveys

In 2020, switched from RDD Phone to Panels for population surveys

Only recruit participants from probability-based methodologies



States of Opinion Project[®]

Multiple state-level panels

- Granite State Panel (NH)
- Green Mountain State Panel (VT)
- Pine Tree State Panel (ME)
- Bay State Panel (MA)
- Ocean State Panel (RI)
- Nutmeg State Panel (CT)

More than 23,000 panelists recruited combined



Background – Recruitment Experimentation

Fine-tuning recruitment methodologies since 2020

Selection of experiments conducted

- Texting vs ABS
- Texting vs RDD
- Number of recruitment texts per sampled record
- SMS vs MMS
- Language for join question
- Language in SMS texts



Research Questions

Can we improve the cost per complete and cost per join using a 2-step texting method?

How does the cost of the 2-step process differ when you use 2 segments to convey information versus when 1 segment is used with limited information?

Do different texting methods impact the demographic characteristics of those who complete the survey and those who eventually join the panel?

Is the subsequent participation rate different between those who joined via 1-step/2 segment, 2-step/2 segment, or 2-step/1 segment?



Methodology

Built an experiment in our February 2026 recruitment effort

New Hampshire

50,000 numbers

25,000 assigned control

12,500 each assigned to one of two experimental conditions

- 2-step/1 segment text-to-web

- 2-step/2 segment text-to-web



Control: 1-Step/2 segment SMS

1-Step/
2 Segment

Message

The University of New Hampshire Survey Center has launched a new survey in NH about current events Just tap the link below to start <https://ask234.info/hRLr.~##!> Questions? Search "UNH Survey Center text" or reply "HELP" Text STOP to opt-out

SMS segments: 2 Characters: 241 Max: 320 

Message

The University of New Hampshire Survey Center invites you to participate in a survey about current events Simply tap the link below to start <https://ask456.co/MJlw.~##!> Questions? Search ""UNH Survey Center text"" or reply ""HELP"" Text STOP to opt-out "

SMS segments: 2 Characters: 254 Max: 320 



Experimental Conditions

Message

2-Step/
2 Segment

The University of New Hampshire Survey Center has launched a survey of New Hampshire residents. Want to participate? Reply "POLL" to take the poll. Questions? Search "UNH Survey Center text" or reply "HELP" Text STOP to opt-out

SMS segments: 2 Characters: 226 Max: 320 

Message

2-Step/
1 Segment

The University of New Hampshire Survey Center is polling NH residents. Can you answer a quick poll? Reply "START" to take the poll or STOP to opt-out

SMS segments: 1 Characters: 149 Max: 320 



Productivity Results

| | 1-Step/ 2 Segment | 2-Step/ 2 Segment | 2-Step/ 1 Segment |
|---------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Texts Sent | 24,887 | 12,452 | 12,458 |
| Delivery Rate | 64.0% | 67.9% | 68.2% |
| Response Rate | 1.39% (N=220) | 1.45% (N=123) | 1.87% (N=159) |
| Join Rate | 63.0% (N=116) | 67.0% (N=75) | 64.1% (N=91) |



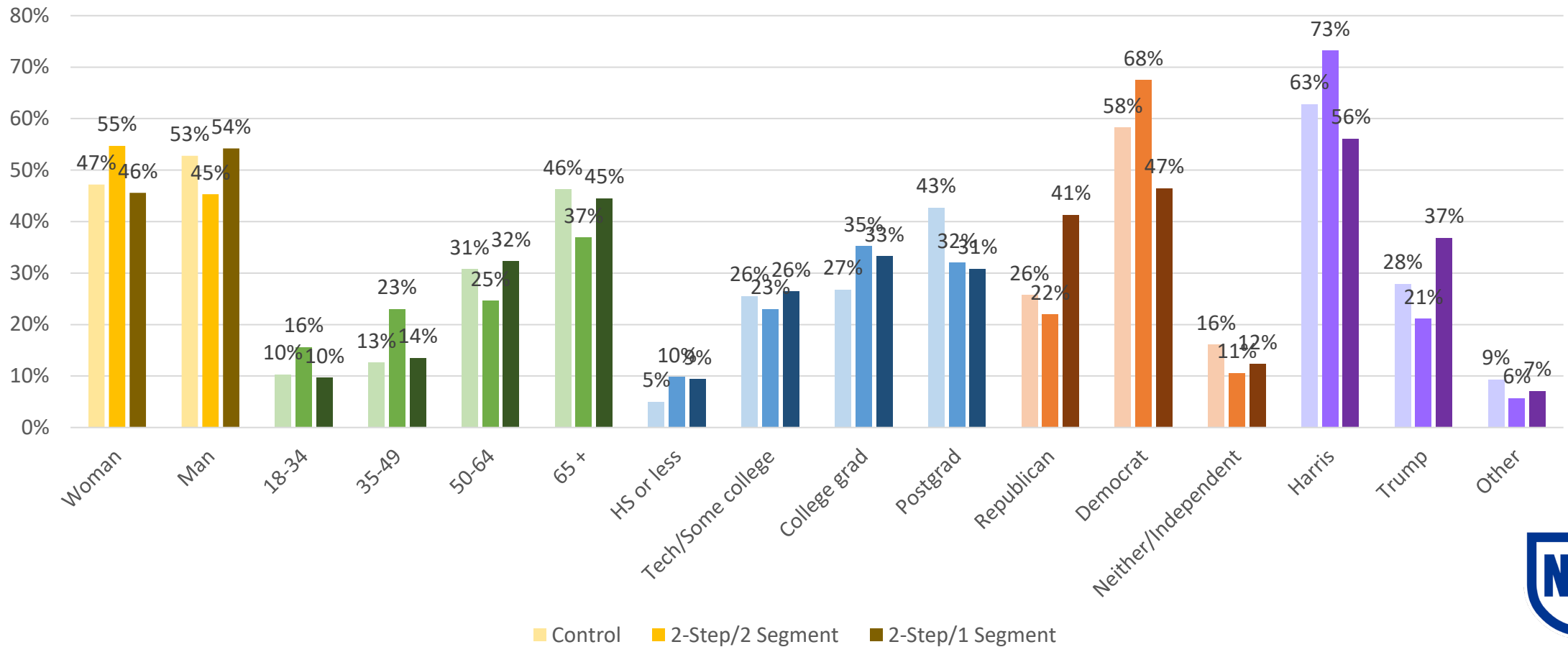
Cost Efficiency Results

| | Control | 2-Step/2 Segment | 2-Step/1 Segment |
|-------------------|-----------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| Cost per Complete | 100% (Baseline) | 90% of control cost | 36% of control cost |
| Cost per Join | 100% (Baseline) | 78% of control cost | 33% of control cost |



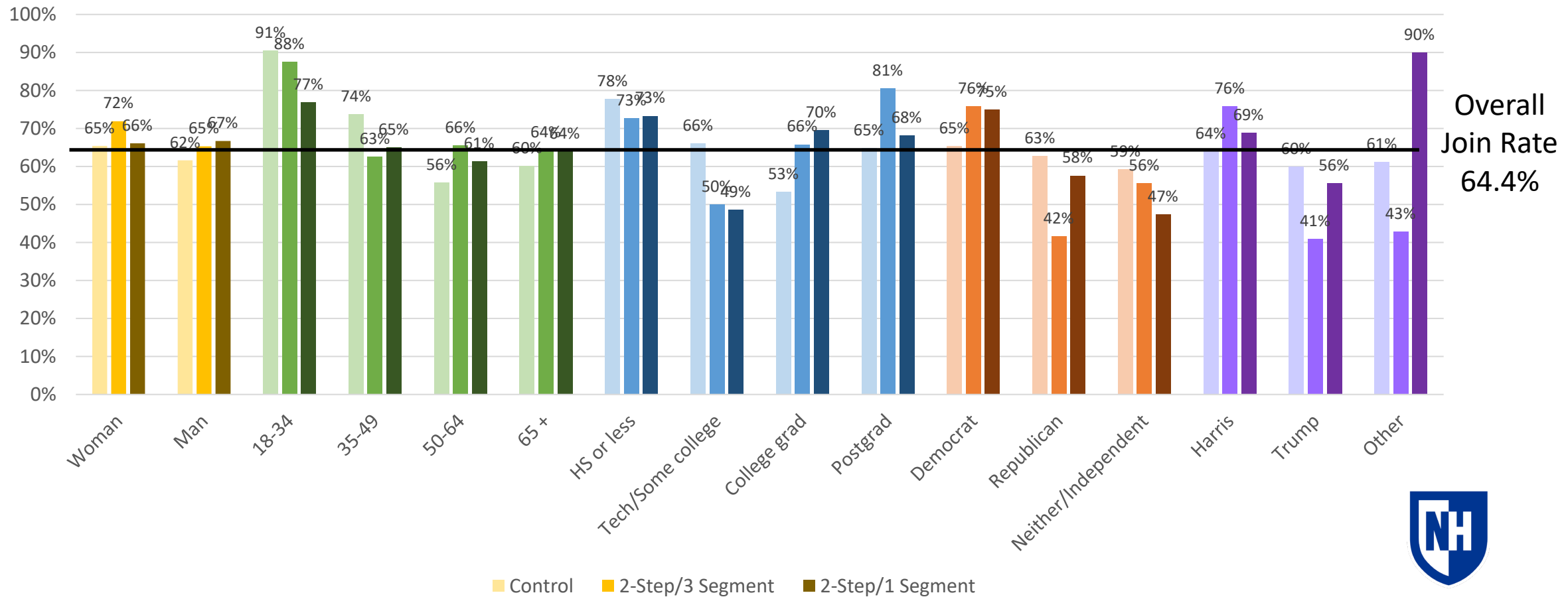
Participation Rates

Participation Rates by Demographics by Experimental Condition



Panel Join Rates

Panel Join Rates by Demographics by Experimental Condition



Summary

We found the 2-step text-to-web methodology to be more cost effective, especially when a 1-segment text is sent first

Based on these experiments, it appears the participation and join rates are on par or more representative using the 2-step methodology

- Increases in 18-34, lower education, and Republicans



Future Research

Panelist participation by mode of recruitment

We were unable to test rate of panelist participation in subsequent surveys due to lack of time between experimentation and our omnibus schedule and this conference.

Now that the cost savings of the 2-Step/1 Segment are verified, we will re-run the experiment at larger numbers in more states in our next round of recruitment.



Thank you

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