author presents an overview of dynamic digital displays that enable readers to adapt visual displays in web sites to their varying needs and interests. This revolution in data design will continue and thus afford readers even greater flexibility in visualizing data, further democratizing visual access to information and intensifying the rhetoric of participation.

Leo Lentz

Luuk Lagerwerf, Louise Cornelis, Johannes de Geus, and Phidias Jansen (2008). **Advance organizers in advisory reports. Selective reading, recall and perception.** *Written Communication (25)* 1, 53–75.

Advance organizers in documents are mostly studied in the context of learning, and focused on attention and recall effects. In this paper, 159 professional readers in a business context were asked to read an advisory report with *graphic* advance organizers and *verbal* advance organizers. The project examined selective reading processes, recall and perception of the document. Verbal advance organizers were presented in two discourse structures: Problem – Solution (PS) and Solution – Problem (SP). Participants attended a writing class for business professionals and were asked to read the report within ten minutes and then complete a questionnaire. Graphic advance organizers facilitated selective reading: more chapters were neglected by readers of the documents in this condition. Verbal advance organizers did not have an effect on selective reading. Chapters written in the PS-structure were recalled better, but appreciation was highest for the chapters beginning with the Solution. In line with earlier research findings, this result confirms that what people like does not always help them to perform better.

Leo Lentz

Survey design: mode effects

S. C. Bates and J.M. Cox (2008). **The impact of computer versus paper-pencil survey and individual versus group administration on self reports of sensitive behaviours.** *Computers in Human Behavior (24)* 3, 903–916.

How can self-reports to sensitive questions, such as the use of alcohol, tobacco and drugs, or risky sexual behaviour, be monitored with adolescents in a valid way? This was studied in an experimental study comparing a computer-based (CB) method to a pencil & paper (PP) method. The administration setting also varied in three conditions: individual-scheduled (the respondent sat alone in an office at a scheduled time) versus individual-unscheduled (which meant the questionnaire was (e)mailed to the respondent's home and was filled out there). Generally, previous research indicates that respondents believe CB methods to be more confidential. Also CB methods lead to less social desirability in the answers, but this has not been crossed with administration setting before.

The results show that respondents perceive large differences in the confidentiality of methods, with an interaction effect for setting. The CB method was believed to be less anonymous than PP in the individual-scheduled condition. In the unscheduled condition, respondents preferred the CB condition, and for a group setting the estimated confidentiality did not differ for CB or PP. These perceptions of anonymity did not correspond with significant differences in responses to

the sensitive questions between the PP and CB condition. The authors conclude that survey methodology continues to change and increasingly uses computers and the internet, which increasingly faces security issues. The impact of perceived anonymity of new and existing methods should be continued to be assessed and, if necessary, dealt with.

Bregje Holleman

S.E. Porter, M.E. Whitcom (2007**). Mixed-mode contacts in web surveys. Paper is not necessarily better.** *Public Opinion Quarterly (71)* 4, 635–648.

Web surveys are increasingly popular. It is difficult, however, to reach a proper sample to ask them to fill out the web survey. Email sent to the sample is often treated as spam by the potential respondents, which is not irrational, as over 40% of their emails each year is in fact spam.

This article examines whether a mixed-mode strategy of approaching respondents is beneficial for web survey response rates. Does the response rate go up when a notification or a reminder is sent by postal mail instead of by email? To assess this, the click rate (did people go to the survey's url?) as well as the response rate (did people finish the survey?) were measured. Two different web surveys were used, one in which there was a very weak relation between the survey's sender and the respondents (high school students who had asked for information about a study but did not apply), and one in which this relation was stronger (alumni who had graduated from an institution).

Contrary to previous research, little differences across experimental groups were found. For example, the group who received a paper prenotification and paper reminder showed response rates which were about 4% higher than

the all email group. Because it is more expensive to send regular mails than it is to send emails, the increase in response cost was about US$25 per additional response, both in the weak and the strong contacts conditions. If there are non-response biases associated with the small response rate differences, each additional respondent would be worth his or her money. That was not investigated by the present study however.

Bregje Holleman

Text comprehension

L. Verhoeven and C. Perfetti (2008) **Advances in text comprehension: model, process and development.** *Applied Cognitive Psychology (22)* 3, 293–301.

A.C. Graesser (2008). **Advances in text comprehension: commentary and final perspective.** *Applied Cognitive Psychology (22)* 3, 425–429.

This special issue of Applied Cognitive Psychology is dedicated to new advances in text comprehension research in order to review the educational implications for the design of multimodal learning environments via computers. The first four papers deal with reading comprehension in adults, with a large variety of methods, varying from brain imaging to think-aloud protocols. For example, one article (by Perfetti, Chin-Lung and Smalhofer) compares Event Related Potentials to study word-to-text integration for skilled versus less skilled readers, whereas another paper (by Kaakinen & Hyönä) investigates the on-line processing and memory of