

JICMAIL Methodology FAQs

To find out more about the JICMAIL methodology and how the panel works, please see below our FAQs.

Who is responsible for running the JICMAIL panel?

Kantar, the global data organisation, operate the JICMAIL panel which consists of approximately 1,000 households. The panel is recruited by Kantar and is nationally representative across household size, region and social grade according to profiles established by the National Readership Survey - a gold standard in media measurement.

How are the panel recruited? Who can join the panel? Do they perform research for any other media?

Kantar have access to hundreds of thousands of research panellists who they use for media research and consumer insight projects within and outside of the mail industry. Anyone can ask to join the panel, but Kantar decide whether or not they can actually take part based on whether or not we actually need someone from that demographic group. They may well take part in other media research. We don't exclude anyone on that basis.

How are the panellists remunerated?

They receive points that they trade in for vouchers and they are also entered in to monthly prize draws. They do not receive more points for recording more mail activity however (to avoid biasing the data).

Is there a propensity for the panellists to record actions because they are on a research panel? Can we trust the data is accurate?

The JICMAIL methodology was piloted for two years prior to launch to ensure it accurately reflected actual behaviour with mail in the home as closely as possible. The panel are regularly communicated with and it is made clear they are to record their activity with mail to reflect their normal behaviour.

In addition, a series of checks and balances are put in place to check panel "health." If a panellist starts recording abnormally high or low mail volumes or interactions on a regular basis, Kantar would investigate directly with that panellist to make sure that their actions are a reflection of reality. On some occasions, panellists and their data are excluded if we do not feel it is accurate.

Is the panel big enough to be accurate and should it be bigger?

It is large enough to infer mail behaviours by industry sector and audience / demographic type. It is also large enough to infer mail behaviour for large advertiser campaigns (e.g. Tesco), but will not pick up smaller brands. If take up of JICMAIL increases we will have more budget in the future with regards to making a decision on increasing sample size.

What does effective size of 20,000 mean when there are 1,000 households?

We measure the mail activity of everyone in the household (approx. 2.5 people per household). Therefore: approx. 1000 households x approx. 2 people per household x 12 months = approx. 24,000 responses a year.

Is the data collected in the same way as that of other JICs?

No, each media has a unique methodology. Digital data is collected passively using tracking technology; TV is measured using a set top box, etc. JICMAIL is probably most similar to radio in terms of its methodology however (i.e. a diary-based survey).

Does the fact that panellists only record mail for one week out of four adversely affect the data? Surely the data would be better if consistently recorded like BARB recording TV viewing.

No - the aim isn't to provide an absolute figure on mail circulation (that's a separate project which would require a view of all months in the week), but rather to provide a view on how people interact with mail. We do track all weeks of the month - we divide the panel of 1000 in to 250 households each and give them a separate week each.

We found in our pilot study that asking someone to record all four weeks resulted in too much panel burden and reduced data accuracy.

How is the data monitored to ensure it is as accurate as possible?

Kantar have a programme of communication with the panellists to ensure they are recording their behaviour as accurately as possible. They also operate an automated monitoring system which will flag any questionable behaviour, eg no mail recorded for a full quarter, for consideration and possible action.

JICMAIL also have a Technical Committee, headed by a research expert, which monitors the data for compliance and health. The data is continuously monitored by the panel for compliance and health.

JICMAIL welcomes questions about the panel or any other aspect of the data. We also welcome the opportunity to introduce the data to new subscribers or upskill our existing subscriber base. Get in touch with us to find out more at tara@jicmail.org.uk.