

Background

The radio industry listening survey was suspended in March 2020 as a direct result of the COVID 19 pandemic. The underlying sample recruitment method of placing diaries via face-to-face (F2F) field interviewers was withdrawn due to the imposition of social distancing rules, creating both a short-term issue but also several new research challenges as the pandemic continues to run its course. Following the initial disruption, RAJAR and its research partners undertook a root and branch service review, including the assessment of all potential data-collection options. The plan to restart the service is framed around preserving as much continuity in the service as possible, making the necessary adaptations to resume quickly but also incorporating change that will improve the resilience and quality of the survey.



Survey Modifications

All aspects of the F2F interviewer recruitment procedures have been adapted to be both COVID compliant and more responsive to the varying interviewer and public attitudes to participating in an in-person survey post COVID.

RAJAR has also adapted the existing specification design to broaden its data gathering sources and create a flexible methodology integrating panellists completing either RAJAR diaries or providing data collected passively alongside face-to-face recruited respondents.

The passive data is collected via an app running on a smartphone/tablet that identifies radio stations by matching exposure to a station’s audio output. All data is from the diary and passive sources is integrated and processed to conform to the standard quarter-hour weekly diary format, consistent with the existing RAJAR data structure.

The modification has been subject to thorough and detailed evaluation over three phases of testing and has been approved by the RAJAR technical management group, the IPA, ISBA and the RAJAR Board for immediate implementation.

Face to Face, Radio Listening Panel – Active data collection



Mediacell – Passive data collection via an Audiomatching App



Q3 2021 Reporting Period

The first set of data published on October 28th, 2021, will cover an extended Q3 period.

When face-to-face fieldwork recommenced in early Q2, RAJAR collected data from over 17,000 adults using the modified methodology for testing purposes. Combining this data with the larger Q3 sample provides a stronger base on which to produce robust listener figures incorporating as much post-lockdown information as possible.

By incorporating this data with the Q2 sample, the Q3 release will be based on around 26,500 unique individuals – this is a larger sample than a pre-pandemic, “traditional” RAJAR quarter.

Quarterly stations will report exclusively on this data, while Half-Yearly (H) and Yearly stations (Y) will see it combined with data from previous releases. (For H stations, this will be Q1 2020 and Q3 2021; for Y stations, this will be Q3 2019, Q4 2019, Q1 2020 and Q3 2021.)

Oct 2021	Q3 2019	Q4 2019	Q1 2020	Q3 2021*	Q4 2021
Quarterly					
Half Yearly					
Yearly					

*Q3 2021 contains sample that was collected in Q2 2021, total sampling period April to September 2021.

Feb 2022	Q3 2019	Q4 2019	Q1 2020	Q3 2021*	Q4 2021
Quarterly					
Half Yearly					
Yearly					

Data Comparability

RAJAR has made every effort to maintain continuity with the pre-Covid methodology however there are differences in the methodologies pre and post covid that should be considered, and caution used.

Given the gap in service, RAJAR is unable to provide Q on Q or Y on Y comparisons until the data set is fully repopulated (Q4 2021 and Q3 2022 respectively). However, stations are at liberty to reference their own historical data provided the following publication note is appended:

“Please note that all RAJAR listening figures from Q3 2021 have been calculated using a modified survey methodology and this should be considered when making comparisons against historical data.”