

Chinese delegation visits

A 25-member delegation from the People's Republic of China National Bureau of Statistics visited Australia during December 2008.

The purpose of the visit was to gain an understanding of the advanced methods in statistical analysis adopted by leading Australian statistical agencies. As part of this tour, the delegation visited Power Stats Pty Limited in Sydney to learn about advanced statistics applied to market research.

Ricardo Maldonado, an accredited statistician and director of Power Stats, presented

case studies to illustrate the application of discrete choice modelling and latent class segmentation in market research.

The seminar was conducted in English and simultaneously translated into Mandarin for the benefit of the delegation's 25 statisticians and managers. Kan Jun, deputy director general of the Chinese National Bureau of Statistics, commented that the material covered in the presentation was very useful and clearly illustrated how to transform data into strategic information.

Research News

March 2009:

'Bang for your buck'

How is return on investment (ROI) being demonstrated in social and market research

Deadline : 12 February

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Q comes up trumps

I read with interest the review of the 'Q' package in the December edition of *Research News*.

I first saw 'Q' demonstrated at the Sydney AMSRS Conference in 2007. I don't want to go overboard, but I loooooove this package.

I have been using 'Q' now for almost a year, and find it to be exceptional software. It is soooooo easy to create a batch of tables and merge columns/ codes and create nets 'on the fly'. And if you make such a change to one table, it automatically carries over to all other tables that use the same question as a break, with no need to re-run tables.

The capacity to efficiently tailor what actually goes in the tables seems almost limitless, but it is all accessible via drop-down menus. And merging in the latest update to

a database is a breeze - all tables are automatically updated, all significance tests of relevance automatically recalculated, and all weights automatically reapplied.

In almost every instance that I have said to myself 'it ought to be able to do or deal with X' then it can. It is almost as if the development team assembled a wish-list from anyone who has ever needed to create a table, and implemented almost all of it in the package.

It is impossible to summarise what this package can do - I am still discovering little nuggets that show clearly that not only did the developers implement the wishes of others, they also incorporated a host of ideas based on their own practical and direct experience in the market research business.

Email and phone support from the Q people is absolutely first rate. As just one example, if I identify a bug or issue, they have gone so far as to issue a new version within one day with the bug fixed. In addition, they have given serious attention to every comment I have made in terms of usability etc.

Initially I worked hard to get other people in our business to try it, and some of them resisted at first, which is to be expected, but once they have tasted the benefits, they have endorsed it wholeheartedly.

Scott MacLean, FAMSRS, Lewers Research
[Disclaimer: I have absolutely no financial interest in Q and its producers, either direct or indirect.]

Criticisms incorporated in latest release of Q

I was pleased to read Craig Wyman's review of Q Research Software, titled 'Impressive productivity benefits for quant researchers' (December 2008). In his article, Craig raised a few shortcomings of Q, which admittedly have proved to be common amongst our user base.

In response, we are proud to announce that every one of the issues raised in Craig's review has been addressed in Q3.0, launched this month.

Craig rightly pointed out that Q had simplistic advanced multivariate methods (focusing on Cluster, Correspondence and Principal Components Analysis). While initially we had no intention of competing

in this part of the market, requests from our users and also the skill set of our developers made it seem remiss not to.

The release of Q3.0 this month sees the inclusion of advanced techniques such as Latent Class Analysis, Multinomial Logistic Discriminant Analysis and Ordered Logit Regression. All are automated and user friendly.

Craig's other criticisms relate to the difficulty of cleaning data and the dependence on JavaScript to construct numeric variables. In response to these issues, we have developed an Excel-like spreadsheet tab. This enables users to alter or delete raw data. It also has the benefit of allowing users a second way to construct and manipulate

variables, using Excel-like instructions rather than JavaScript.

Finally, Craig's concerns about the lack of a good export facility for coded data is easily addressed - simply click the copy icon and paste it into your required destination.

The launch of Q3.0 this month will be accompanied by free Webinars, designed to introduce the new and improved features. Current and potential users of Q are encouraged to attend. The Webinars will take approximately 40 minutes and will run throughout February.

Matilda Sarah,
Marketing director, Q Research Software