



Forward Thinking Series

Play, interpret together, play again and create a win-win-win

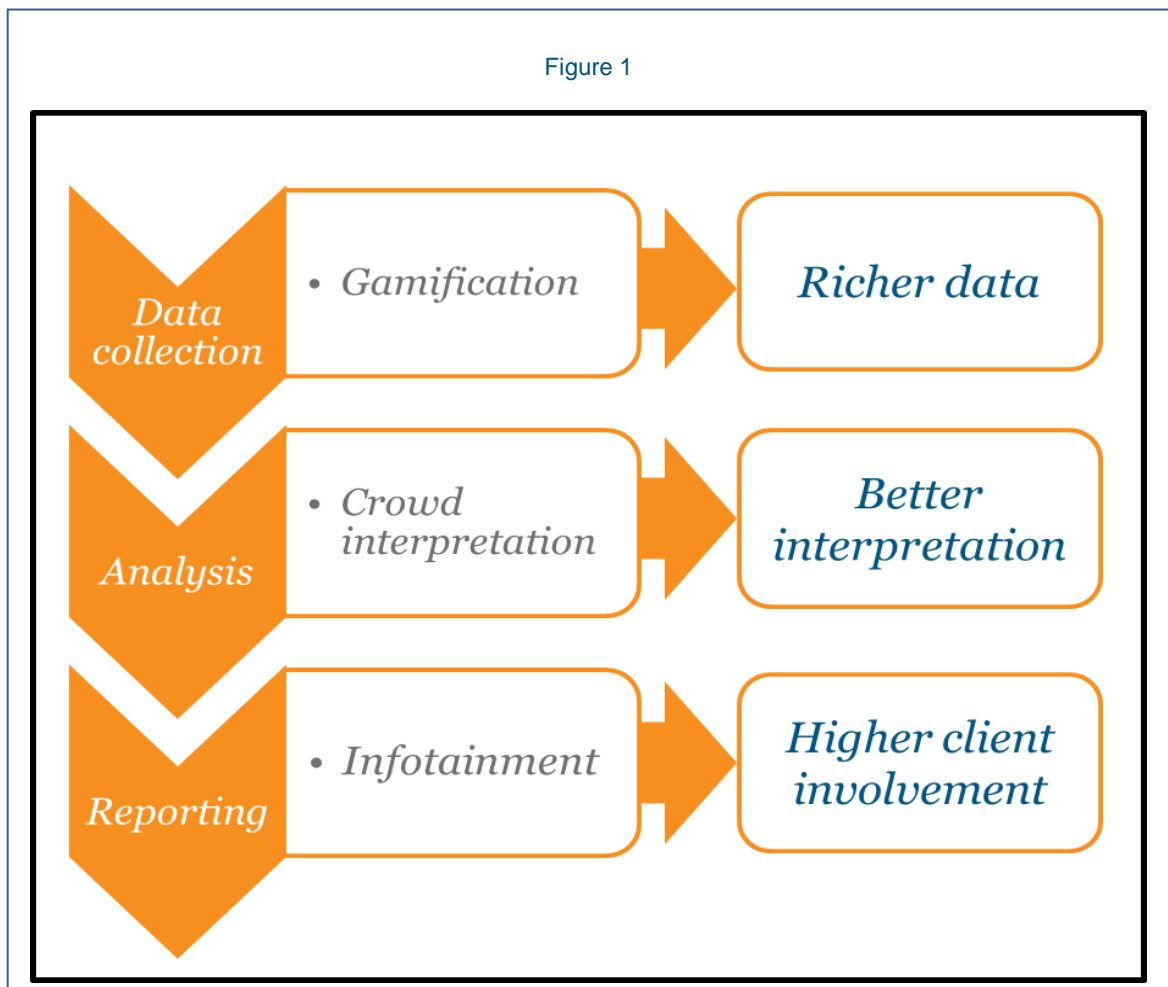
A 21st century research experience picturing the lives of 'cool'
digital natives in 'hot' cities

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Introduction

There are three concepts that have the potential to change market research as we know it today. If used correctly these concepts hold the promise of a “triple win”: richer data, better analysis and higher client involvement. In the end, this will lead

to a higher business impact and thus better research in general. This triple win consists of Gamification, Crowd Interpretation and Infotainment (Figure 1).



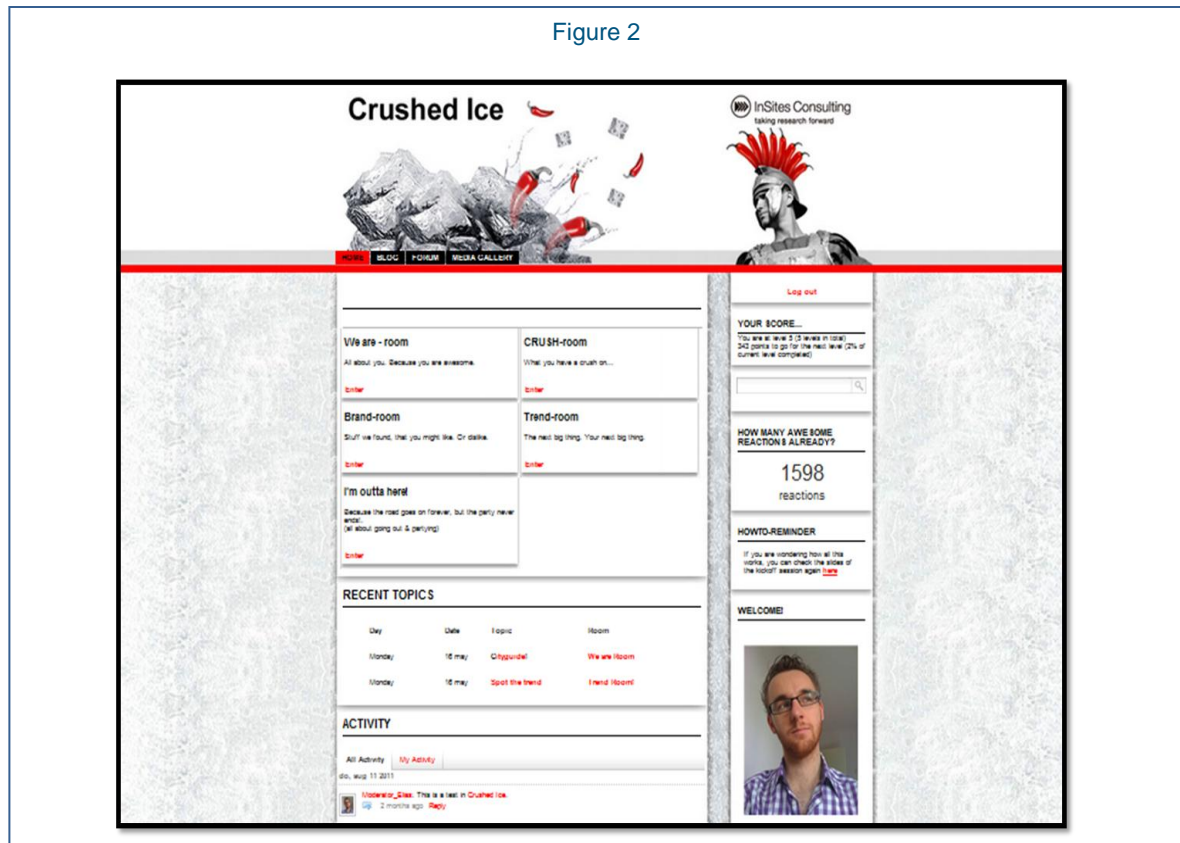
To illustrate these 3 concepts, we will use a case study that we did among Generation Y respondents. (Van den Bergh & Behrer, 2011). We recruited 100 of the coolest urban youngsters, living in cool cities all over the globe, to take part in an online research community (Figure 2). We wanted to know more about GenY, since this generation is one of the most influential generations we have ever seen, and they are both the consumers and the workforce of tomorrow. They are truly the generation of the future. We

recruited cool, urban youngsters because we needed people with strong opinions who are in touch with current trends. Since cities are trend hubs, where most trends are created, the choice for urban youngsters was evident. Furthermore, since GenY are digital natives who like to be empowered, we chose for an online research community. This method taps into their online knowledge on the one hand, and leaves much room for respondent empowerment and input on the other hand.

The core research objectives of this project were fourfold. Firstly, getting to know GenY better, and secondly, discovering what current trends they see. Thirdly, we wanted to expand and illustrate our CRUSH branding model (Van den Bergh & Behrer, 2011). This model states that in order to appeal to Generation Y, a brand should be Cool, Real, Unique, easy to Self-identify with and create

Happiness and emotion. Lastly, we wanted to illustrate and explore the concepts of Gamification, Crowd Interpretation and Infotainment in a research community context. In the remainder of this document, each of these three concepts will be briefly explained and illustrated.

Figure 2



The three concepts

Gamification

Gamification is the process of using 'game thinking' and 'game mechanics' to solve problems and engage users. (Veris, slideshare). In our research communities, and thus also in this specific one, we use gamification on three different levels:

1. Question level: Questions are worded as challenges, not as questions. Questions get answers, whereas challenges require skill and courage to be overcome. Instead of asking "What are the current trends according to you", we ask "Who can spot the most current trends?" Although seemingly merely semantics, previous research has already shown that this kind
2. Respondent level: For every challenge that the respondents solved, and thus every post they did on the community, they individually earned points. When a certain number of points was gathered, they were notified of their 'Level-up'. A (virtual) reward was attached to every level-up, thus making it meaningful. Rewards included Content (fun facts in line with the overarching community story), Status (communicating to others who is the best scoring respondent), Power (the right to write a blogpost in the space that is normally reserved for moderators) or Access (the right to view

certain parts of the community that are closed to others who had not reached that level yet).

3. Community level: For some challenges, the community was divided into different groups which fight each other over who offers the best solution to the problem at hand. Regular feedback was given about which group was in pole position, stimulating a kind of positive rivalry between the groups.

These 3 elements have proven to generate up to 7 times more on-topic arguments (De Ruyck et al, 2011). In order for this to function well, however, an overarching story or purpose needs to be in place (Schillewaert et al, 2011). For the current study, the story was all about getting to know cool people from all over the globe, and sharing and learning about trends and hotspots. If Gamification is used within a community with a common story, the community will show higher engagement and therefore generate more data.

Crowd Interpretation

Crowd Interpretation is the interpretation of data by regular consumers. In the case at hand, we recruited people with the exact same profile (Urban GenY'ers, in touch with current trends). Nothing else was required from these participants. These new participants get community posts (text and images) from the old participants, mostly so from people who live in the same city as they do. They are asked to observe and interpret the posts, and to come up with an explanation about why this post answers a certain question (Figure 3). To give a very concrete example: we shared a post from a girl named Jenny from San Francisco with them, in which she explains why the brand Dunkin' Donuts makes her happy. The post includes both text and photo material. The challenge for new participants would be to interpret what links Dunkin' Donuts with happiness, and what that story tells them about happiness in general (which is a part of the CRUSH branding model).


Again, this approach is gamified; the posts these new participants get are framed in a timed online game. They can score points by interpreting everything within a given time limit. These people are also informed of the fact that their interpretations will be reviewed by the older participants on correctness; more correct interpretations result in higher scores. That way, they have an incentive to participate in the best way possible, and on top of that we would be sure that the final Crowd Interpretation is correct and not just freewheeling. We have proven in a previous case study that this approach can lead up to 20% extra insights (Verhaeghe et al, 2011).


Now the question was whether we could replicate

the findings from the Heinz study. Therefore we conducted a live test to compare a crowd interpretation versus a researchers' interpretation on the recent Esomar 3D congress. We selected 3 experts from the research industry to come up with as many insights/conclusions about 3 community posts as possible. They were selected because they were the three top scorers in "The Big GenY Game" (more details later). They got 20 minutes, just as much time as participants got, to come up with their interpretations of the 3 community posts. We then compared the number of insights that the crowd of new participants (6 people) generated, with the number of insights that the researchers (3 people) generated. Researchers came up with less insights (16, spread over the 3 posts) than the crowd (25, spread over the 3 posts). This clearly shows us that ordinary participants who share some properties with the original participants are at least equally good at interpreting the generated data (keeping in mind that the crowd consisted of more people). We can however not conclude that researchers' analysis is no longer needed (luckily!). While 10 of the interpretations were shared between the 2 groups, both groups also came up with unique insights: 6 by the researchers and 15 by the GenY crowd. In conclusion: it does make a lot of sense to include participants in the analysis phase of a project. They will generate insights that researchers didn't think of themselves. However, researchers still need to do their homework, in order not to miss valuable interpretations. If Crowd Interpretation is used in conjunction with ordinary interpretation, we will get richer analysis. This proves that crowd and researchers are truly complementary.

Figure 3

Crushed Ice






Round 1: Observation
09:50

You will see different pictures and stories here of what is Cool, Real, Unique or makes people Happy. Try to describe them as accurately as possible, within the time limit.

Christina from San Francisco told us this story about what is real



For me, when I think of authentic brands, I think of Levi's jeans. Though I don't personally choose Levi's for my denim, it comes to mind for me as the realest brand around because of a current ad campaign. Levi's has recently come out with "Curve ID" jeans for women, which are fit differently dependent on what kind of body a woman has. This is an ad running in current magazines: I was shocked to see women advertising clothing who weren't all impossibly thin. This ad features women who, to me, look REAL, more like myself and other women I know than models. It's a pleasant change of pace here in the US. Beyond this current campaign, I do consider Levi's to be a real brand because they've been making essentially the same product since the 1870s. My grandfather, dad and brother have all worn Levi's at some point in their life and that staying power proves the brand is legit.

Please describe as accurately as possible what you SEE / READ in this story. Dont forget to keep the timing into account.

Infotainment

Infotainment concerns presenting insights in an engaging, inspiring and activating way. For too long, market researchers have delivered endless PowerPoint reports to their clients, that do nothing more than gather dust in drawers. Additionally, in many instances, reactions from clients are defensive, including the often-heard phrase "We already knew that". We are in need of an engaging research experience, which inspires and is worth sharing (De Ruyck et al, 2011), to make research used.

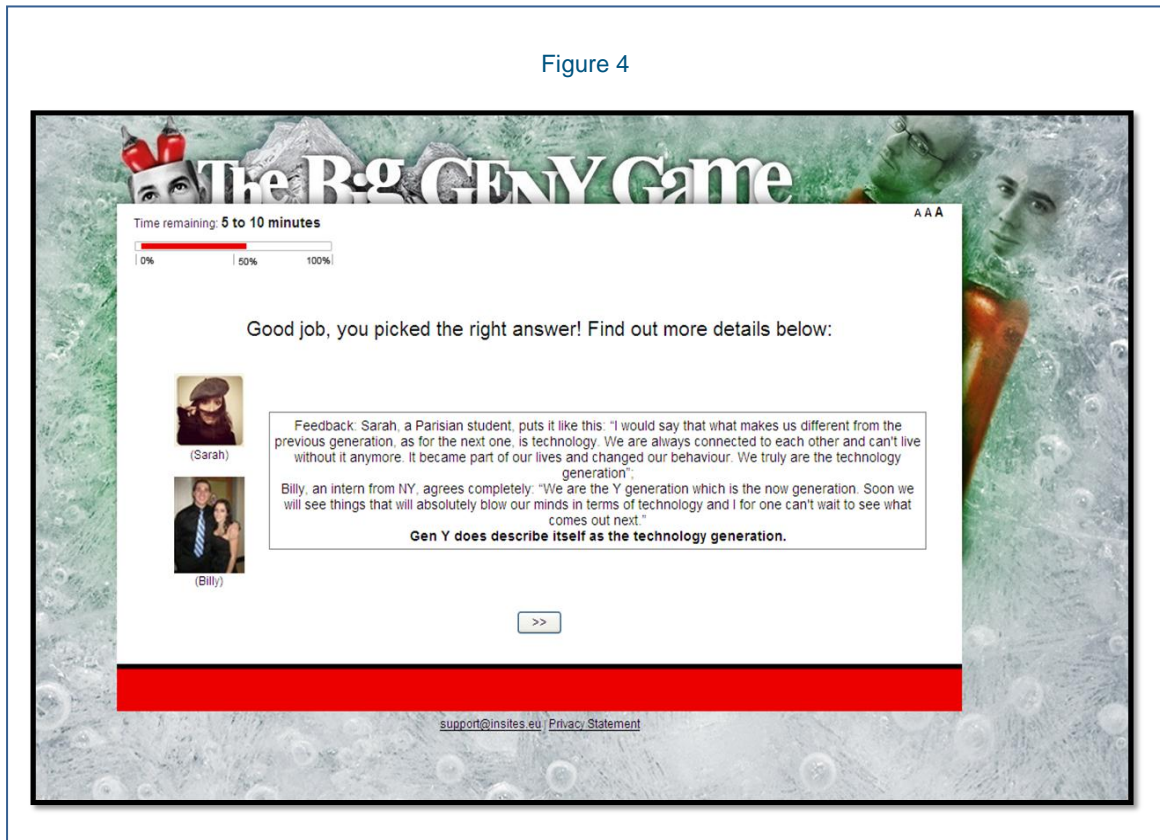
For the current case, we created "the big GenY game" (Figure 4). This game was played with attendees to the Esomar 3D conference, where we presented the results from this study, right before the conference. The game consisted of 14 questions about the life of GenY and the trends they came up with. The questions were mostly single-choice questions with about 4 answer options. Whenever you would answer a question, you would get a message stating whether you were right or wrong, containing real community verbatims and pictures to further explain the issue. As such, we confronted the players with quotes from individual consumers, making it a real-life

experience.

At the end of the game, people would also get their final score, ranging from "GenYus" for very good scorers to "GenYtically different" for the worst scores. We recruited the 3 highest scorers in the audience of the Esomar 3D Congress to take part in the analysis process (see part about crowd interpretation).

By playing this game before the Esomar 3D congress, we reached two results: people got to know our presentation and talked about it (a.o. on social media), and additionally, people realized that their knowledge about GenY is all but complete. The average game score was 6/10, and only 6% scored 8/10 or more. Communicating the score to players leads to a sense of "positive disruption": players realize what they don't know yet about the topic at hand, and are thus more open and eager to learn. That desire to learn is immediately gratified, since the right answer is given immediately after the question. As such, infotainment creates better client involvement with the results, more openness to the insights, leading to more willingness to act upon them.

Figure 4



To conclude

Wrapping up, we believe that in order to tackle some of the challenges that the market research industry faces today in terms of data collection, analysis and client involvement, the concepts of Gamification, Crowd Interpretation and Infotainment will be an invaluable addition to our toolbox. Richer data, better interpretation and

higher client involvement will result from using these principles, as we've shown in this research community project with GenY. In the end, this will give research more impact with end clients, resulting in a higher business impact and better company performance. Truly a triple win.

About this paper:

This is the written output of a presentation the authors gave at the [Esomar 3D conference 2011](#), Miami.

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