

Interconnectivity and Trust in Mixed-Mode Surveys

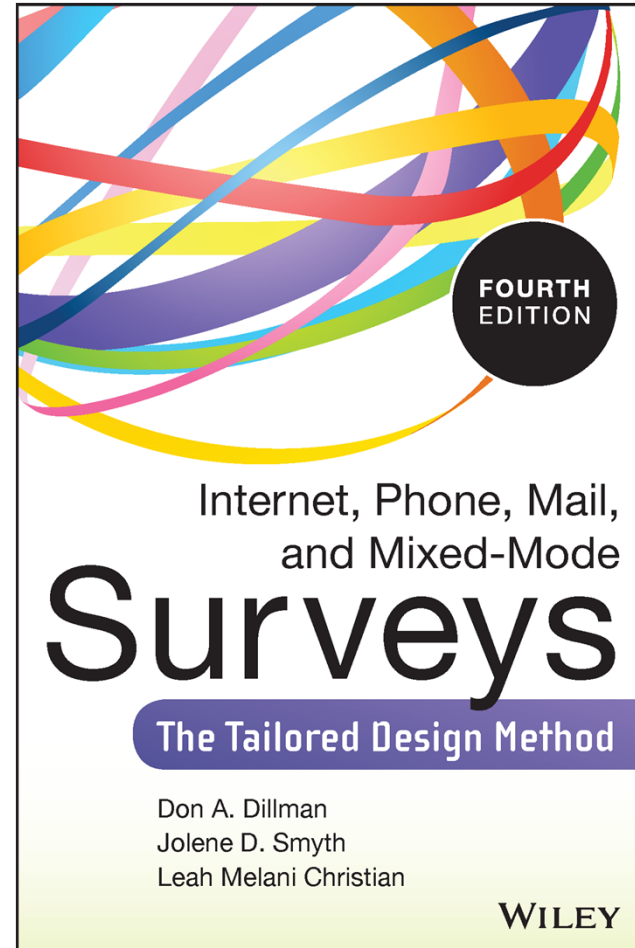
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Shameless advertising!!

75% revision of the previous edition.

- Updated thoughts on social exchange theory and surveys.
- More holistic approach to thinking about survey design.
- Treatment of single-mode mail, internet, and telephone designs.
- **More complete treatment of mixed-mode designs. → Interconnectivity.**
- 185 practical guidelines for questionnaire design, implementation, and pretesting.
- Companion website with pretesting and visual design resources, color figures, and example survey materials.



We often focus on individual effects of features, and overlook interconnections between them

- We spend so much time agonizing over whether or not to include an incentive and how much to give that we have to throw together quickly written letters.
- We hope the incentive inspires reciprocity.
- But it probably also increases the likelihood that the letter gets read.
- If we do not consider this interconnection (and write a good letter!) we are not taking full advantage of the incentive.
- Holistic design – think about how all the features of a design work together.
- Mixing modes can provide opportunities to take advantage of interconnections between design features.



A student survey example

- Sample members were asked to respond to a web survey.
- Three different contact strategies (i.e., experimental treatments) were used.

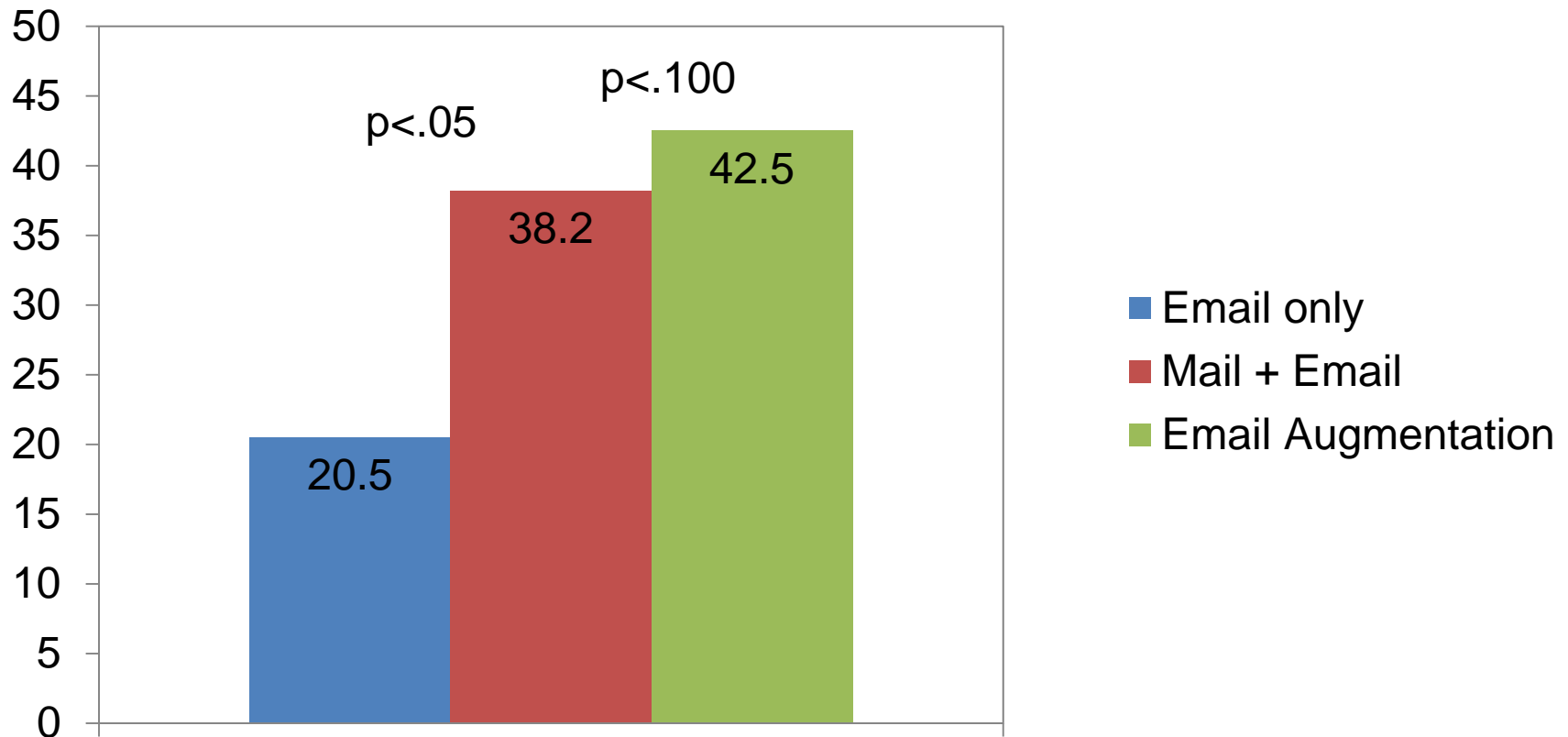
	Initial Invitation	Reminder 1	Reminder 2	Reminder 3	Reminder 4
Email-Only	E-mail	E-mail	E-mail	E-mail	E-mail
Mail+Email	Letter \$	E-mail	E-mail	E-mail	E-mail
Email Augmentation	Letter \$	E-mail	Letter	Letter	E-mail

Source: Millar, Morgan M. and Don A. Dillman. 2011. "Improving response to web and mixed-mode surveys." *Public Opinion Quarterly*. 75(2):249-269.



Mixing postal and email contacts produced the highest response rate.

Response Rates by Contact Treatment



Why did mixing modes work this way?

Postal mail

- Increased the chances of delivery
 - No spam filters
 - Parents are very likely to pass university mail to students.
- Allowed the incentive to be used
 - Provided a benefit → reciprocity
 - Increased chances of the letter being read and considered.
 - Increased general trust
- Allowed for the use of sponsor's formal envelope and letterhead
 - Communicated the importance/legitimacy of the survey (i.e., trust)
 - Increased the likelihood that subsequent emails would be opened
 - Increased the likelihood that the survey link would be followed.

E-mail contacts

- Provided a convenient link to the questionnaire (i.e., reduced costs).
 - Does not work without postal mail to set the stage.
- Showed positive regard – effort to make the survey more convenient (i.e., increased trust).



Two additional treatments looked at what happens when respondents are given a choice of response mode.

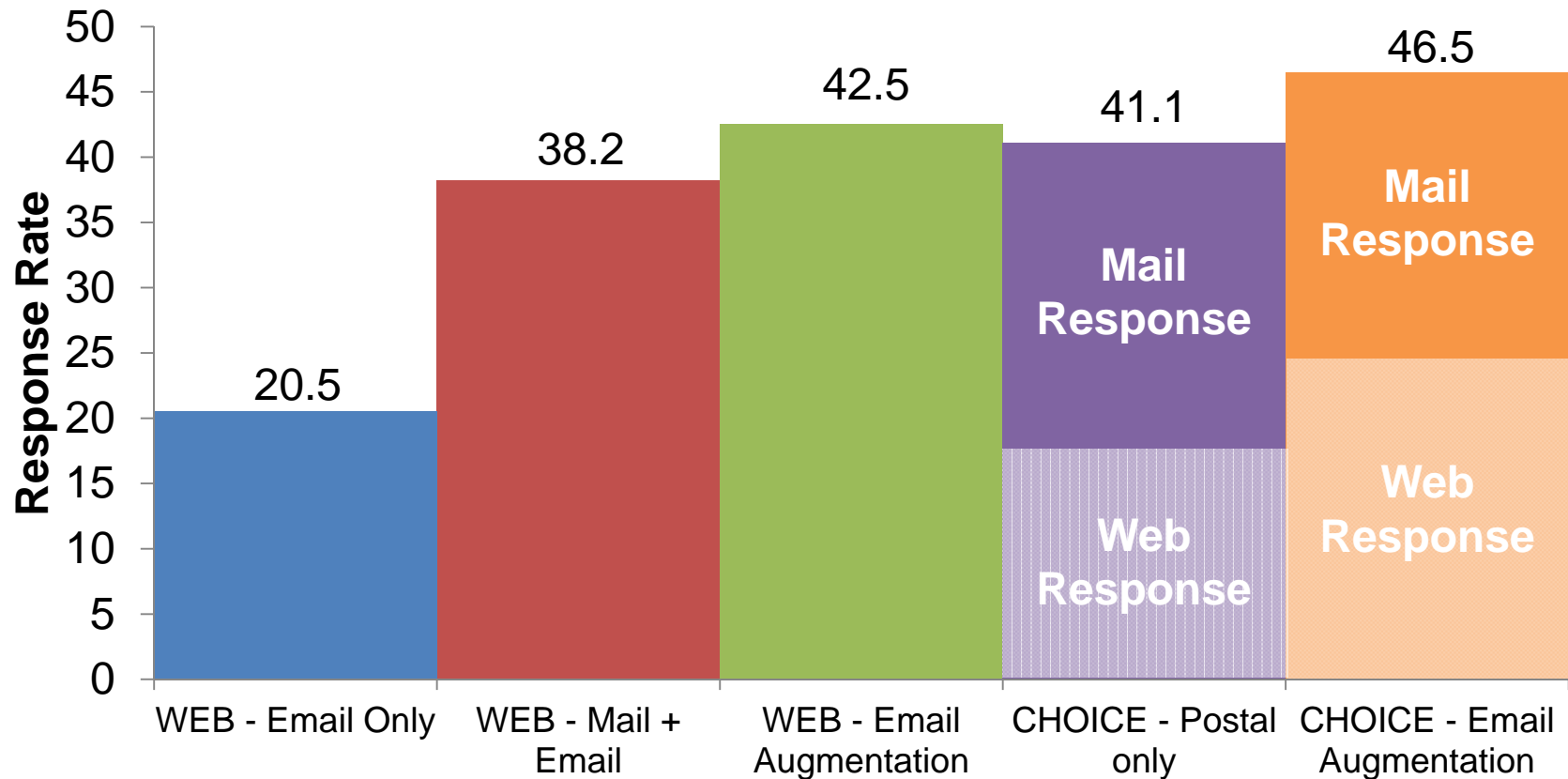
- Sample members could choose to answer by mail or web.

	Initial Invitation	Reminder 1	Reminder 2	Reminder 3	Reminder 4
Mail Only	Letter \$	Postcard	Letter	Letter	Postcard
Email Augmentation	Letter \$	E-mail	Letter	Letter	E-mail



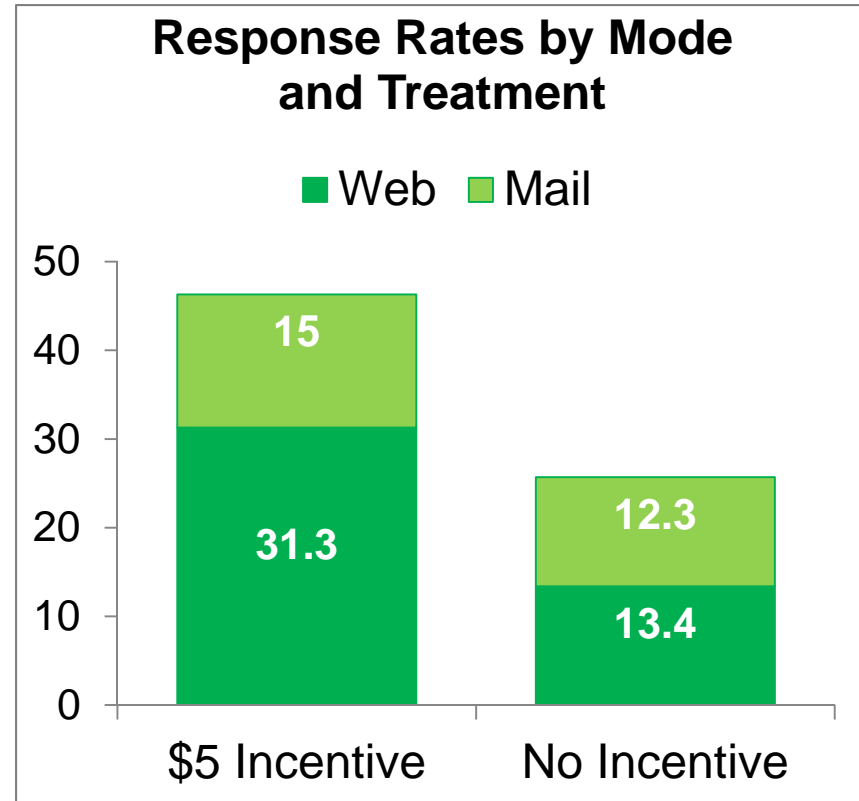
Mixing contact modes increased response rates in the choice condition primarily by increasing people's willingness to complete the web survey.

Response Rates by Treatment



Using trust-inducing features is key to getting web response: Incentive Example.

- 2008 Washington Community Survey
 - DSF sample of WA residents.
 - All contacts by postal mail.
 - Sequential mixed mode design - starts by offering web mode of response; later offers mail mode of response.
 - Trying to push people to the web
 - \$5 incentive vs. no incentive

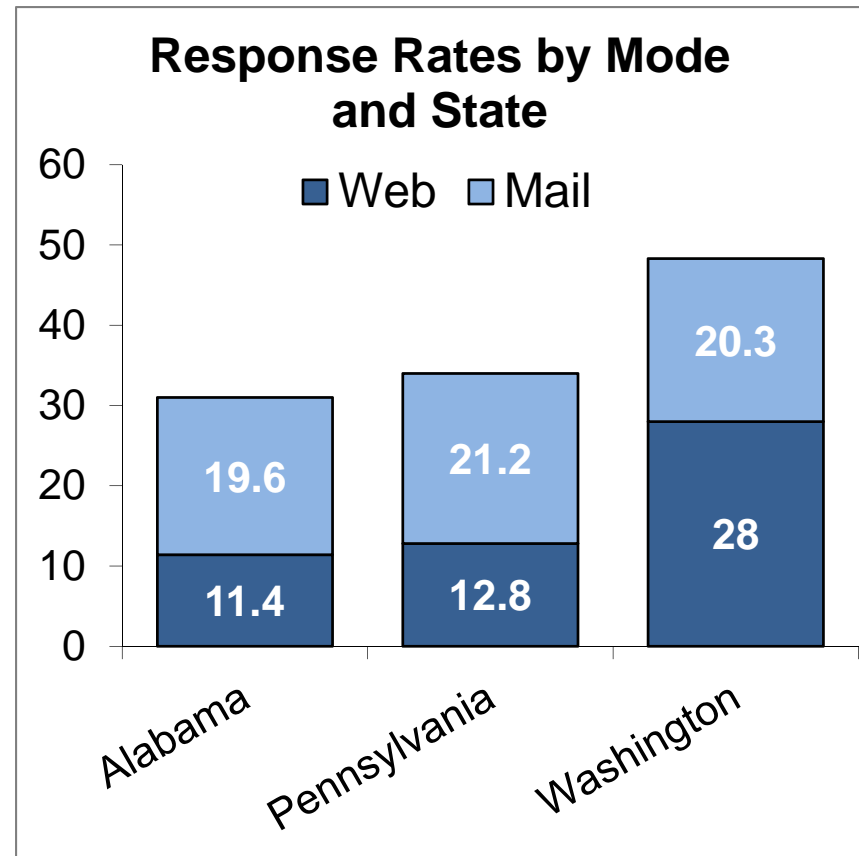


Source: Messer, Benjamin L. and Don A. Dillman. 2011. "Surveying the General Public Over the Internet Using Address-Based Sampling and Mail Contact Procedures. *Public Opinion Quarterly*. 75(3):429-457.



Using trust-inducing features is key to getting web response: Proximity Example.

- 2011 Electricity Study
 - Sponsored by Washington State University
 - DSF samples from
 - Alabama
 - Pennsylvania
 - Washington
 - Sequential mixed mode design to push people to the web

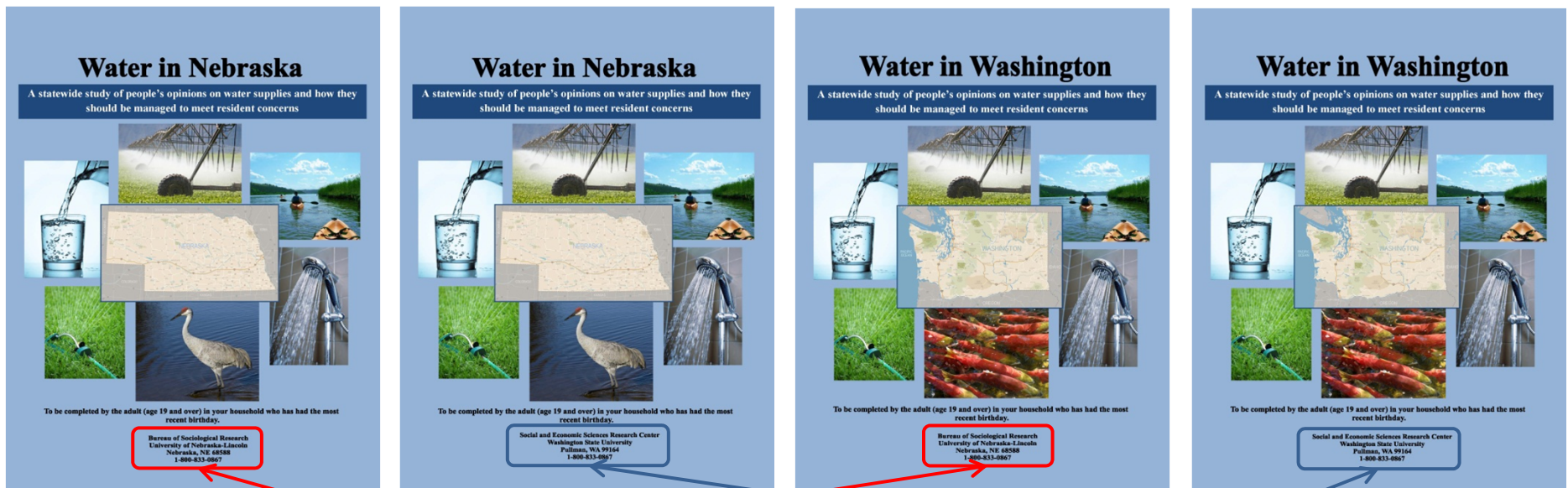


Source: Messer, Benjamin L. 2012. "Pushing households to the web: Results from Web+mail experiments using address based samples of the general public and mail contact procedures." Ph.D. Dissertation. Washington State University, Pullman.



Using trust-inducing features is key to getting web response: University Sponsorship Example.

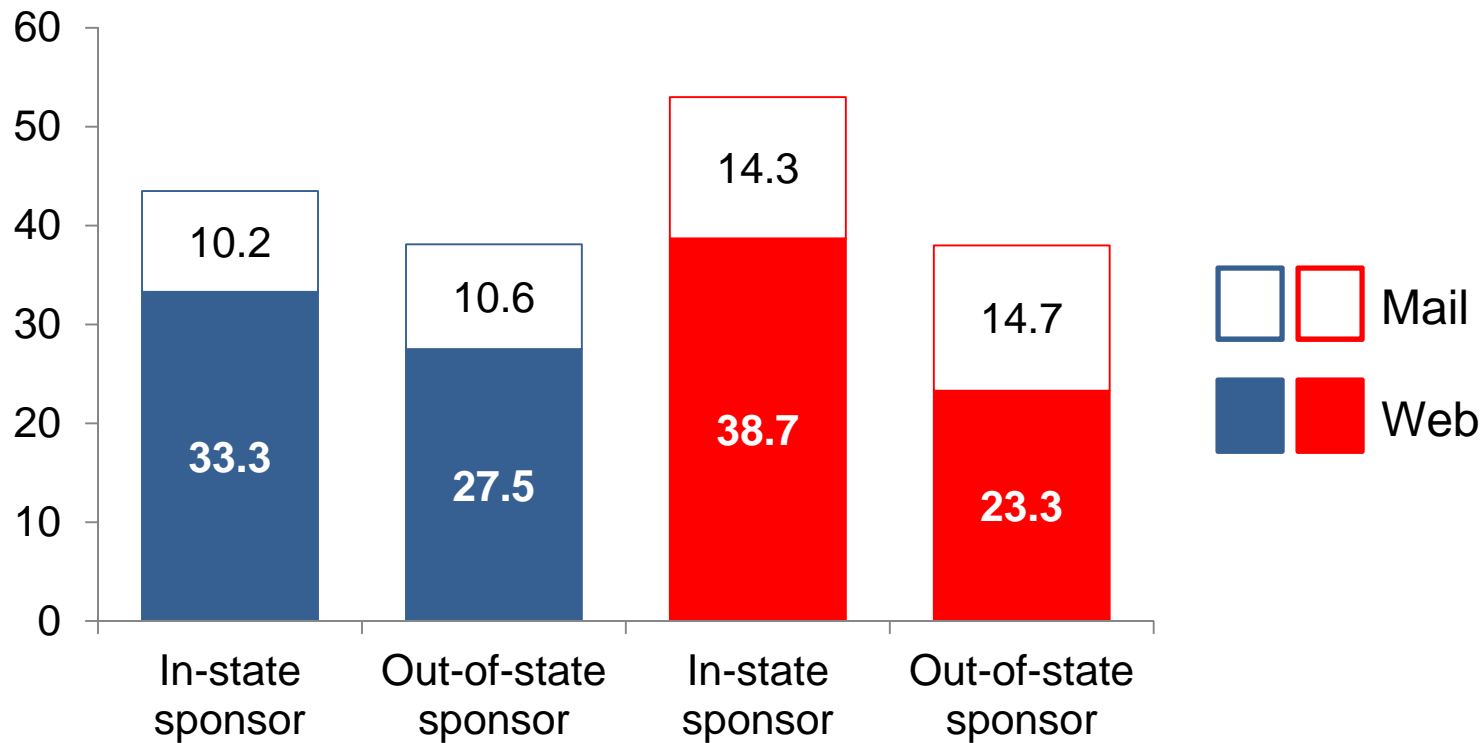
- 2012 Water Management Survey
- Examined in- versus out-of-state sponsorship
 - SESRC at WSU; BOSR at UNL
- DSF Samples of WA and NE residents
- Sequential mixed-mode design



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Response Rates by State of Residency, Sponsorship, and Mode



**Washington
Residents**

**Nebraska
Residents**

Source: Edwards, Dillman, & Smyth. 2014. An experimental test of the effects of survey sponsorship on internet and mail survey response. *Public Opinion Quarterly*. 78(3):734-750.



- In today's challenging response environment, it is increasingly important to think about and take advantage of the interconnectedness of design features.
 - This requires a different way of thinking.
 - We need to produce a **holistic package of features** that support one another to encourage response.
 - We need to be especially careful to include trust-inducing features.
 - Mixing modes opens up more avenues for us to do this.

