



# Innovative Retention Methods in Panel Research:

*Can Smartphones Improve Long-term Panel Participation?*

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# Agenda

- Panel Management for Longitudinal Research
- Panel Retention
  - Traditional Tactics
  - Alternative Tactics
- ICF Panel Management
  - Quantitative Experiment 1
  - Quantitative Experiment 2
  - Next Steps
- Conclusions

# Panel Retention

- Potential damage from attrition
  - Can bias sample
  - Can reduce statistical power
  - Can be costly to replace panelists
- Traditional tactics
  - Managing contact information
  - Good rapport
  - Participant-oriented actions<sup>2</sup>
    - Calls, mailings, visits

<sup>2</sup>[http://www.wpic.pitt.edu/research/famhist/PDF\\_Articles/Springer/RI%206.pdf](http://www.wpic.pitt.edu/research/famhist/PDF_Articles/Springer/RI%206.pdf)

# Panel Retention

- 56% of American adults own a smartphone<sup>3</sup>
  - Smartphones used to perform activities previously reserved for PCs or tablets
- In evolving landscape...
  - *How do we best facilitate access and engagement?*
- New/alternative tactics
  - Electronic information searches to locate “lost” panelists
  - Smartphone engagement to avoid losing them in the first place
    - Native app
    - Mobile-optimized online
    - QR code

<sup>3</sup>[http://www.pewinternet.org/~media/Files/Reports/2013/PIP\\_Smartphone\\_adoption\\_2013.pdf](http://www.pewinternet.org/~media/Files/Reports/2013/PIP_Smartphone_adoption_2013.pdf)

# Smartphone App



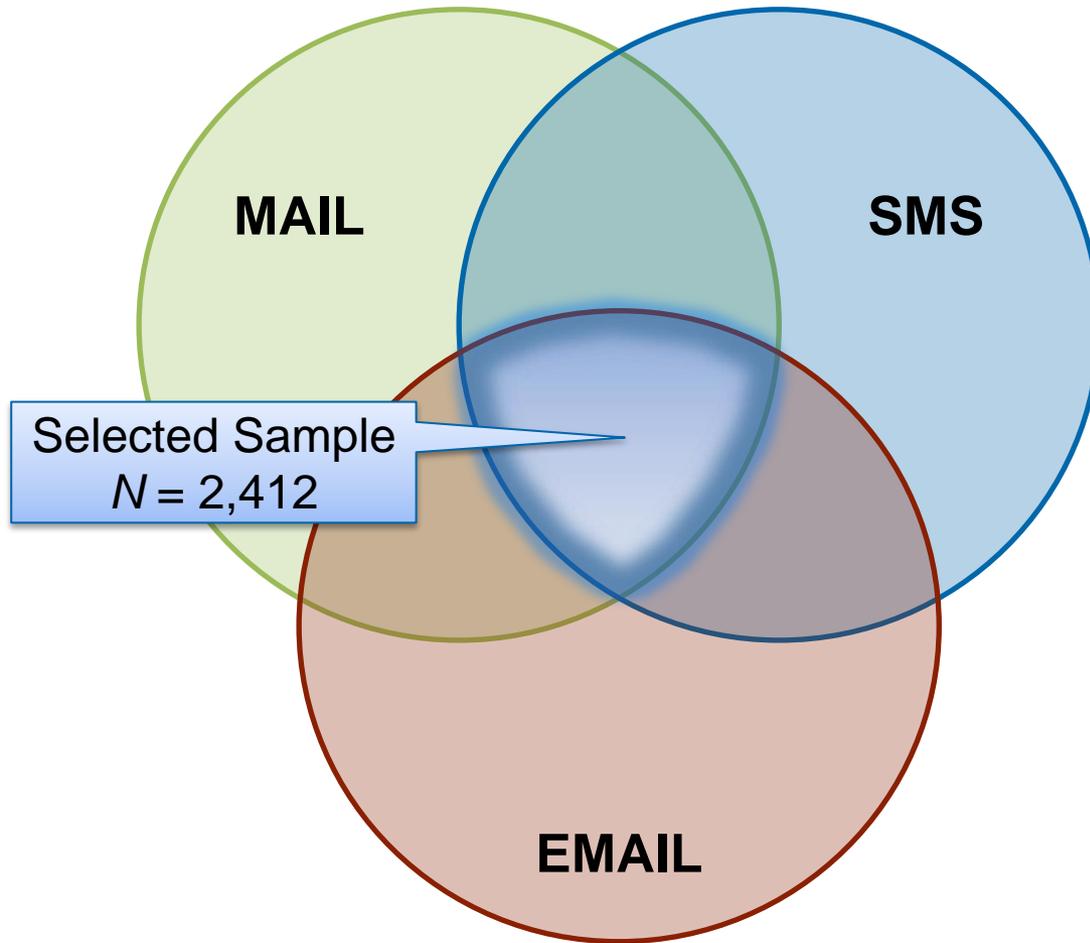
- Panel of recreational boat owners
  - *Q: Would a smartphone app support panel retention?*
- Which panelists own a smartphone?

## Who are these Panelists?

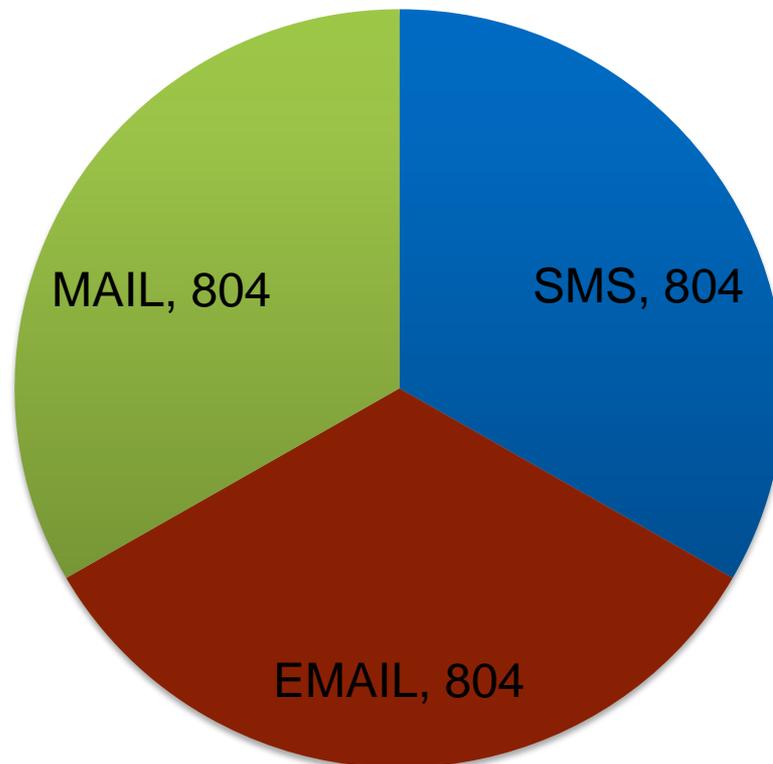
- Recreational boat owners recruited from a dual-frame, dual-mode study
  - National RDD, CATI
  - State lists of registered boat owners, Mail
- Approximately 24,000 people—all states, D.C. and Puerto Rico
- Range of boat types
- Report boating activities periodically throughout year
- \$10 Amazon.com gift code for each interview



# Sample Selection



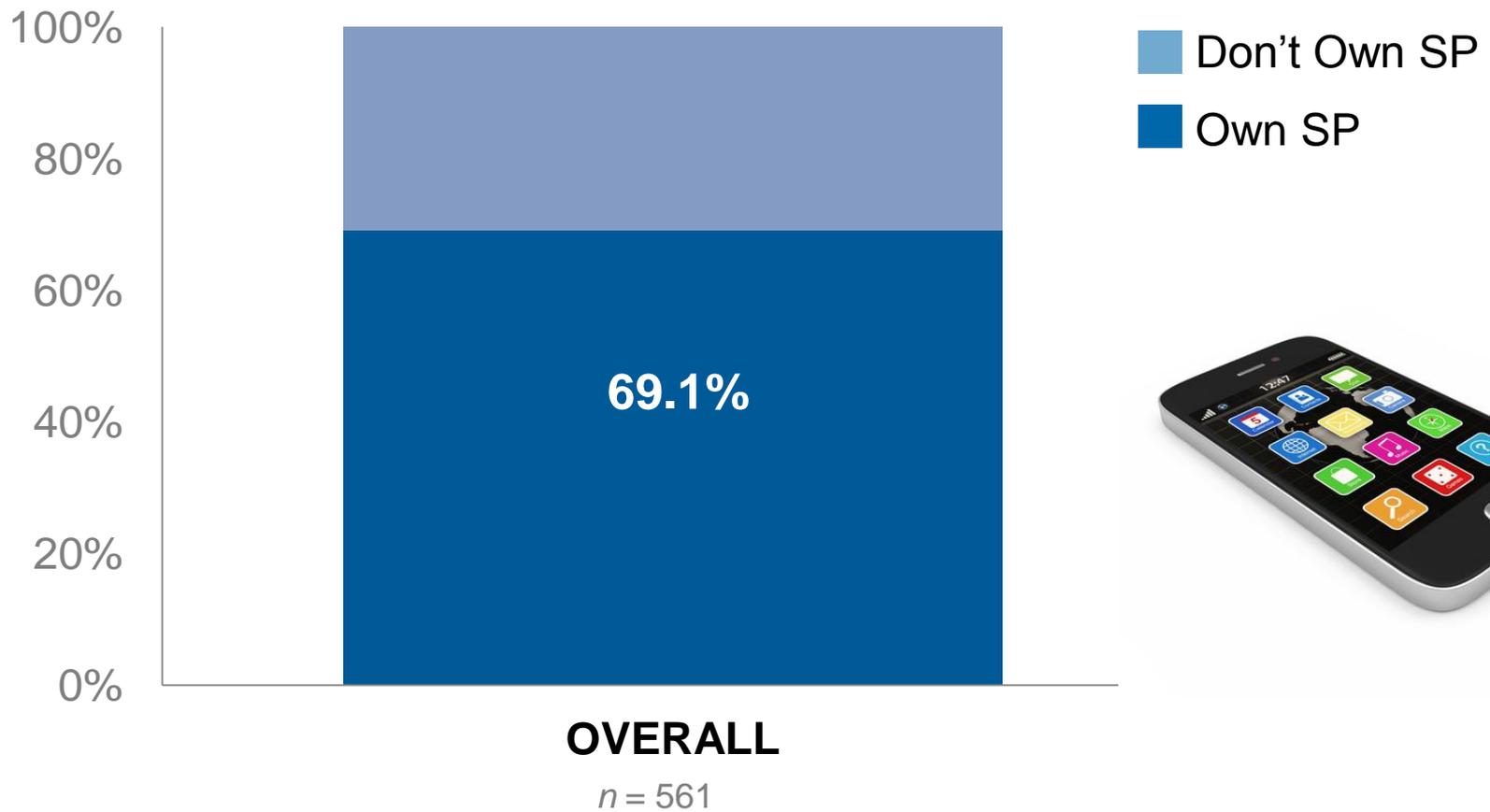
# Sample by Experimental Mode of Contact



N = 2,412

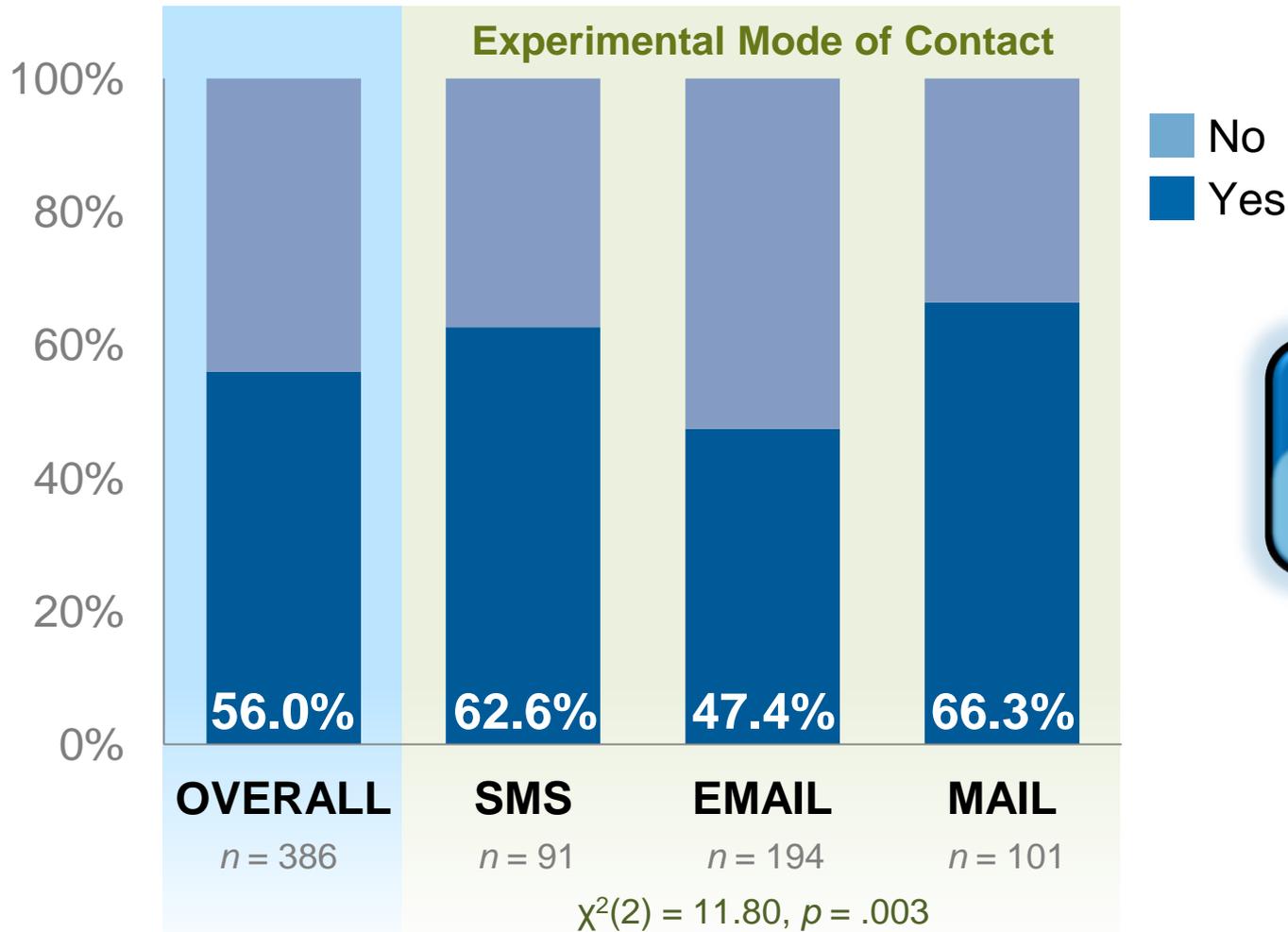
- We asked panelists...
  - *Do you own a smartphone?*
  - *Would you download a smartphone panel app?*
  - *How do you prefer to be contacted in the future?*
- Mini-survey identified effect of contact mode on...
  - Response rate
  - Willingness to download smartphone panel app
  - Preferred mode of future contact
- ...and we learned who owns a smartphone!

# Smartphone Ownership

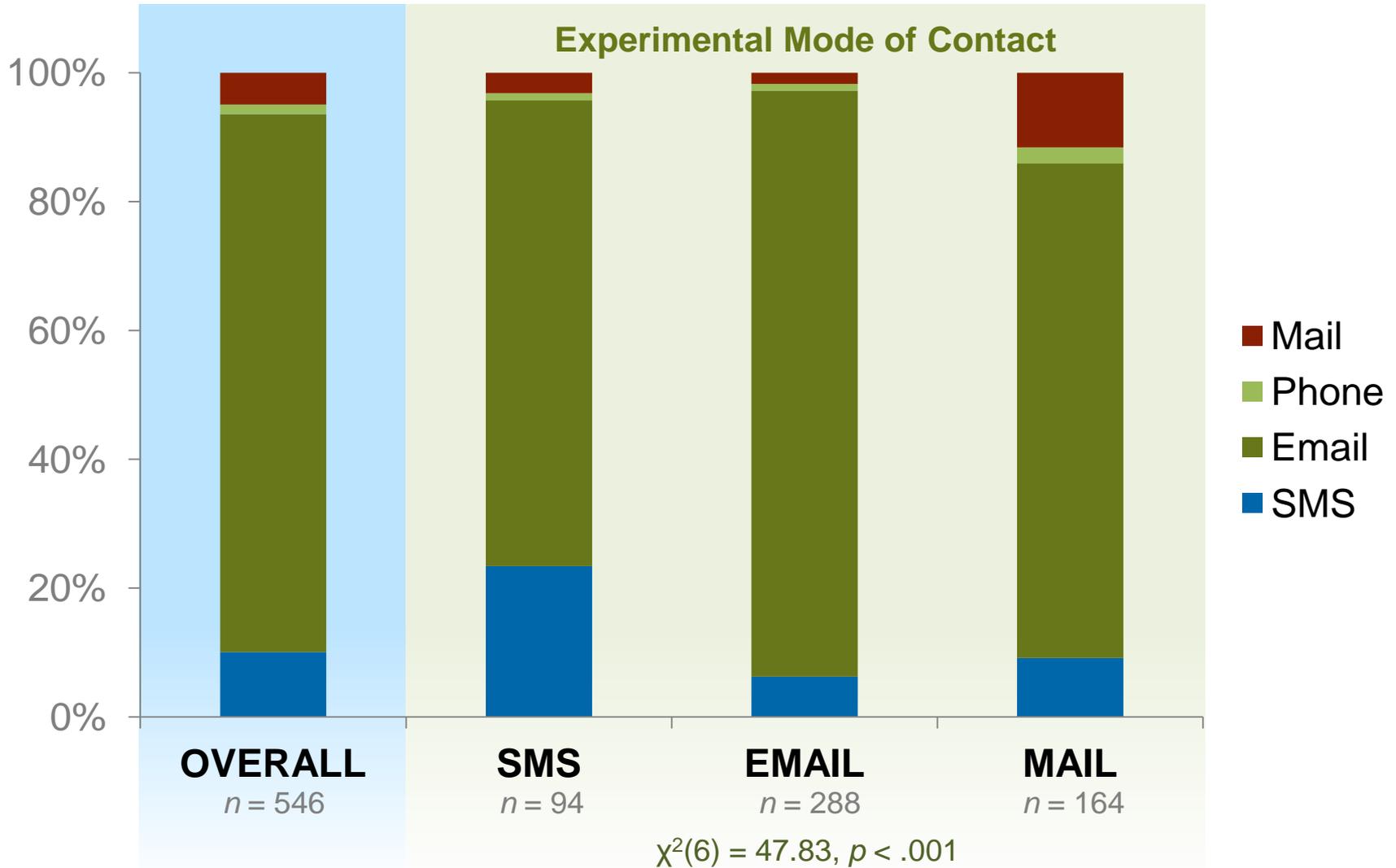


# Willing to Download Panel App

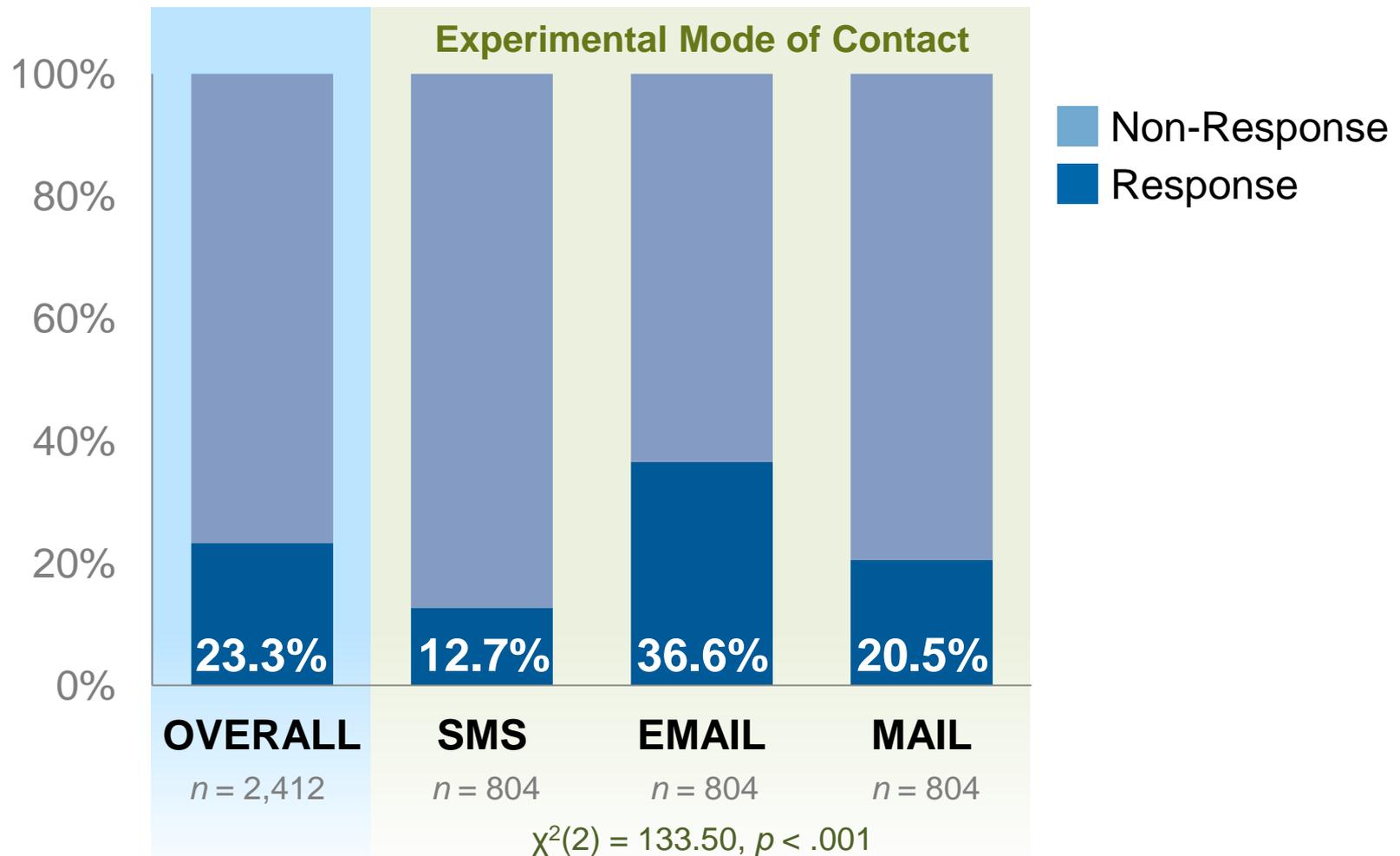
(among SP Owners)



# Preferred Mode of Future Panel Contact

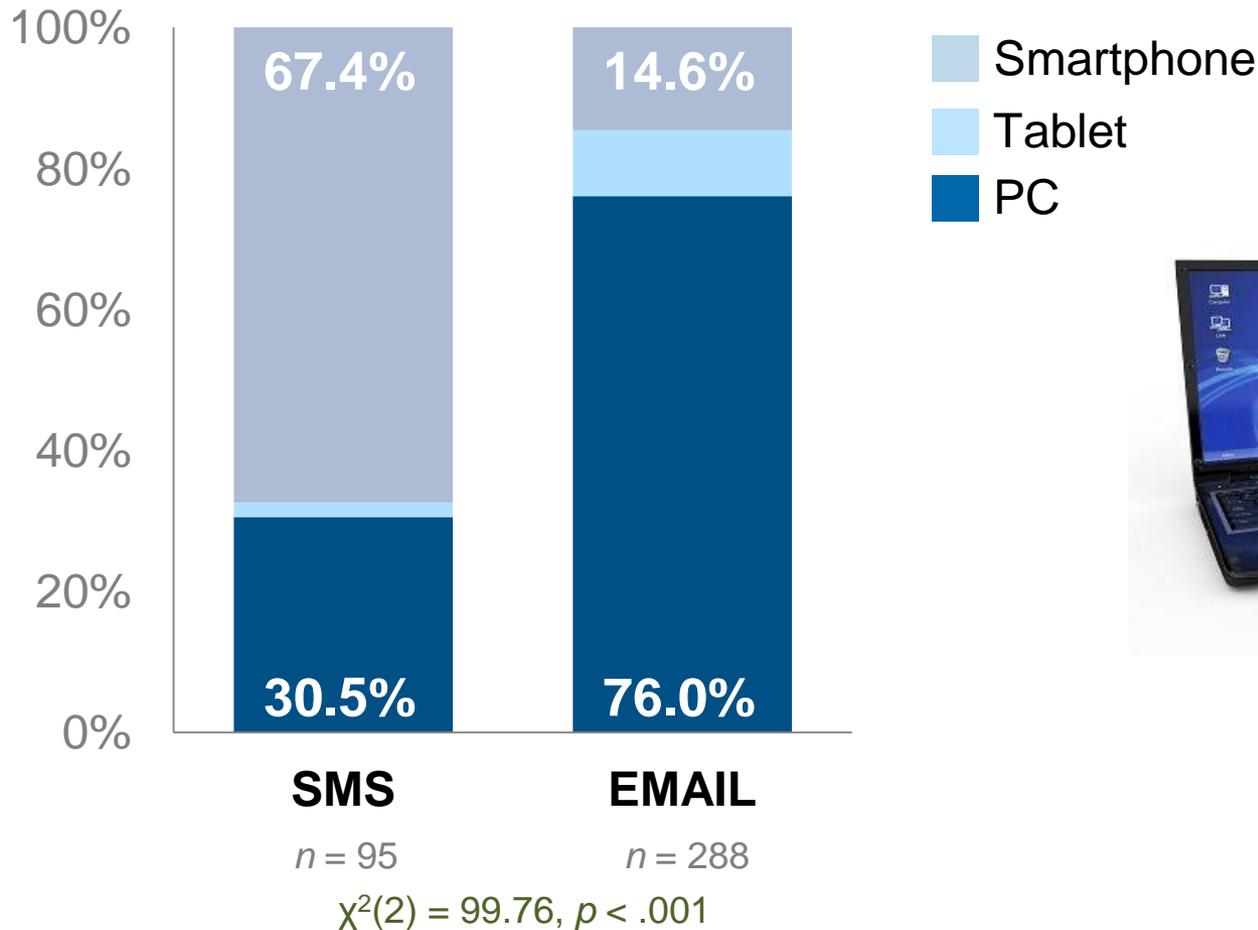


# Response Rate



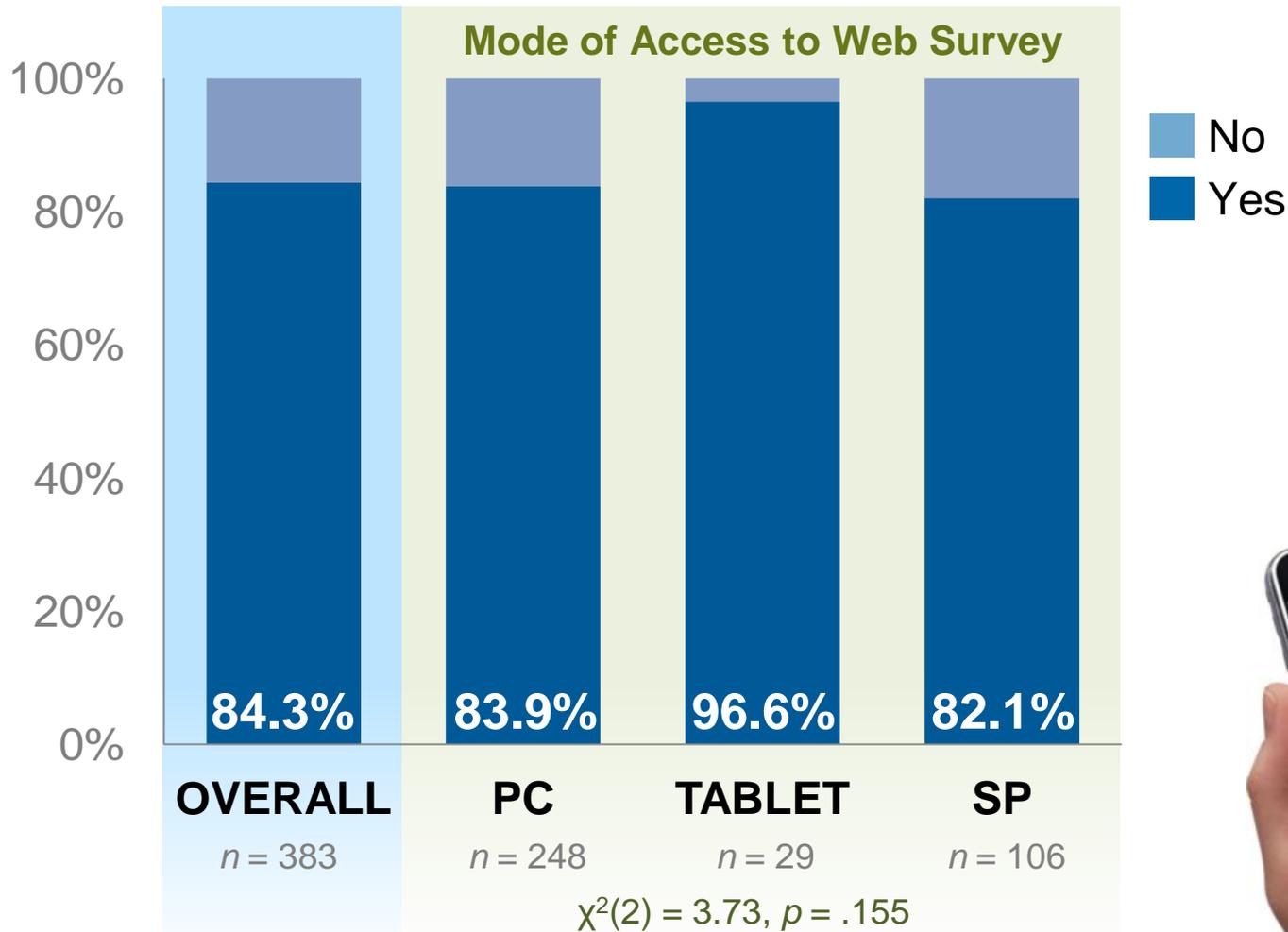
# Mode of Web Survey Access

(following SMS or EMAIL contact)



# Provided Current Contact Information

(Address, Phone, or Email)



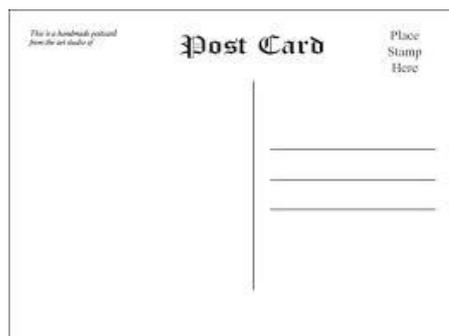
# Takeaways



- Email contact produced highest response rate
- Many panelists willing to download app
- Contact mode influenced future contact mode preference
- Smartphones not a barrier to update contact information

- Panelists with a mailing address

Group	Sample	Treatment
Control	7,163	Postcard + URL
Experiment	7,163	Postcard + URL + QR code

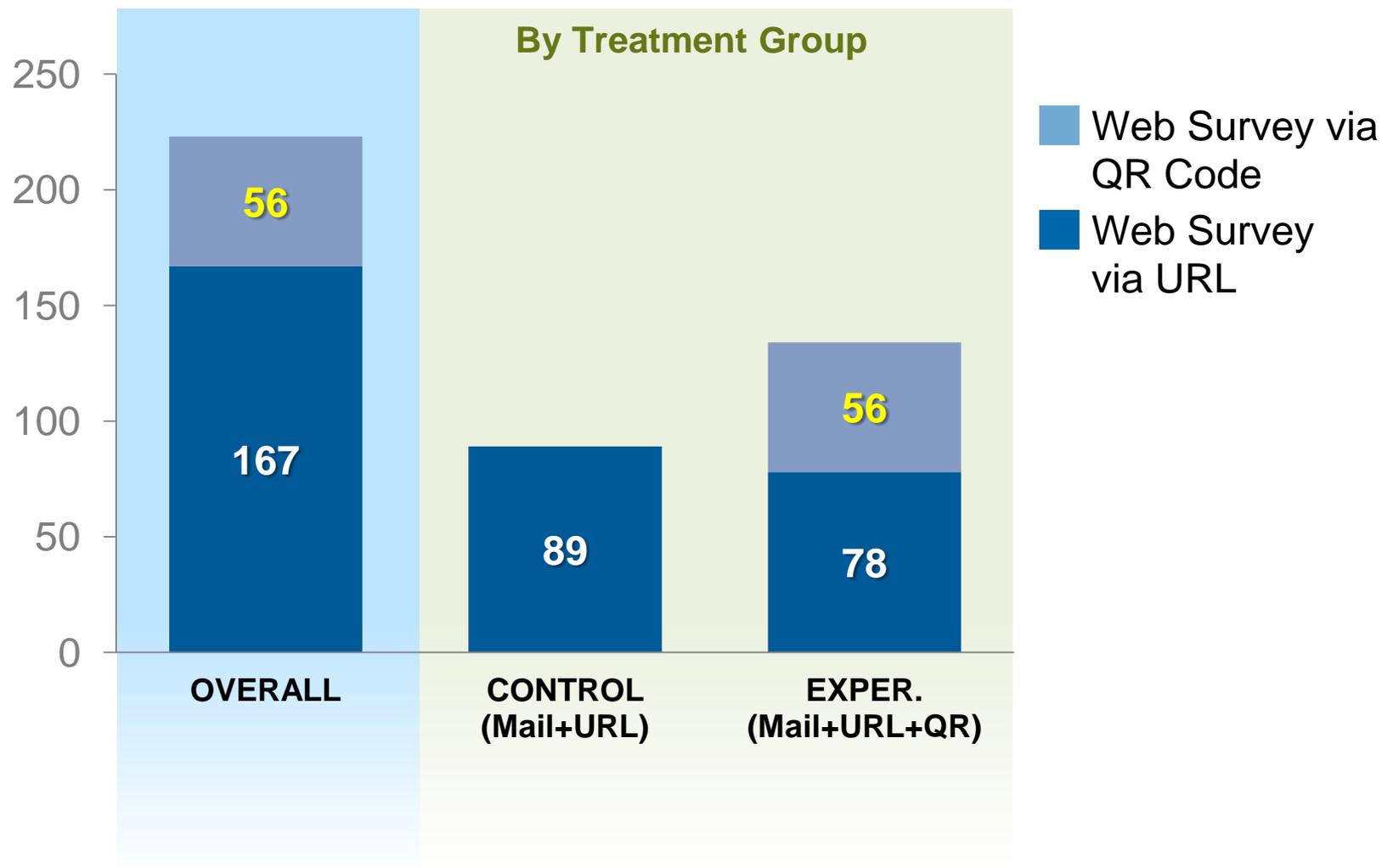


[mysurvey.com](https://mysurvey.com)

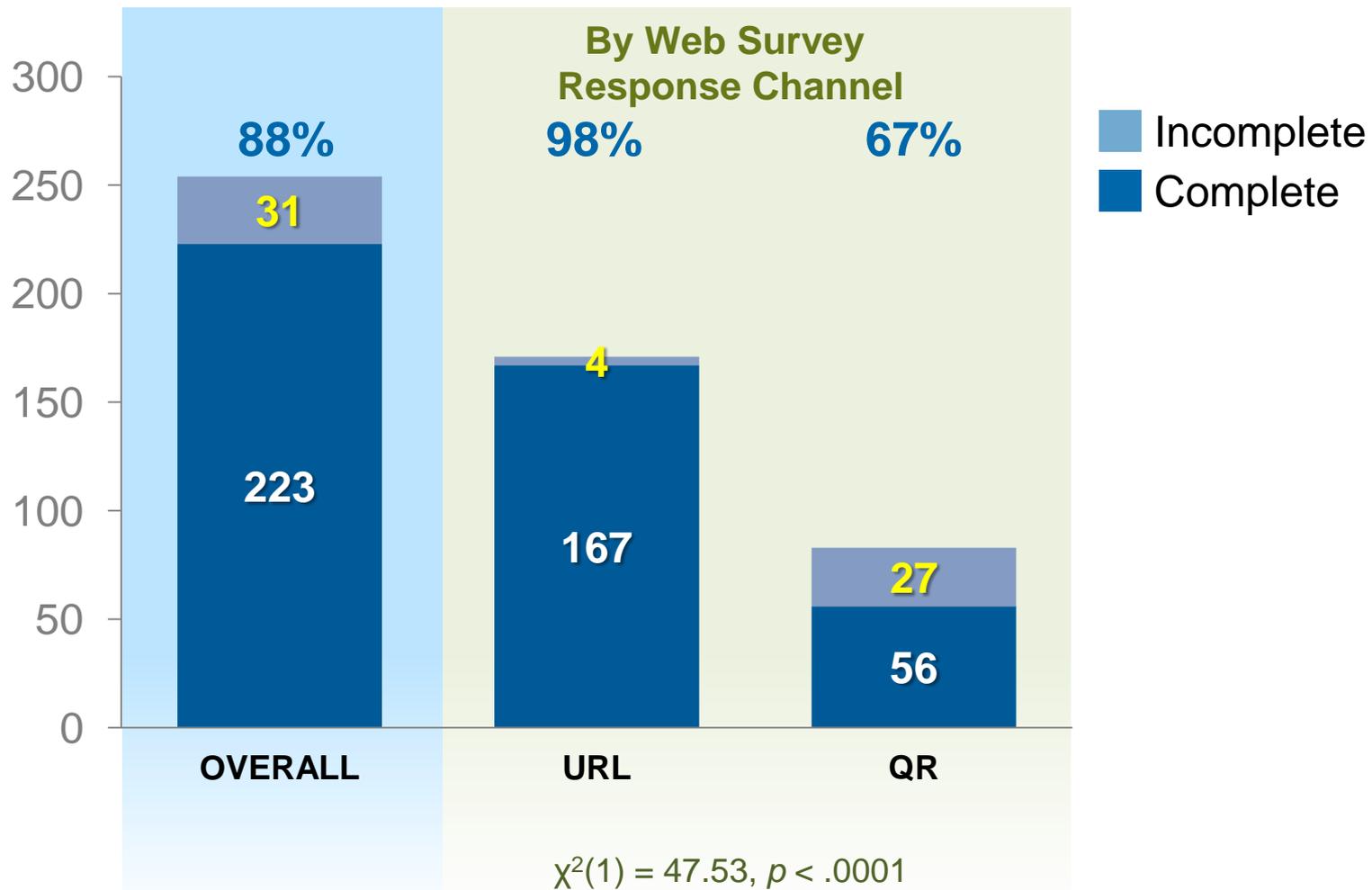


*Q: How does the QR code impact response rates?*

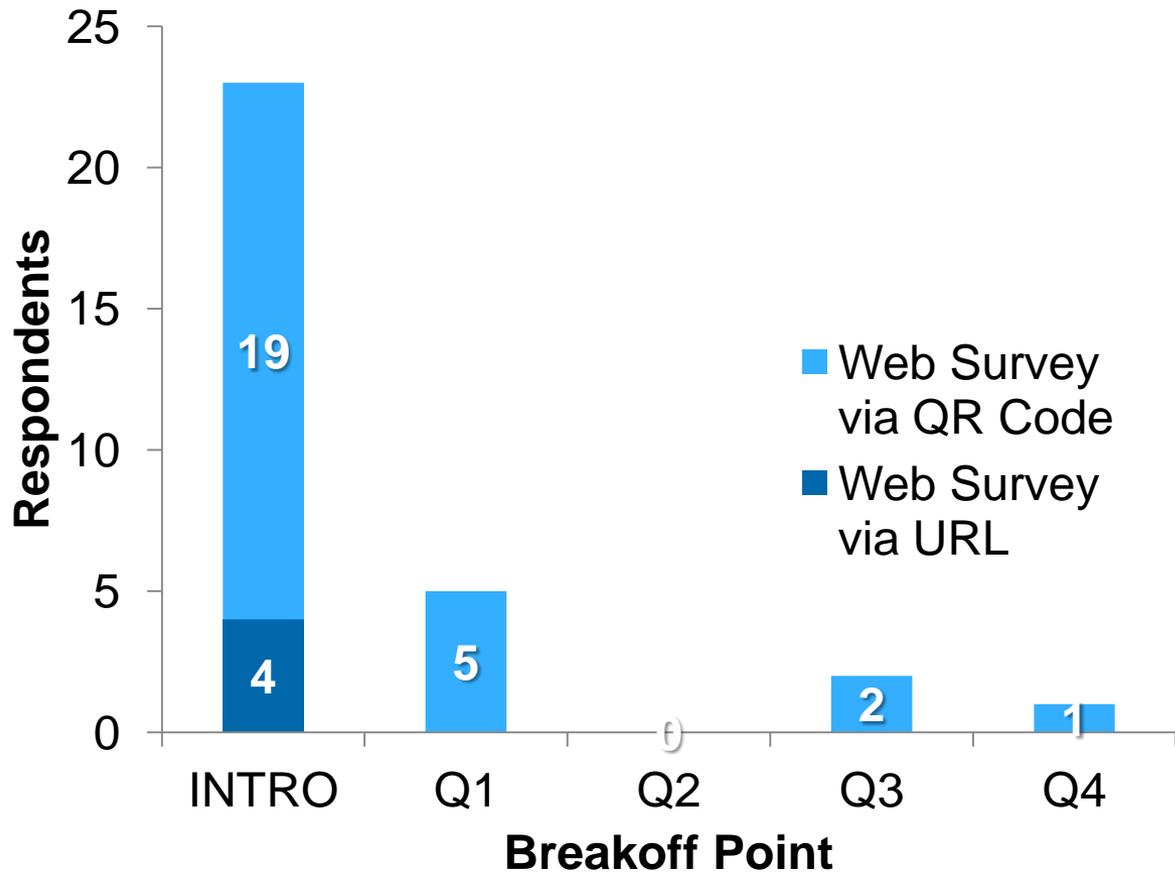
# Responses – Web Survey



# Completion Rate – Web Survey



# Breakoff Point – Web Survey



# Takeaways

Too early to say but...

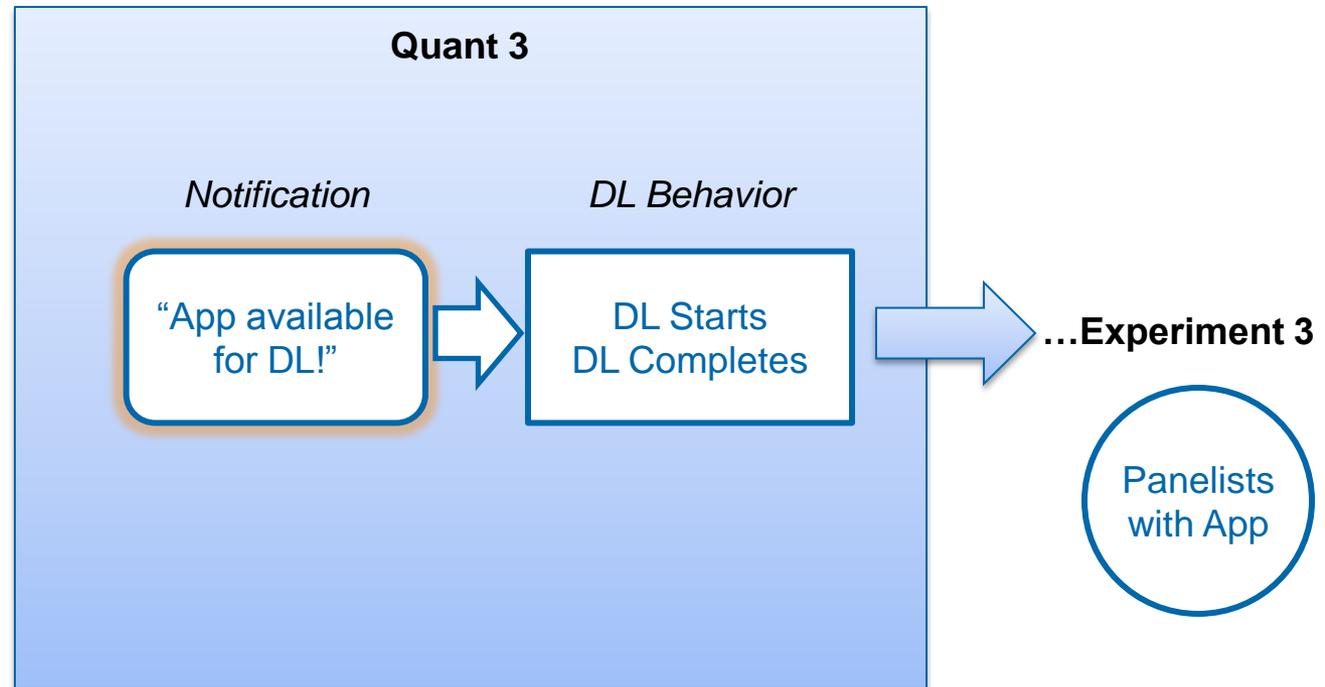
- QR presence appears to increase overall response

- Respondents want the “easy button”



- Challenge to engage smartfone users to complete

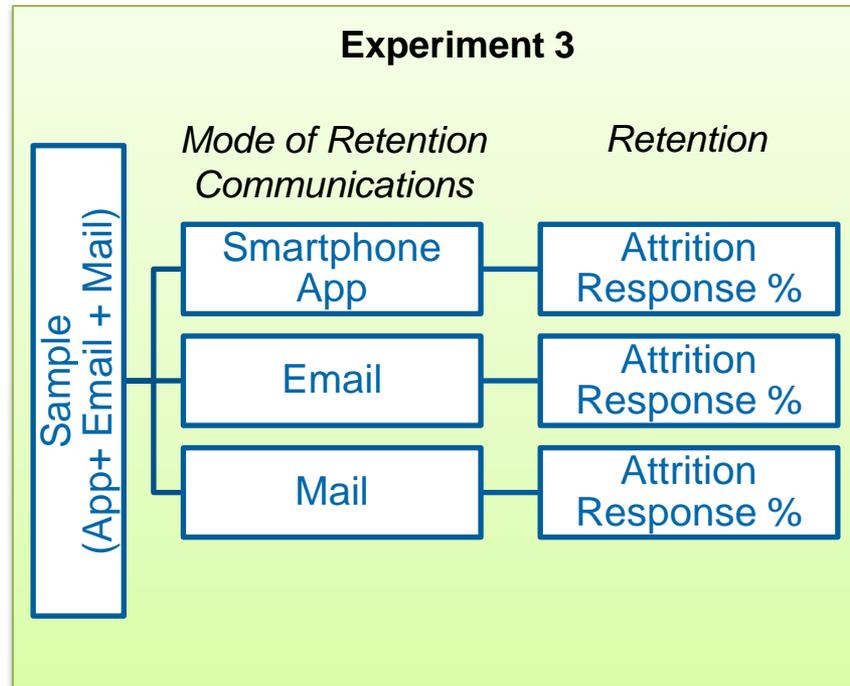
# Next Steps



## ■ Quantitative Research Question

- Does intention to download an app predict actual behavior? (correlational)

# Next Steps



## ■ Experiment 3 Questions

- Does mode of contact influence retention? (experimental)
- Does mode of contact influence survey response rates? (experimental)

# Conclusions

- Apps can provide value under the right conditions
  - Large ongoing panel to be cost effective
    - Higher investment and maintenance cost
  - App store gatekeepers
  - End user acceptance
- Mobile optimized online option
  - Easier/cheaper development vs. app
  - Requires internet connection
  - Slower page loads could trigger break-offs/attrition
- QR code
  - Smartphone accessibility via print
- Smartphones more commonplace
  - Researchers must account for this reality

# Questions?

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