

The actual state of the project



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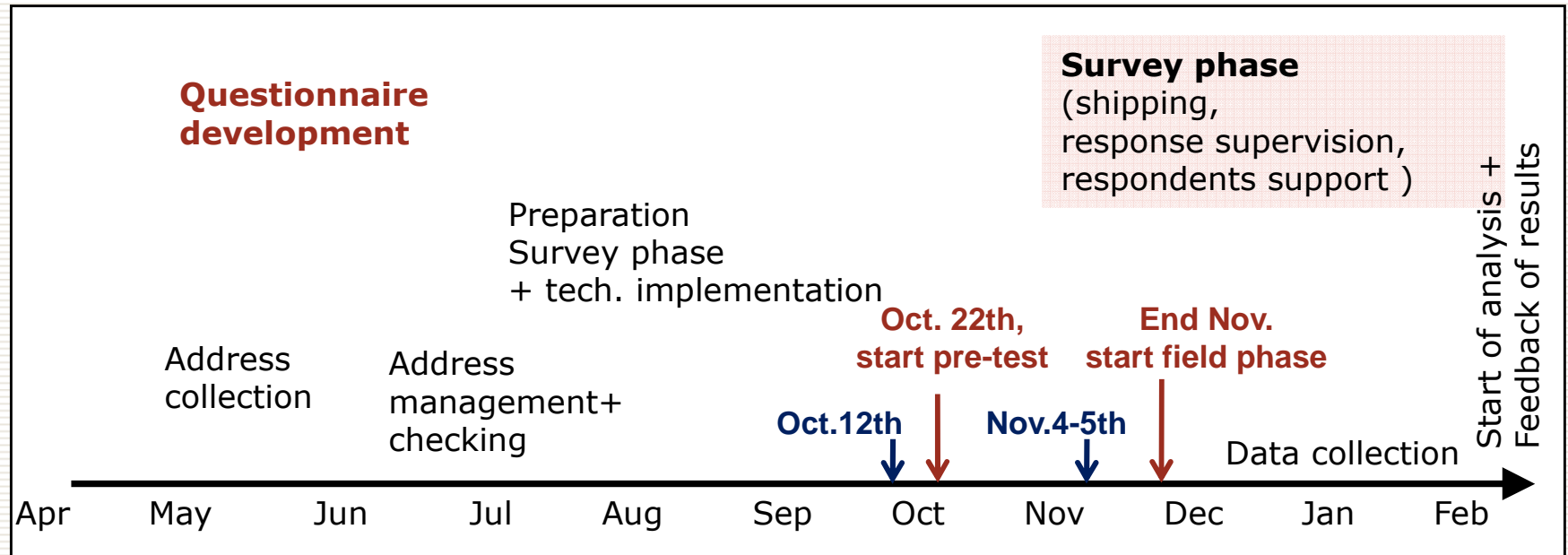
- Timetable of the project**
- Addresses and shipping**
- Preparation of the survey:**
 - Website
 - Additional material
- Data protection**
- Conducting the field phase**
 - Response documentation
 - Methods report
- Conclusions**



Timetable of the project



Timetable of the project



- Jun - Aug 10: Address collection
- Jun - Sep 10: final development of the questionnaire
- Jul/Aug 10: Address management+ checking
- Jul-Sep 10: Survey preparation, technical implementation
- Oct /Nov10 - Feb 11: Survey phase / shipping, response documentation, respondents support
- Nov 10 - Mar 11: Data collection
- Feb 11: Start of the analysis
- Apr/May/Jun 11: Feedback of first results to the HEI

Questions:

The preparation of the field phase

- ? **Total number** of graduates per cohort (2008/09 and 2004/05)
- ? **Number of bachelor graduates** per cohort (2008/09 and 2004/05)
- ? Number of bachelor graduates per cohort with **known addresses** (in the database)
- ? **Types of sources** used for address searching and updating (internal sources, other sources, internet etc.)
- ? **Additional information** of the graduates in the database (degrees, faculties, domains, fields of study, gender, age, mark etc.)
- ? A **single address database** created (yes / no)
- ? Address database functions for all aspects of the field phase (updating addresses, sending invitations/reminders, reporting response, etc.)
- ? Text of **invitation letters** to the graduates adapted and signed (yes / no)
- ? Project **homepage** created (yes / no) and relevant information included (description of project, FAQ, link to the Q, data protection, etc.)
- ? Use of **additional material** decided (yes / no)
- ? Additional material created (yes / no)
- ? Relevant people (e.g. career service, alumni service) informed (yes / no)
- ? Personnel backup (student assistants) available (yes / no)



Addresses and shipping



Address data base

Content:

- **All personal information**
 - Name, address, date of birth, etc.
 - Study programme, degree(s) etc.
 - Current study programme (master)
 - PIN
- **Information on address and address updating**
 - Address type (study address / home address / email)
 - Address status (undeliverable, updated, etc.)
- **Information on shipping**
 - Date of first shipping, second shipping, etc.
- **Information on response**
 - responded (online / paper), date
 - Willingness follow-up survey yes/no
 - Passing address to alumni centre
 - Desired results report
- **Actual status**
 - what to do next (update address, sending which reminder, etc.)
 - what was already done (address updated, which reminder sent, etc.)

Shipping:

Creation of invitation letters (1)

Necessary information for shipping:

- Form of address („Dear Mrs.“), name
- Postal address
- PIN
- Subject / study programme → if different questionnaire variants or different invitation letters (own letter head, own signature)

→ Form letters

- Possibilities for personalisation:
 - Dear Mr. M rgineanu/ Dear Mrs. M rgineanu
 - Possibly course of studies? pro/contra

Shipping: Creation of invitation Letters (2)

To create invitation letters **the address data should be sorted:**

- By type of contact (Email, personal, letter)
- By graduation year (2005 / 2009)
- By country (for graduates living outside Romania)
 - different sender's instructions in the address field
 - different postage
 - maybe different return envelope (not franked)
- By, if necessary, English invitation letters (e.g. for study programmes in English language)
- For reminding AFTER the first contact:
 - Mentioning non response
 - Which contact (up to 4 contacts)? → different invitation letters

The actual state of the project

Ship it!





Preparation of the survey:

Websites

Preparation of the survey: Websites

The project website has the following functions

During the field phase:

- direct people to the questionnaire ⇒ Simple address (must be typewritten)
- present the project to the respondents ⇒ What is the project's objective?
Who is involved? Who is handling it?
- clarify questions of the respondents ⇒ How does the survey data flow?
Clarification! Tell them what happen!

After the field phase:

- present the project to university staff ⇒ What happens in the project?
- present the project to external parties ⇒ Why does the university need it?
- present the results (when available)

Preparation of the survey: Websites

<http://www.uni-goettingen.de/absolventenbefragung>

Example:
University of
Göttingen

The screenshot shows the website for the 2008 Graduate Survey at Georg-August-Universität Göttingen. The page is in German. Key elements and annotations include:

- Navigation Bar:** "Georg-August-Universität Göttingen" with links for "Die Universität", "Fakultäten", "Forschung", "Studium", "Einrichtungen", "Alumni", and "Service".
- Header:** "Absolventenbefragung 2008 / 2008 Graduate Survey".
- Participation End:** "Teilnahmeschluss: 1. Februar 2009".
- English Version:** A green box labeled "English Version" points to the link "Für an English version click here.".
- Access to the Questionnaire:** A green box labeled "Access to the Questionnaire" points to the "Zugang zum Online-Fragebogen" section, which lists:
 - Fragebogen (OHNE Medizinische Fakultät)
 - Fragebogen (NUR Medizinische Fakultät)
- Related Information:** A green box labeled "Related Information" points to the "Weiterführende Informationen" section, which lists:
 - Gründe für Ihre Teilnahme
 - Projektbeschreibung
 - Datenschutz
 - Häufig gestellte Fragen
 - Beteiligte Fakultäten
 - INCHER
- President's Message:** A green box labeled "President's Message" points to the signature of Prof. Dr. Dr. h.c. Kurt von Figura, President of the University.
- Contact:** "Kontakt: Sandra Többe, Stabsstelle Lehrentwicklung und Lehrqualität - Qualitätsmanagement - Wilhelmsplatz 2, 37073 Göttingen, Tel. +49 (0)551 / 39-9915, E-Mail".
- Footer:** "Startseite UniFour English version Textversion Impressum".

Preparation of the survey: Websites

Example: University of Weimar

www.uni-weimar.de/absolventenbefragung

Bauhaus-Universität Weimar

- Aktuell
- Universität
- Studium
 - Hier studieren
 - Studienangebote
 - Vorlesungsverzeichnis
 - Studienberatung
 - Online-Bewerbung
 - Stipendien
 - Studien-Organisation
 - Wissenschaftliche Weiterbildung
 - Services/ BaföG/ Mensa
 - Studienreform (Bologna-Prozess)
 - Careers Service
 - Studierendenvertretung

Online-Fragebogen

Warum Absolventenstudien

Informationen zum Projekt

Datenschutz

Kontakt

Access to Questionnaire

Related Information

Access to Questionnaire

Liebe Absolventinnen und Absolventen,

im Herbstsemester 08/09 führt die Bauhaus-Universität Weimar eine Absolventenbefragung in Kooperation mit dem Internationalen Zentrum für Hochschulforschung (IZH) der Universität Kassel durch. Befragt werden all diejenigen, die im Zeitraum zwischen Oktober 2006 und September 2007 einen Abschluss an der Bauhaus-Universität erworben haben.

Wir möchten Sie hiermit ausdrücklich dazu einladen, an unserer Befragung teilzunehmen. Der Erfolg des Projekts hängt in erster Linie von Ihrer Beteiligung ab! Die Beantwortung der Fragen kann sowohl online erfolgen, als auch mittels eines Papierfragebogens, den wir Ihnen **Access to Questionnaire**

Sie können sich auf unseren Seiten eingehender über die Hintergründe und Nutzen des Projekts informieren. Sollten sie nur wenig Zeit mitbringen, können Sie hier direkt zum [Online-Fragebogen](#) gehen.

Wir bedanken uns bei Ihnen ganz herzlich für Ihr Interesse und Ihre Teilnahme!



Preparation of the survey:

Additional Material

Preparation of the survey: Additional Material

Apart from the invitation letter, the questionnaires and additional letters the following material could be sent:

- Project flyers (if used)
- Information sheet about data privacy
- Incentives (if used)
- Support letter from department representatives / vice chancellors/ presidents or other important persons (if used)
- Information flyer of the alumni club (if used)

Not too much – It is a scientific survey instead of marketing!



Data protection

Data protection: Two problems

- **Unauthorized access to the data**
- **De-anonymization**

Data protection: Unauthorized data access

Unauthorized access to the data can happen in different ways:

1. Unauthorized access **to the computer** where all address data is processed from internet and intranet.
2. Local unauthorized access **to the data** where all address data is processed (right at the office).
3. Unauthorized access **to files** which contain address data (e.g. at USB pen drive).
4. Unauthorized access **to paper sheets** which contain address data.
5. Unauthorized access **to the transmission of files** which contain address data („sniffing“, „tapping“ of email accounts)

Useful protection strategies:

1. Use **safe passwords** for local user accounts at the computer
2. Make **user accounts** at the computer for access management (not everybody needs to be an „administrator“, the use of internet with „administrator“- status should be avoided)
3. **Firewall** (Hardware- solution, software firewalls are nice toys and useless!)
4. Use **actual virus protection** (and use automatic updates)
5. **Encrypt** critical data
6. Process address data only on a computer **without access to internet or intranet**
 7. **Solid locker** (better: safe) for paper sheets with address data
 8. No longer needed paper sheets with address data have to be **safely destroyed**
9. Critical data has to be **safely deleted with specialized software**

Data protection: De-anonymization

Anonymity of survey data means, that it is not possible to identify from the survey data and results, from which individuals they came. It has to be secured, that a de-anonymization is also impossible, with use of external sources or combination of several data sources (e.g. students statistics from universities).

This is generally related to three aspects:

1. De-anonymization because of **connection / combination of address and survey data**.
2. De-anonymization because of **connection / combination of students statistics and/or other data at universities and survey data**.
3. De-anonymization because of **combination of several answers in the questionnaire in presentations of survey results**.

Useful protection strategies:

1. Strictly **isolation of address data and survey data**.
2. Strictly **isolation of students statistics** and/or other data at universities and survey data.
3. **Abdication of showing results**, which allow inference on individual persons (e.g. results with small case numbers)

Data protection: To pay attention for

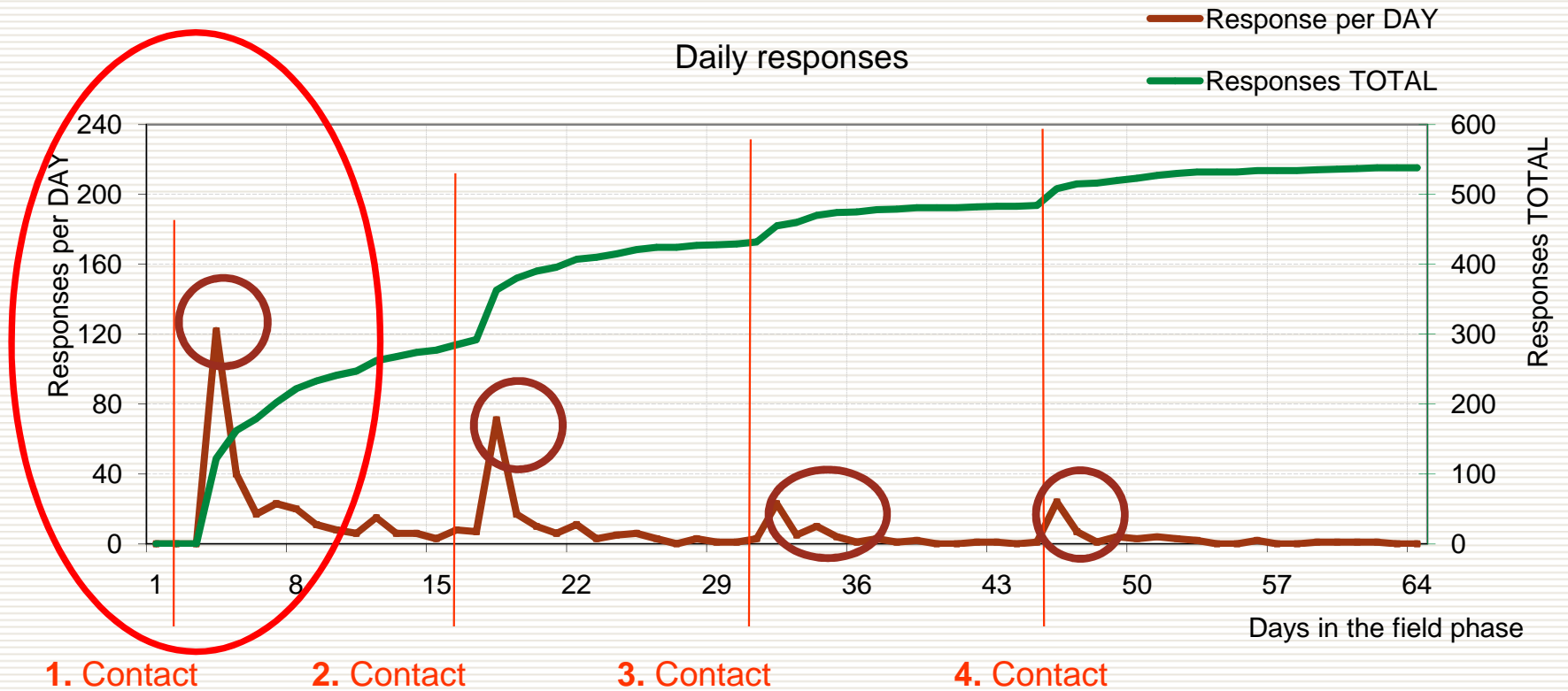
- ❑ Unauthorized access to personal data (addresses) (e.g. with burglary or manipulation of the computer) has to be prevented ⇨ paper sheets in a locker, data only on a pc without network connection, after finishing the field phase and the related processes after the field phase delete the data safely
- ❑ The connection or combination of personal data (addresses) and survey data has to be prevented as much as possible ⇨ strictly physical isolation of both data, the more isolation the better it is, personal data has to be safely deleted after finishing the field phase and the related processes after the field phase
- ❑ All involved colleagues, student assistants and other employees had to get explicit instructions about data privacy and data privacy protection and need to understand them
- ❑ Maybe it is needed to disclaim of showing results with small numbers of cases

Conducting the field phase: Response documentation



Field phase

PRE-TEST



Field phase: Timetable

Schedule of contacts (email)

Day 1 ⇒ 1st Contact

Day 15 ⇒ 2nd Contact

Day 29 ⇒ 3rd Contact

Day 44 ⇒ 4th Contact

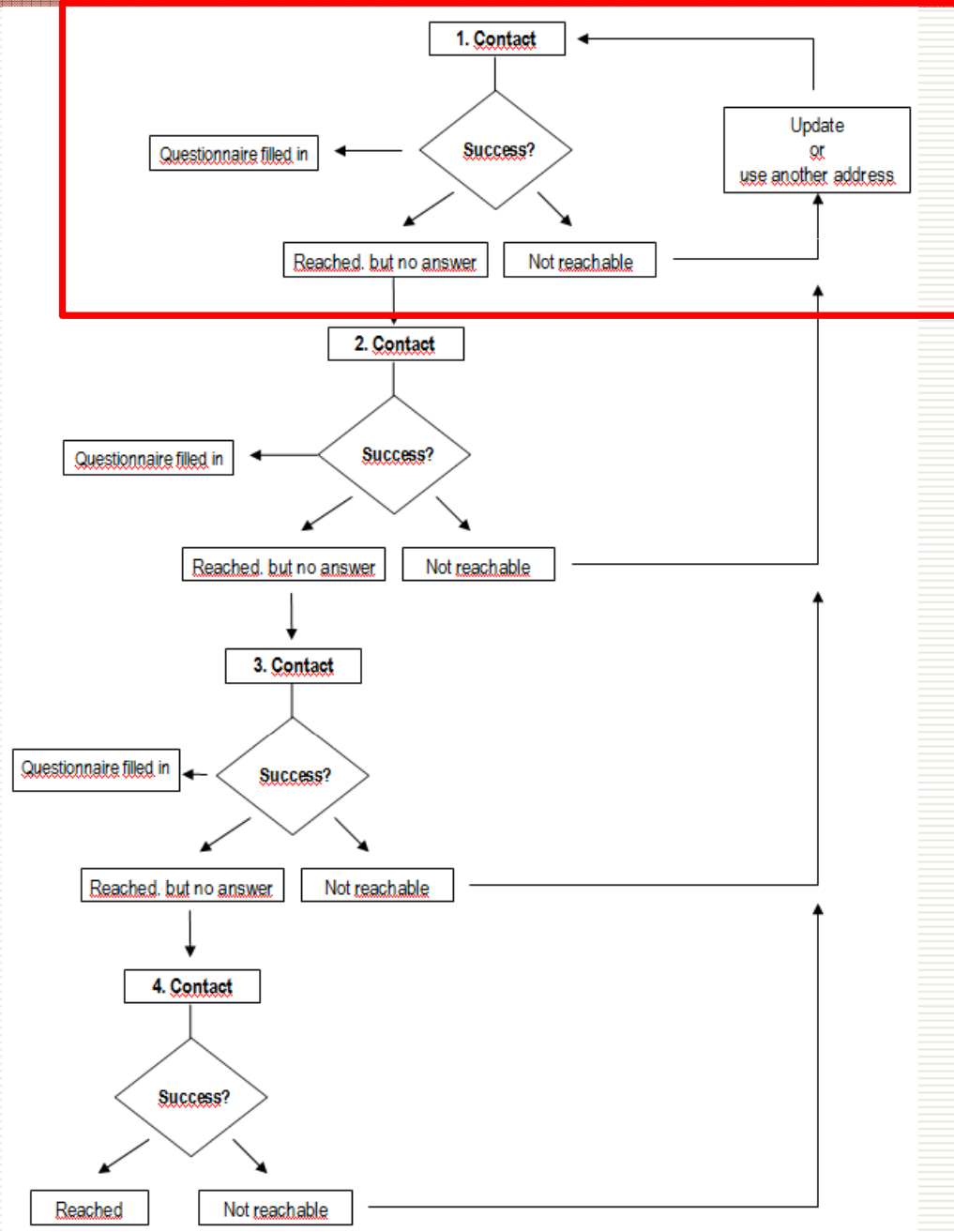
PRE-TEST

During the whole field phase

- Managing the process
- Documentation of the response behaviour
- Answering questions and fix problems
- Find new addresses
- Communication to others

Field phase:

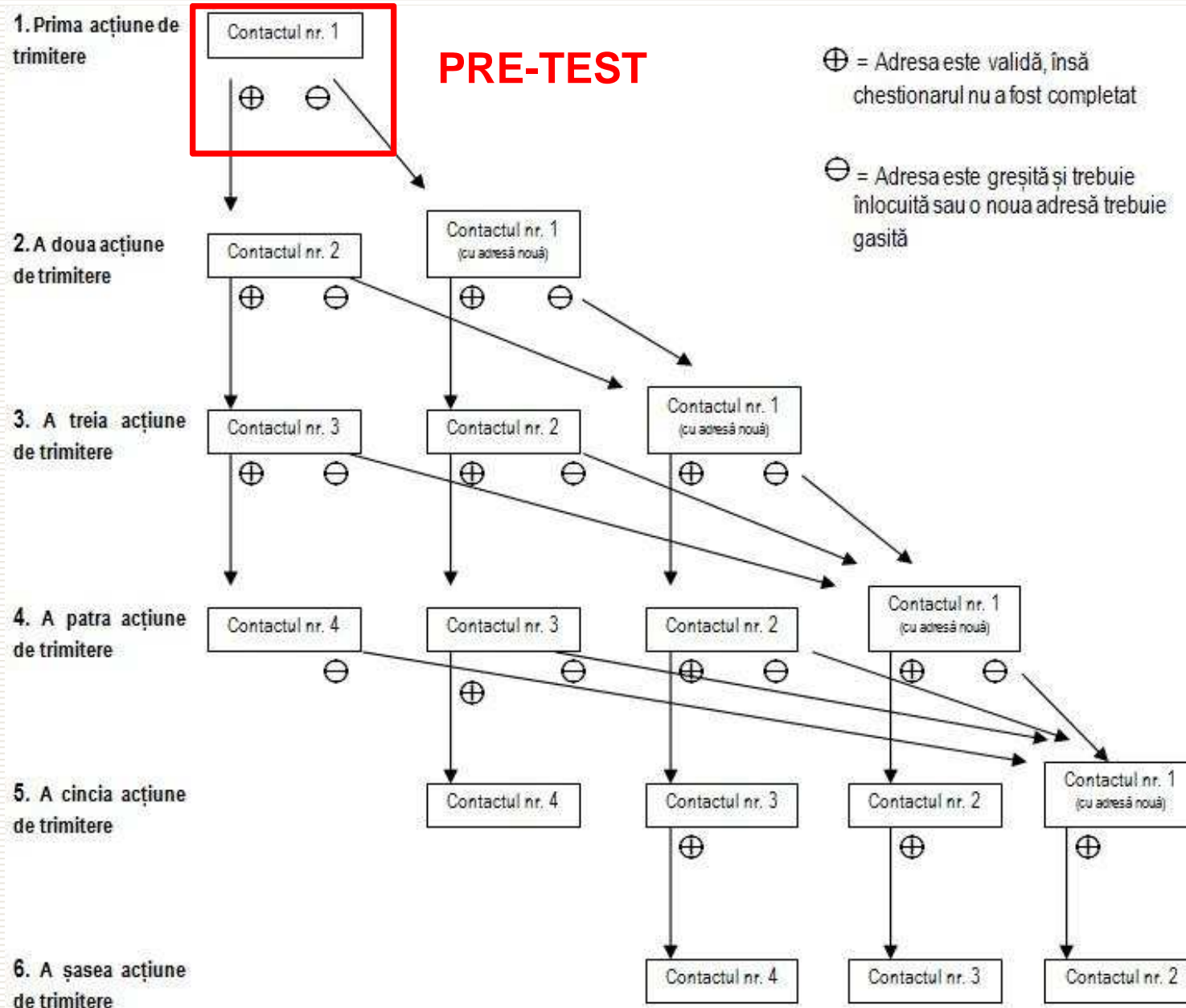
Process of contacting **one** graduate



PRE-TEST

Field phase:

Process of contacting **many** graduates



Response

Why should the field phase be documented?

- a) Control for further shipping
- b) Methods report
- c) Collect experiences for further surveys

Response: Processing (1)

Daily work:

- Get mail (undeliverable letters / emails)
- Count and enter numbers (use e.g. an Excel sheet)
- Report UEFISCSU the numbers

Paper questionnaires

- Get mail (returned questionnaire)
 - Count daily response
 - Enter numbers (use e.g. an Excel sheet)
 - Package (rubber band, box, etc.)
 - Date the package
-
- Save file (use different file names, every day with the date of that day)

Response: Processing (2)

Further work to be done

(regularly but not necessarily daily):

- Process case in address database (tick off, update address, change actual status etc.)

Paper questionnaire:

- Open envelopes, take questionnaires
- Put filing ID on cover page and address page
- Cut address page
- File and store address pages and questionnaires separately
- Send packages of questionnaires to UEFISCSU (fixed dates?)



Response statistics

What is response?

- ⇒ The amount of graduates that actually participate in the survey

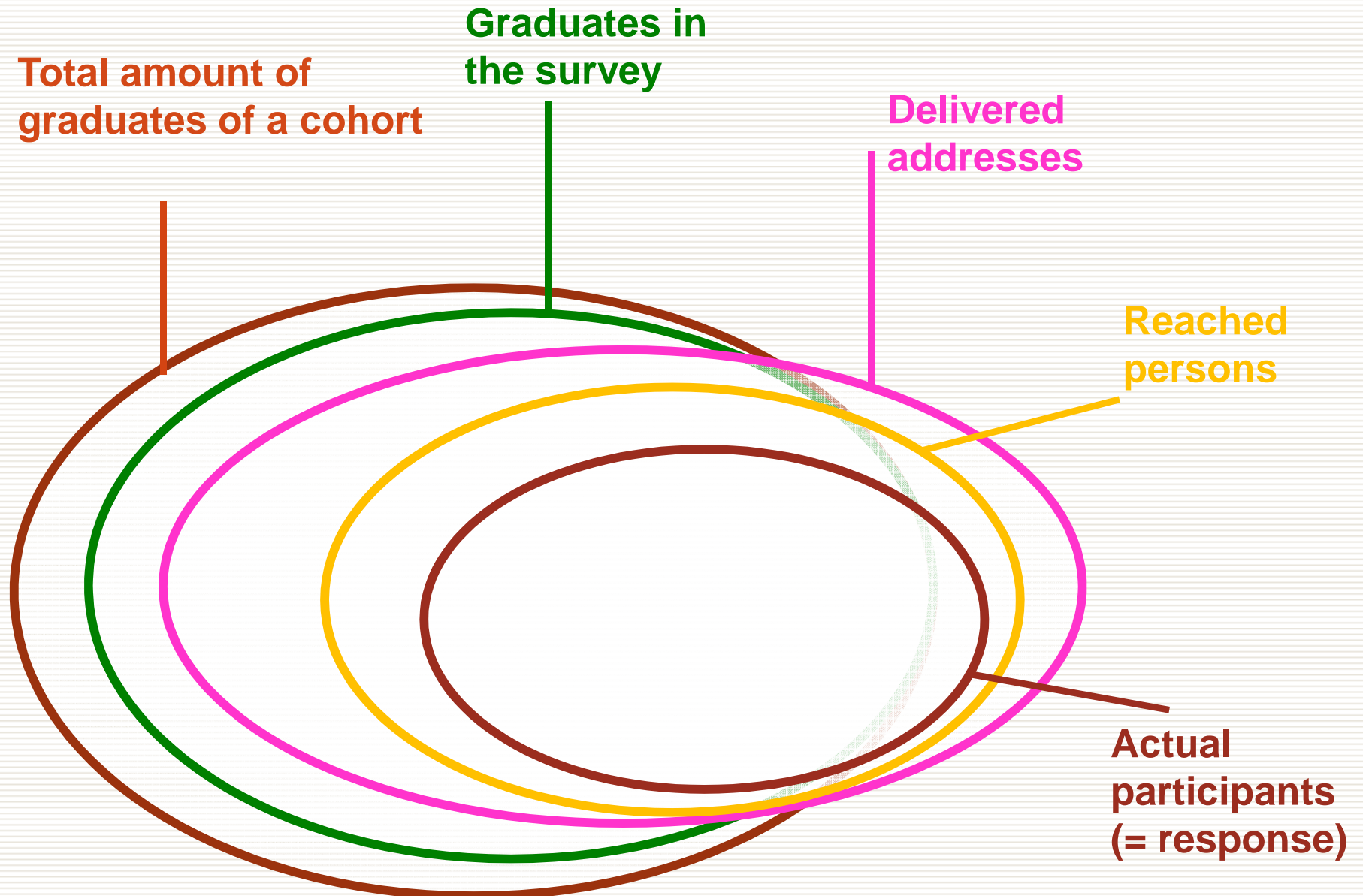
How could the response be measured?

- ⇒ Absolute amount (how many people have answered ⇒ „n“)
- ⇒ Relative amount (What percentage of people has answered, quota)
 - ⇒ The percentage of ... WHAT?
 - ⇒ Graduates of a cohort in the survey
 - ⇒ Graduates of a cohort that were actually reached



Response statistics

The percentage of ... WHAT?





Response statistics

In general a high response rate is desirable!

Because:

The response rate serves various purposes:

- The response rate gives clues for the „success“ of conducting a survey
- A high response rate secures survey results against criticism



Response statistics

Response rate– gross

- The percentage of graduates of all relevant graduates, that actually participated in the survey, regardless of whether:
 - an address was available
 - the available address(es) was/were valid
 - a valid address could be researched
- Calculation formula:

$$\frac{\text{Amount of actual respondents}}{\text{Amount of relevant graduates}} \times 100 = \text{GROSS response}$$

Response rate– net

The percentage of graduates of all relevant graduates, that participated in the survey, less the graduates:

- of whom there was no address available
- whose available addresses were not valid
- of whom no valid address could be researched

Calculation formula :

$$\frac{\text{Actual respondents}}{\text{amount of relevant graduates} - \text{non-reachable graduates}} \times 100 = \text{NET response}$$



Conducting the field phase:

Methods report

Methods report: Reporting during the field phase

Field phase reports

- ⇒ serve the description of the start situation
- ⇒ serve the documentation of the sending process
- ⇒ serve the documentation of address updates
- ⇒ serve the documentation of the response entry

**Central element
of process control**

- ⇒ Will be done partly with an online form
(but not everything can be documented by a
standardized form, because...)
- ⇒ ... **you need to document every detail of the field
phase for yourself**

- ⇒ **A detailed documentation and reporting of
the field phase is the only way to learn and
to improve the process in the future**



Methods report

- Objectives of a methods report
- Need of a methods report

Methods report:

Objective: Describe the study !

Descriptive metadata of a study

1	Type	Cross- sectional or panel
2	Data collection 1	Written questionnaire or interview
3	Data collection 2	Online or paper
4	Standardisation	High - low
5	Target population	Which cohort? Which degree? Which country?
6	Sample	Census? Sample size; sampling strategy
7	Time of field phase	When was the survey conducted?
8	Inside the field phase	Description of the field phase
9	Response	Number of cases; response rate
10	Representativity	Criteria? PRE-TEST

Methods report:

Objective: Think about the representativity!

- **“Representativity” in scientific reading is not provable** (this would be a longer story)
- **“Representativity” in everyday life means**
 - “not too much bias” in the data, and
 - the matching of sample and target population based on reviewable data / facts
- **Reviewable data / facts are needed from both, sample (asked in the questionnaire) and target population (statistical information and with the addresses)**

Methods report: Representativity

„Representativity“?

Response can vary according to several characteristics

Based on the questionnaire and the HEI statistics, the following characteristics can be checked for deviations (among others):

- Gender ⇨ (e.g. theory: women participate more often)
- Type of degree ⇨ (e.g. theory : Ph.D. holders are hard to reach)
- Course of study ⇨ (e.g. theory: engineers participate less often)
- Graduation date ⇨ (e.g. theory : the longer since graduation, the lower the reachability)
- Study duration ⇨ (e.g. theory : the longer the study duration, the lower the willingness to participate)
- Final grade ⇨ (e.g. theory : the worse the grade, the lower the willingness to participate)
- Citizenship ⇨ (e.g. theory : foreigners are harder to reach)

Methods report: Why is it needed?

- The description of the study and the field phase make it reviewable and criticisable to others
- The critical view on “representativity” made it reviewable and criticisable to others
- To make a study reviewable and criticisable is one point that separates *science* from *journalism*
- A good and detailed documentation is essential for further improvements



Conclusions



Conclusions

- ❑ A good preparation of the field phase can make the field phase itself easier
- ❑ A good timetable helps to avoid periods of high pressure
- ❑ The necessary work in the field phase covers a full time job (at least)
- ❑ Documentation of everything is important
- ❑ A methodological reflection separates science from journalism

Open questions for further research about different forms of contact

What are the effects of the medium used for contacting the graduates in terms of:

- Accessibility / Reachability of the graduates**
(Which form of contact is the one with best reachability?
What do or can we know about reachability of the different forms of contact?)
- Time lag between contact and answer**
(When do the graduates fill in the questionnaire, related to the date of sending the contact?)
- What is the most efficient way (in terms of money and success) for contacting graduates in Romania in further surveys?***



**Thank you for your
attention!**



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