



Incorporating Public Choices in Policy Planning Using Online Town Hall Meetings Integrated with a Statewide Survey: A Qualitative & Quantitative Method

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Overview of this Presentation

The need for high quality, cost effective tools for obtaining public input for policymaking processes

Policy-making requires an integration of both qualitative & quantitative data to capture public input

Methodology

- Probability sample to maximize representation
- Qualitative analysis of E-town hall meetings
- Quantitative analysis of the statewide survey

Fitting the information into the policy planning process

Online Qual/Quant Integration: Powerful and Innovative Ways to Listen and Learn

Integrated online qual with online quant surveys

- Video based Q&A
- Real-time moderated probes and interaction

Water cooler or town hall online qual meetings

Incorporate interaction, multimedia stimulus and moderation when needed – all online

Supplemented with large n online surveys with a representative sample



Qualitative Online Integration with Quant

- Capture **feelings and emotion** with Video Q & A in a quant survey or
- Probe within a quant survey in **real time**
- Hold large forum **interactive groups** online: your Water Cooler or Town Hall



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Session Date: Jul-18-2008	Respondent ID: 300224	Duration: 14 minutes, 28 seconds
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Segment	Brand Aspirational
Overall opinion of Wolfgang Puck	Fair
Why have that opinion (OE)	On his TV show he does not captivate me like some of the other chefs.

You are now connected to: Alexis .

Alexis: Hi and thanks so much for chatting with me today. To kick things off, what's the first thing that comes to mind when you think about Wolfgang Puck?

Guest: Spago's

Alexis: Why does that in particular come to mind?

Guest: It is his restaurant and he is famous for hosting Oscar parties there

Alexis: What other associations do you have with Wolfgang Puck?

Guest: A TV show on food network

Alexis: Getting a little more specific, how do you feel about Wolfgang Puck's line of food items?

Guest: Good enough not my favorite I don't purchase them

Alexis: Why don't you purchase them?

Guest: I don't know I just don't think about it they don't make my list

Alexis: Have you or someone you know had experiences with his products? If so, what products? What was the experience like?

Guest: No. Not that I know of

Alexis: Along similar lines, how do you feel about Wolfgang Puck strictly as a personality?

Guest: I think he is funny. He seems likeable

Alexis: What makes him likeable to you?

Guest: He is always laughing and smiling on TV. He seems to enjoy what he does

Problems with Traditional Public Meetings and Focus Groups

Traditional in-person public meetings represent a small, self-selected sector of the population

Discussion is often dominated by loudest voices

Not integrated with a quantitative statistical survey

High costs in staging meetings and recording data

Attendees are highly clustered geographically

E-meetings & Sample Surveys: An Innovation in Policy Research

The Power of Combining Qualitative & Quantitative Data

- Qualitative data reflects personal insights of the public in more direct ways
- Quantitative data reflects the aggregated perceptions of the public with regard to policy issues
- The combination provides a more complete view of public opinion than either does by itself

The ‘electronic town hall’ provides planners and policymakers with rich input from the “unattached” or “less interested” public

The statewide quantitative survey provides a reality check with a simulated voting public

Benefits of Qual-Quant Integration for Policy Research:

Focus groups without Geographical Limits

Much larger n's possible: 100 or more for qual + 1,000s for quant

Reduces effect of self-interest (i.e., the loudest voice has the greatest impact)

Creates a representative model of the relevant public (voters, etc)

Captures background information on public for clear analysis

Provides real-time public reaction to policy ideas

Provides real-time communication to policy-makers

Creates a sense of public ownership of the policy process

“E-Town Halls” Provide Several Qualitative Capabilities

The presenter can ask attendees for snapshot opinions during a meeting

The presenter can instantly tabulate poll results and ask for opinions based on the results

The presenter can ask groups within the sessions to collaborate and discuss an issue collectively

The presenter can assess opinions before and after a meeting with a population survey that provides a rich combination of different data sources

Data Capture in the “E-Town Hall”

In Town Hall meetings:

- Attendees can simultaneously view a presentation
- Or view material at their own speed
- Can consist of only invited guests or any interested parties
- Recorded in their entirety including all transcripts, audio, video, and polling results

All saved information can easily be downloaded offline

Applicable to Many Purposes

Meeting rooms are fully customizable to suit project-specific needs

Can be used to present stimuli to respondents:

- PowerPoint presentations
- Graphics (e.g., graphs and charts)
- Live or recorded video and audio

Rooms can include interactive features:

- Live chat windows to gauge verbatim opinions in real-time
- Instant polling to determine opinions about an issue in real-time

Description of “Town Hall” Meeting

Narrated meeting was composed of survey questions, informational slides, and a Q&A session

In total, the town hall meeting lasted just over one hour

The screenshot displays a web browser window titled "WSDOT E-Town Hall Meeting - Session 1". The interface is split into two main panels. The left panel contains a "Thank you for participating!" message, a slide titled "What should be Washington's Aviation Future? E-Town Hall Meeting", a video feed of Moderator Rita Bragan, and a "Questions (1 of 1)" section with a question from John A. and a response from Moderator Rita Bragan. The right panel shows a presentation slide titled "Town hall meetings, then and now" with two bullet points defining traditional town hall meetings and e-town hall meetings. The WSDOT logo is visible in the bottom right corner of the presentation area.

WSDOT E-Town Hall Meeting - Session 1

Thank you for participating!

What should be Washington's Aviation Future?
E-Town Hall Meeting

Moderator Rita Bragan

Questions (1 of 1)

John A: Are these estimates allowing for an increase if fuel costs?

** Moderator Rita Bragan: These are based on historical trends, so they do account for wide fluctuations in fuel costs and other economic changes.

Town hall meetings, then and now

- A **town hall meeting** is an informal public meeting that originated from the traditional town meetings of New England, where everybody could attend, express ideas, and hear responses from decision-makers.
- An **e-town hall meeting** serves the same function, but allows people from all over the state to convene online, in real time, to share their ideas and provide input to decision-makers.

Washington State Department of Transportation

Participants can Ask the Moderator their Questions Throughout the Meeting

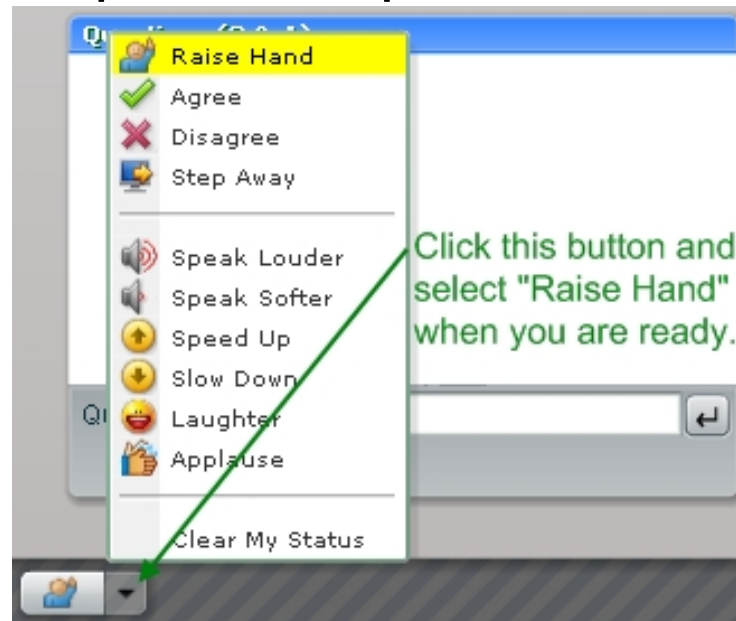
The screenshot displays a web browser window titled "WSDOT E-Town Hall Meeting - Session 1". The interface is divided into several sections:

- Thank you for participating!** A blue header for a slide titled "What should be Washington's Aviation Future? E-Town Hall Meeting".
- Moderator Rita Brogan:** A small video feed showing a woman with dark hair, identified as Rita Brogan.
- Questions (Q & A):** A scrollable list of questions and answers. Visible text includes:
 - ** Moderator Rita Brogan: These are based on historical trends, so they do account for wide fluctuations in fuel costs and other economic changes.
 - Luiz S: How difficult would it be to expand and build on smaller airports?
 - ** Moderator Rita Brogan: It depends. Smaller airports may be located in geographically constrained areas or areas that don't require expansion. Most capacity problems are within Puget Sound region. The issue is whether it's suitable to accommodate the kind of aviation needs that the state has.
 - Irene P: Do airports receive any federal funding?
 - ** Moderator Rita Brogan: Generally, most of the costs of airports are covered by the federal aviation system.
 - Jacques S: Is SeaTac...
 - ** Moderator Rita Brogan: ...
 - David L: Do your commercial airlines...
 - ** Moderator Rita Brogan: ...
 - We're talking about...
 - Kathy A: Given...
 - ** Moderator Rita Brogan: ... capacity or less capacity before and has...
 - David I: Is there...
 - ** Moderator Rita Brogan: ... of commercial expansion that happens...
 - Dawn S: would we...
 - ** Moderator Rita Brogan: ... built for constraints, personnel...
 - Earl P: ... (Sub...
 - ** Moderator Rita Brogan: ... many years...
 - of experience an...
 - Martin T: If the...
 - ** Moderator Rita Brogan: ... and...
 - over military base...
 - Kristal D 2: How...
 - ** Moderator Rita Brogan: ... face conflict...
 - Each airport should...
 - Gora W: If you h...
 - ** Moderator Rita Brogan: ... project list...
 - airport. For example it took SeaTac 15 years to add a new runway. Also some airports are reaching capacity now.
- Discussion Instructions:** A section titled "Q & A Session!" with instructions:
 - Now you have the opportunity to ask questions to the moderator, who will provide answers so everyone in the meeting room can see them.
 - Please be patient. We'll try our best to answer as many questions as possible in the time allotted!
 - The remainder of the session will consist of your questions and our answers to them.
- Q & A Form:** A text input field with the placeholder "Type your questions here" and a "Submit" button. A note states: "Press this button to submit your question. Other people will not see your question until the moderator answers it."

Residents were presented with a simple interface and were given instructions throughout the meeting

Participants can be Polled During the Meeting

For some questions, you'll be asked to change your status by selecting "Raise Hand" at the bottom left. This will notify the moderator that you are ready to proceed. Please wait for everyone else to complete the questions



Let's start with a few simple questions, just to make sure we get the hang of this system

Many Question Formats are Possible

Other than bad weather, what do you think is the biggest cause of air service delay?

- a) Airplanes needed to circle before they can land
- b) Poor connections at other airports
- c) Mechanical difficulties
- d) Flight cancellations by airlines
- e) Other reasons not listed here
- f) Don't Know

Continue

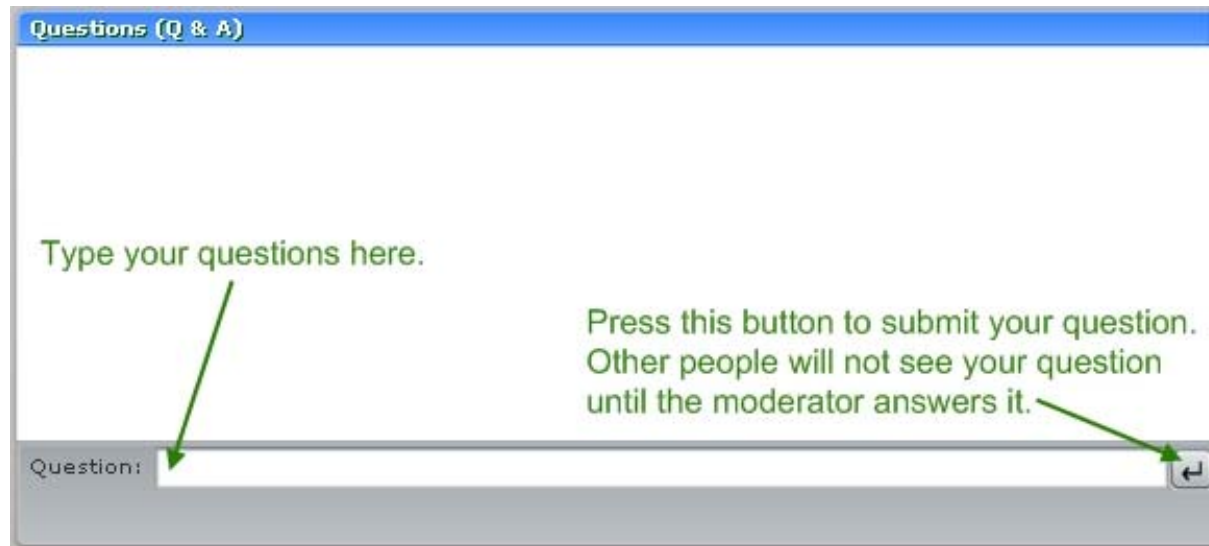
Verbatim Responses are Easy to Collect

Do you have any other thoughts about the state's role in expanding existing airports?

Please type your response below. You must enter something in order to continue to the next slide. If you don't know or don't have an opinion, just type that into the box.

Q & A Sessions can be Seen by All

Now you have the opportunity to ask questions to the moderator, who will provide answers so everyone in the meeting room can see them



Please be patient. We'll try our best to answer as many questions as possible in the time allotted!

The remainder of the session will consist of your questions and our answers to them

Washington State Case Study: How Participants were Selected

Participants were sampled randomly from KnowledgePanel

- Washington State KnowledgePanel = 1,200
- Participants provided a computer if necessary

Town Hall #1: 81 participants (120 invited)

Town Hall #2: 105 participants (120 invited)

Participants are Demographically Diverse

Gender

- Female: 61.4%
- Male: 38.6%

Age

- 18-29 years old: 4.1%
- 30-44 years old: 25.3%
- 45-59 years old: 37.7%
- 60+ years old: 32.9%

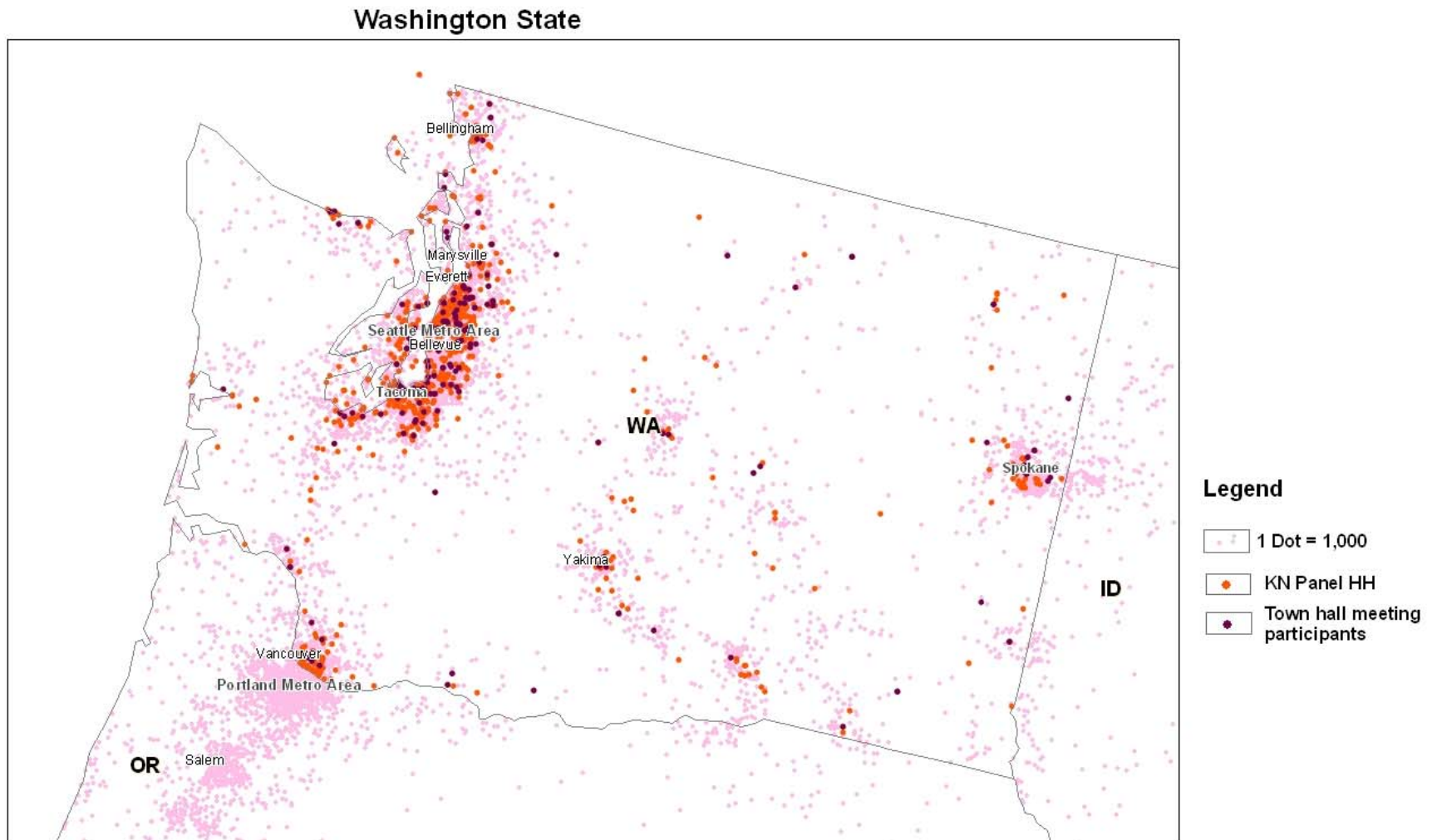
Educational Level

- Less than High School: 2.1%
- High School: 12.5%
- Some College: 41.5%
- Bachelors Degree or Higher: 44%

Race/Ethnicity

- White, Non-Hispanic: 85.6%
- Black, Non-Hispanic: 2.4%
- Other, Non-Hispanic: 3.8%
- Hispanic: 3.5%
- Two or more races, Non-Hispanic: 4.7%

KnowledgePanel Participants Track the Population Density



E-Meetings Reveal Dimensions of Public Policy Perceptions

Funding priorities

Stewardship priorities

Role of State in Funding and Preserving Public Use Airports

Highest/Lowest Priority Aviation System Needs

Meeting Future Capacity Needs

State role in expansion

KnowledgePanel Statewide Survey Provides Quantitative Data

Sample consisted of residents of Washington State

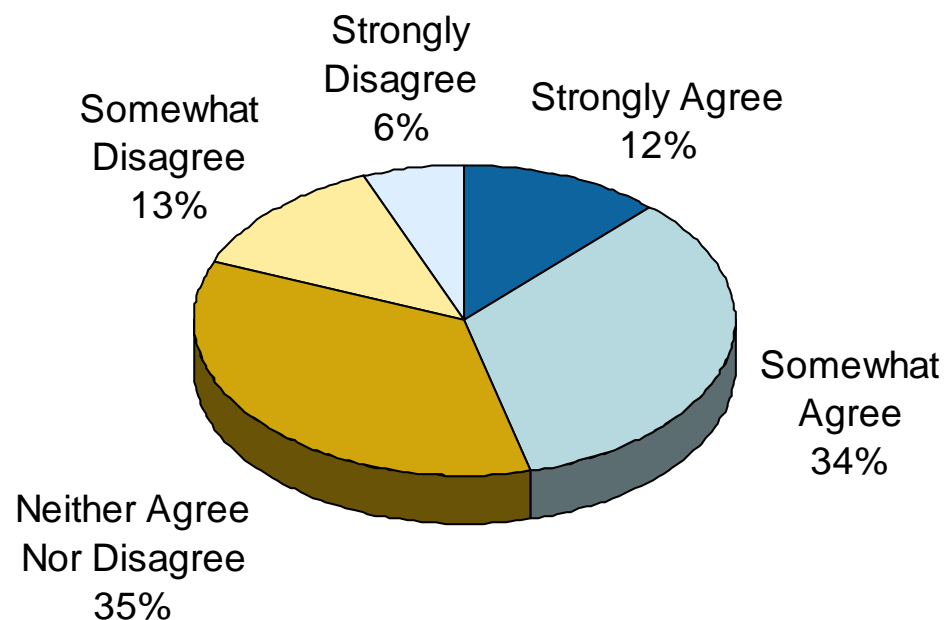
The field period was 14 days, April 3 to April 17, 2008

The survey was fielded to 1,322 people with 938 of them completing (71% survey completion rate)

Survey can Reveal the Perceptions of the Role of Government in Public Policy Making

Level of Agreement

"Because of its importance to our entire economy, the existing system of airports should be protected by state government"



Quality Public Input Contributes to More Complete Context for Policy Debates

Creates broader and more representative public input

- Improved geographic reach
- Augments input from motivated stakeholders
- Allows more dimensions of the public to participate

Allows for graphical stimuli to be shown to participants

Provides for interactive information exchange

Captures background information on both the participants and those that choose not to participate

Leads to.....

Creating More Balanced Policy Decisions

Qualitative & quantitative data collection via E-meetings and KnowledgePanel surveys provides ...

- Real-time access to demographically accurate, balanced public opinion
- New voices to the policy development process
- Public balance to the technical judgments of professional planners
- A rich context for the discussion of policy alternatives
- A less expensive method for eliciting both individual and aggregated public opinion

Thank You!

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