

# Harnessing New Communication Methods to Support Survey Research in the 21st Century •

---

**Amelia Burke-Garcia, PhD, MA**  
**NORC at the University of Chicago**

Date: September 28, 2021

A row of colorful wooden blocks, some standing upright and others falling over, symbolizing a crisis or collapse. The blocks are in various colors: red, blue, yellow, pink, blue, orange, green, and red. The yellow block in the foreground is tilted, and the blue block next to it is also tilted, while the others are standing upright.

“The survey and polling business is in crisis ... response rates have been falling for more than 30 years... Even high-quality face-to-face surveys rarely reach a 70% response rate these days.”  
— *Tourangeau, 2017*



“One person was displaced every two seconds in 2017,  
with developing countries most affected.”  
— *UNHCR, 2018*





“Foreign citizens made up 7.5% of persons living in the EU Member States on 1 January 2017.”  
— *EuroStat, 2018*



“One-in-five American adults are ‘smartphone-only’ internet users.”

— *Pew Research Center, 2018*



“People now  
generally lose  
concentration  
after eight seconds.”  
— *Microsoft, 2015*







“Only 18% of Americans today say they can trust the government.”

— *Pew Research Center, 2017*





“83 percent of employed people spend more time working at the workplace than at home.”  
— *American Time Use Survey, 2018*



The whole  
world  
is getting  
hard  
to survey.

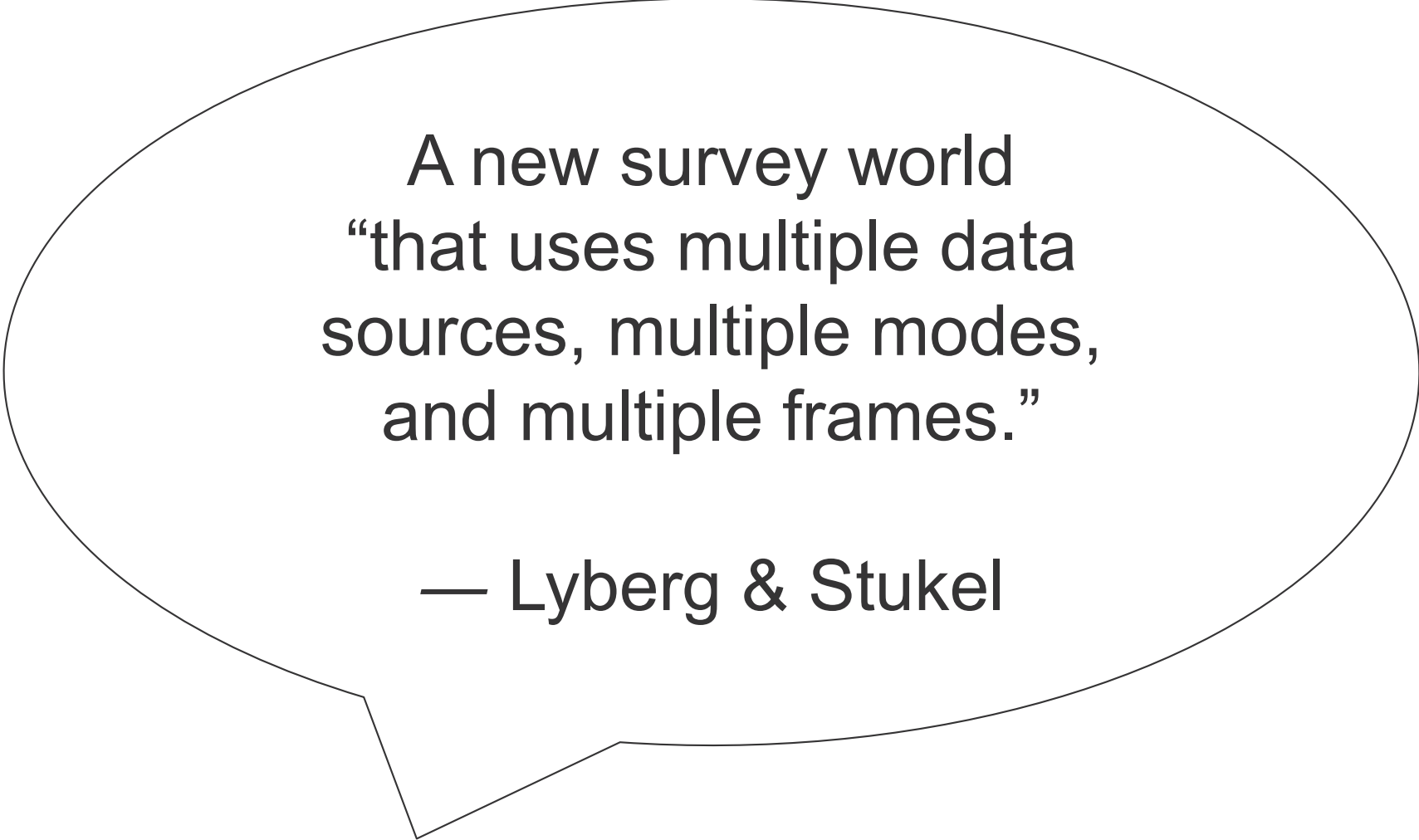


“The change in the nature of the new types of data, their availability, the way in which they are collected, and disseminated are fundamental. The change constitutes a paradigm shift for survey research.”

— *APPOR, 2015*

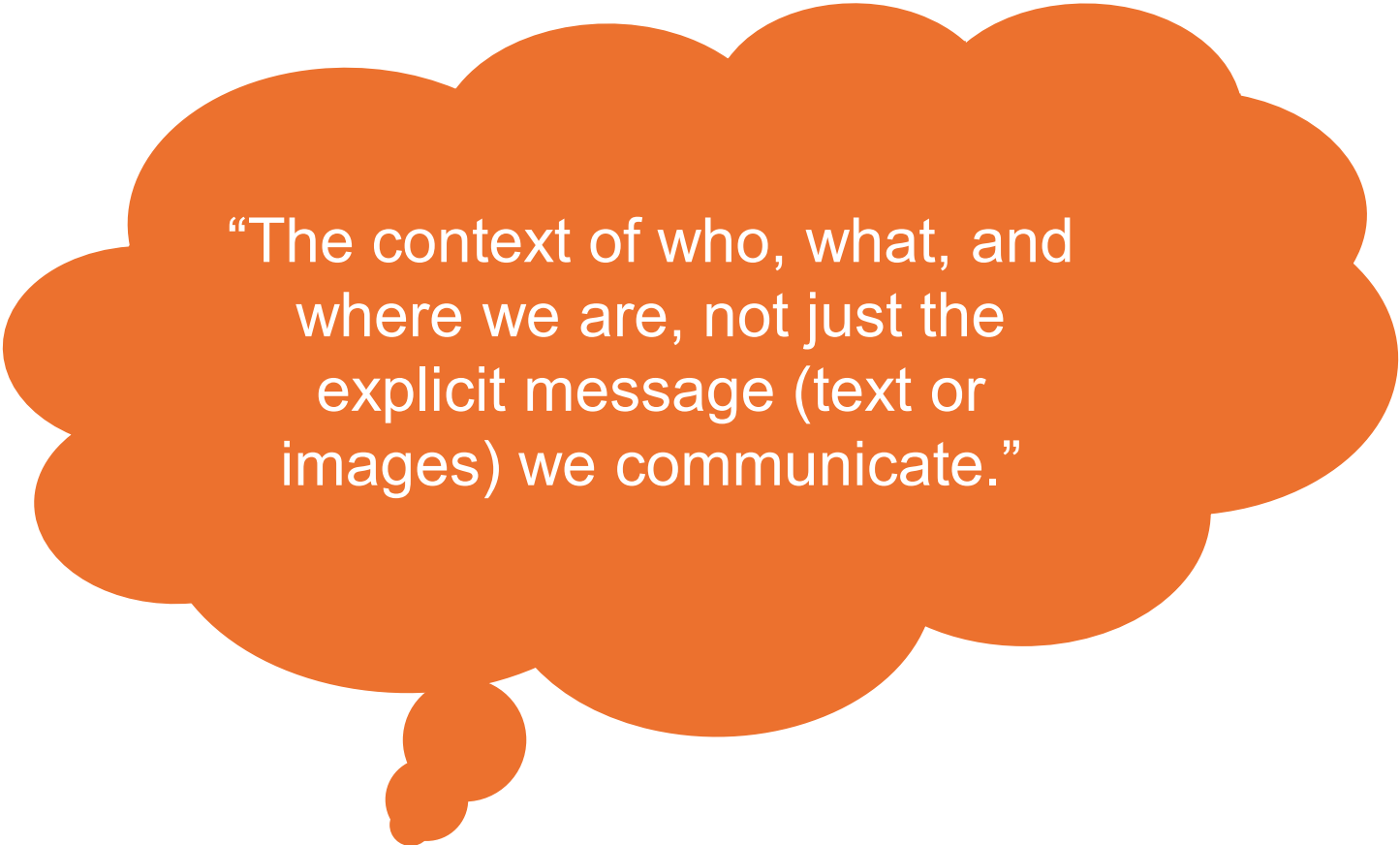






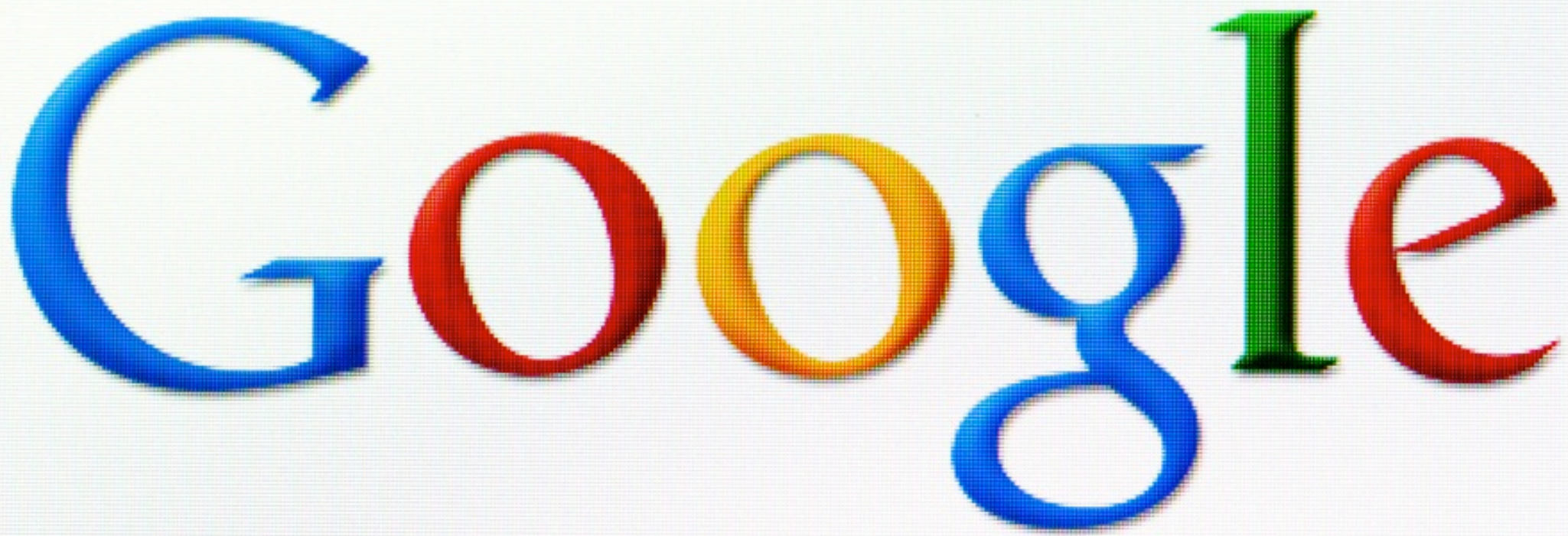
A new survey world  
“that uses multiple data  
sources, multiple modes,  
and multiple frames.”

— Lyberg & Stukel

A large, irregular orange thought bubble with a small tail pointing downwards and to the left. Inside the bubble, white text is centered.

“The context of who, what, and where we are, not just the explicit message (text or images) we communicate.”





“There are more than 3,000,000 Google searches –  
*every minute.*”



“There are more than 2 billion monthly active Apple device users — *globally.*”





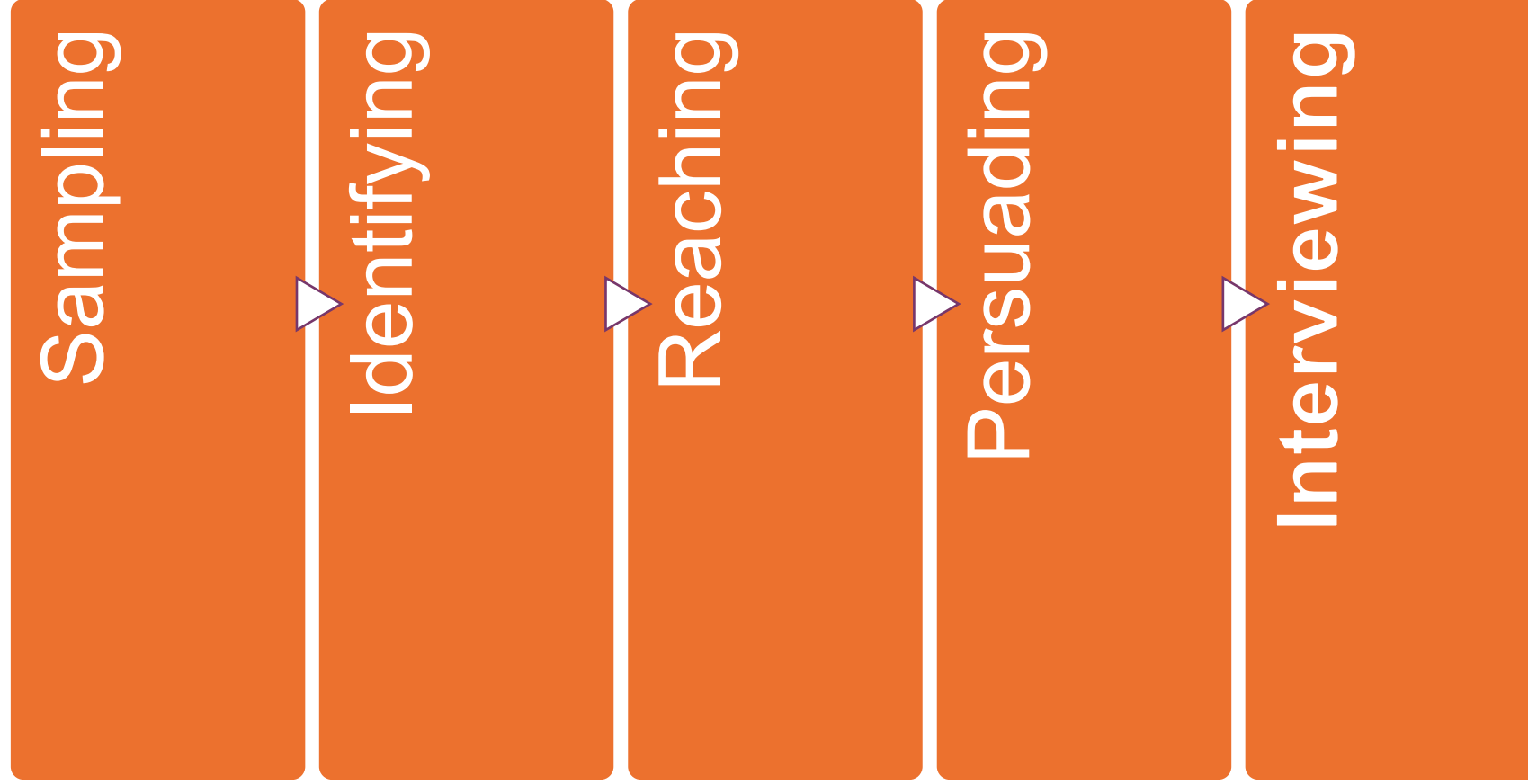
“There are more than 2.2 billion people on Facebook – *globally.*”



“There are more than 300 million monthly active Amazon users – *globally*.”

A close-up photograph of a hand holding a brown cardboard box. The box features the Amazon logo, which consists of the word 'amazon' in a bold, lowercase sans-serif font, followed by '.com'. A curved arrow is positioned below the 'a' and 'z', pointing from the 'a' to the 'z'. The background is blurred, showing what appears to be a warehouse or shipping area with other boxes and equipment.

amazon.com



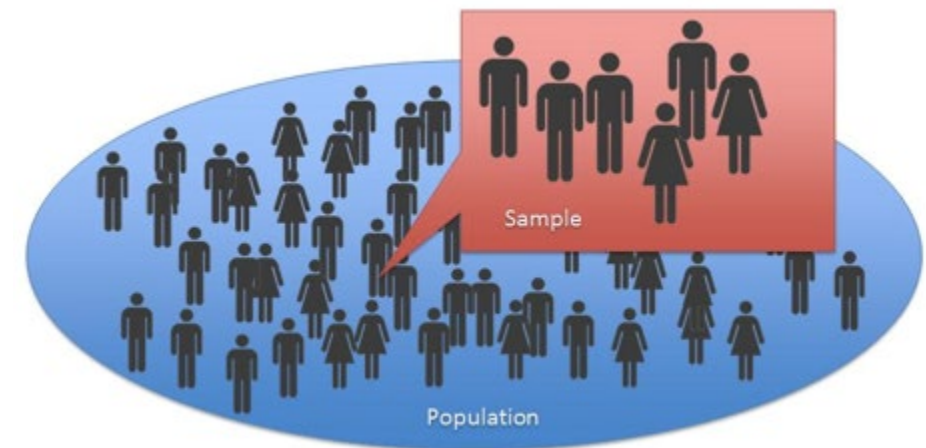


## Venue-based, Time-Space sampling

- What is VBTS sampling?
- Translating for an online context
  - Virtual events – how they work online?
  - The importance of the group manager

## Respondent-Driven Sampling

- Online groups
- Online influencer networks



## Confirming characteristics

- Essential variables such as gender, age, and geographic locations
- Other variables, e.g., membership to certain types of groups, personal interests or passions

**Lowers burden by not asking key questions via a screener**

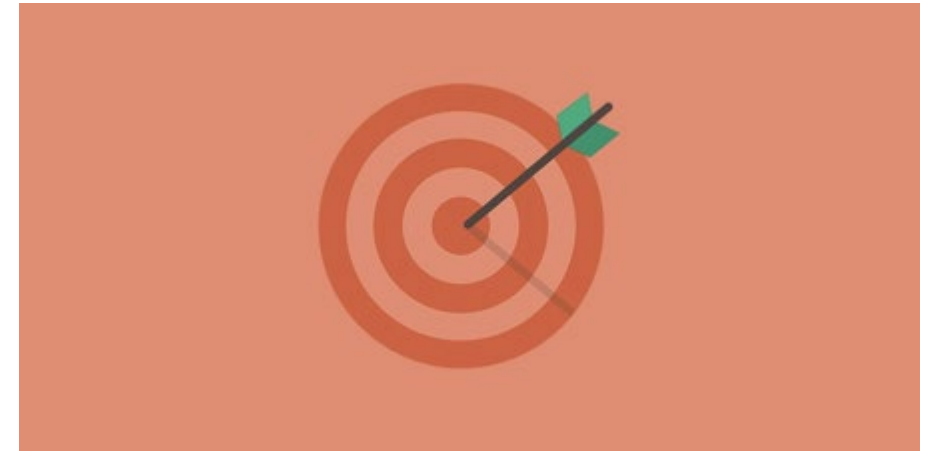
**Data needs to be public**



## **Paid social media advertising**

- Promote the survey brand
- Serve direct link to web survey
- Ads can be easily developed
- Tailored to demographic and psychographic subgroups
- Designed to fit specific platforms

## **Tracing**





## Paid social media advertising

### Online influencers

- The act of influencing requires a specific result: *a change in thinking or behavior*
- Layperson opinion leaders have the ability to share information with their readers
- They have the trust of their readers and followers



## Passive social media data mining

- Collect & analyze social data
- Which questions can be more easily answered

## Active data collection

- Obtain needed services & ideas by soliciting contributions from a large group of people
- Has had dramatic impact on the speed and scale at which scientific research can be conducted



Platforms are rapidly changing

How populations use them is also changing, e.g., ad blockers

Inactive users/fake accounts/bots

Gaps in understanding & awareness amongst users

Transparency, privacy, consent, and appropriate use of the data

Tools to analyze data

Budget

Human error/misrepresentation

Hawthorne effect





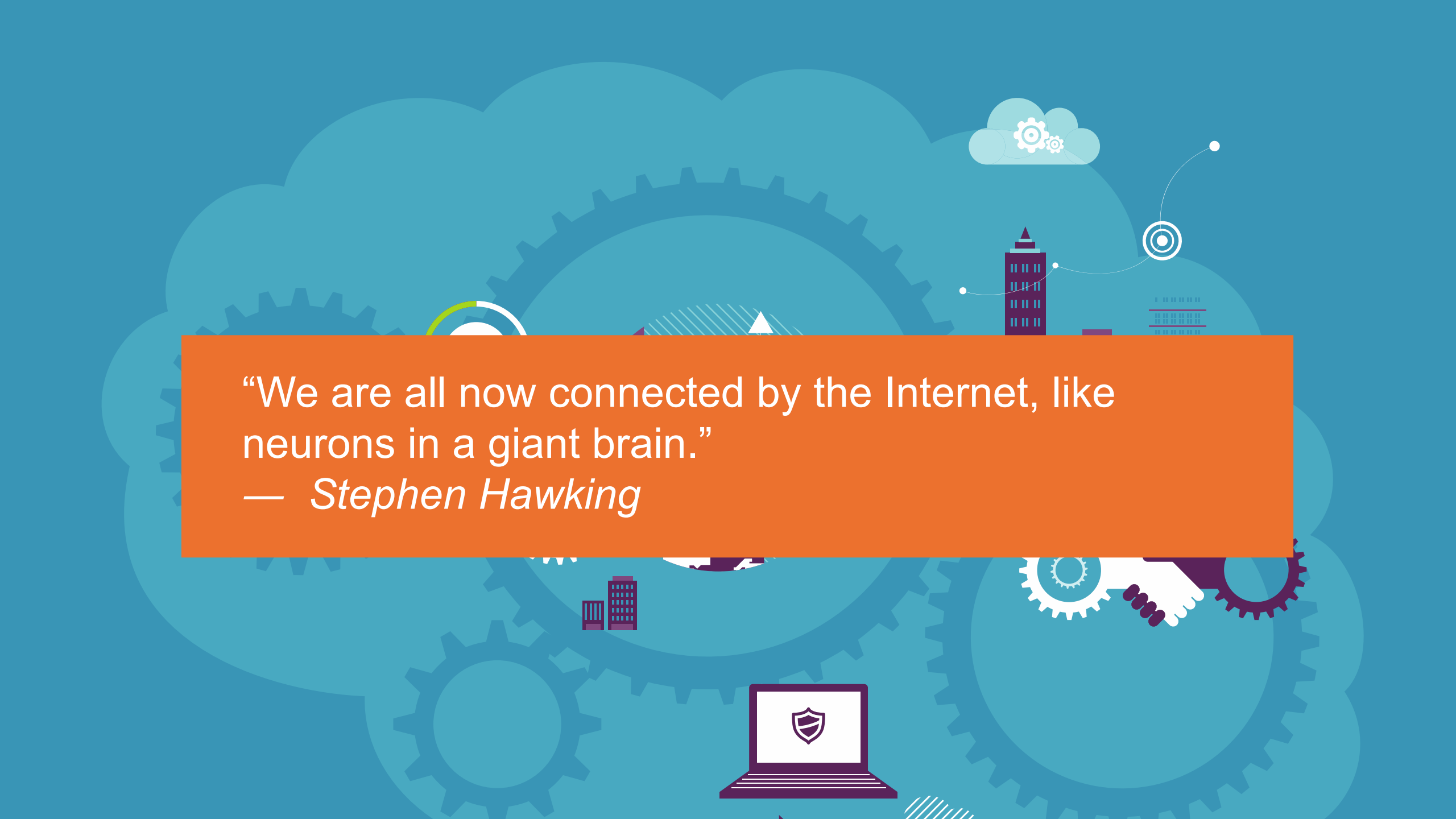


Investment in pilot and feasibility studies

New frameworks for how to successfully integrate such data into survey research

New ways of thinking about error in survey research

Protocols for appropriately and successfully using social media

The background is a solid blue color with several large, semi-transparent, light blue cloud shapes. Overlaid on these are various white and dark blue icons: large interlocking gears, a cloud containing two small gears, a target symbol with a line connecting it to a building, a hand holding a gear, a laptop with a shield icon on its screen, and a small city skyline. The text is centered within a solid orange rectangular box.

“We are all now connected by the Internet, like  
neurons in a giant brain.”  
— *Stephen Hawking*

# Thank you.

**Amelia Buurke-Garcia, PhD,  
MA**  
Program Area Director  
[burkegarcia-amelia@norc.org](mailto:burkegarcia-amelia@norc.org)

---

 Research You Can Trust™

---

 **NORC** at the  
University of  
Chicago