

**Campaign Strategy Newsletter No 48, January 2009**  
**Campaigns by 'Now People', And Polls**

Two articles in this Newsletter – first two Now People campaign offers, second two polls on biodiversity

## **March Of The Now People – Designing Campaigns for Prospectors**

Readers of this newsletter will remember articles about Values Modes [1] and the Mode “Now People”. This is a critical group in public conversation, being the defining owners of ‘fashion’, the most favoured readers of mid-market media, and amongst the most sought after consumer targets for many retail brands. Now People live in the corner of the Values Map which is home to hedonism: “we want the world and we want it now”, is a thought that Now People can easily identify with. They have succeeded in leaving behind their Settler roots – having satisfied their needs for belonging, safety and security – and partly achieved the esteem of others. They are now in full-on pursuit of self-esteem and feeling quite confident about getting it.

Gaining the support of Now People is crucial in bridging any campaign ‘issue’ or more likely action, from the land of complexity, connections, ‘good causes’ and arguments – the Pioneer world of the Inner Directed – into the simpler, no-nonsense, get-ahead, success-oriented, more fun and highly emotional esteem-seeking world of the Outer Directed Prospectors. Even in these straitened times when the prospects for esteem may be shaken, the Now People remain the key to engaging a huge swathe of the population in any developed or transitional economy. Sadly few campaigns resonate for Now People. Most get put in the “not yet”, “too worthy”, “too dull” and “too complicated box”. But here are a couple of campaigns that seem to be devised in model ‘Now People’ terms. Note how different they are from most ‘campaigns’.

<http://www.globalcool.org/>

Global Cool’s website home page features Super Model Lily Cole - find out “what she thinks about work, sex and of course cool. It’s all about you !” Me-me-me – this is Now People think.

“Global Cool's mission is this: get a billion people to reduce their personal CO2 emissions by at least one tonne. Become one in a billion right here by ticking which tiny lifestyle changes you could realistically make on your very own MyCool Workout Card”.

Although it’s all about climate change Global Cool is all about people – from K T Tunstall and HRH Prince Charles through Razorlight, Lily Allen and Paul McCartney – and lifestyle not policies. And simple action - buying a “tonne of cool” at <http://www.globalcool.org/donate/donate> takes a tonne of CO2 out of the atmosphere.

[www.joinred.com](http://www.joinred.com)

The RED Amex card ([www.joinred.com](http://www.joinred.com)) is a device which could appeal to both Now People and Transcenders. Launched by U2’s Bono and supermodels Giselle Bundchen and Elle Macpherson in 2006 it offers a bounded, instant, visible, glamorous and uncomplicated way of supporting a cause, without it feeling like one.

Declaring that it had been “Created to eliminate AIDS in Africa” and with the strapline “virtue + desire”, Red’s website is festooned with images of style icons and reads like a Now Person – Transcender positioning statement:

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*“Red is not a charity, Red is not a cause, Red is not a theory [read: not just Pioneer and definitely not Concerned Ethical – ed]. Red is an ingenious idea that unites our incredible collective power as consumers with our innate urge to help others. Red is where virtue meets desire ... The most sought after brands in the world have become Red partners ... American Express, Apple, Converse, Dell, Emporio Armani, Gap, Hallmark, Microsoft ...”.*

Brands, supermodels, style icons – Now People could take the card at that level. Having the card would be the vital thing, so long as it remains *the* thing to be doing. Or Transcenders might take it a different direction, into issues, connections, Africa. Each time a (style icon) product is bought through Red the company gives up to half its profit to red to buy retroviral drugs in Africa. A freebie – something else Prospectors love. A clever proposition which pulls off a difficult trick.

Predominantly inner-directed NGOs thinking about trying to reach Now People should note that you can’t do what these sites have done by plugging in a bit of Now Person-ness into an existing Settler or Pioneer brand. They need to stand alone as their own offer with their own ‘architecture’.

[1] see *Using Values Modes* and for example, Newsletter 44, at [www.campaignstrategy.org](http://www.campaignstrategy.org)

### **The Recession Affects Values Groups 2008 - 9**

In Newsletter 44 ‘Campaigning Your Way Out Of Recession / Who Cares About The Environment’ I looked at UK survey data on how different values-groups looked at ‘climate’.

That Newsletter also argued that in a recession when politicians need most to reassure people about safety and security, campaigners would need to “put the case [eg on climate issues] in terms which meet the psychological needs of the time – first for security, safety and belonging, then profitability, and only after that, their favourite territory of ethics and global responsibility”.

Yet to be published, the latest full CDSM ([www.cultdyn.co.uk](http://www.cultdyn.co.uk)) values survey, based on 5,000 people, was run after Northern Rock but before the September 2008 banking collapse. Pat Dade at CDSM tells me it shows some significant changes. For example there have been changes in the values profile of party support from 2005 when we surveyed political affiliation by identity (see <http://www.campaignstrategy.org/valuesvoters/index.html>) .

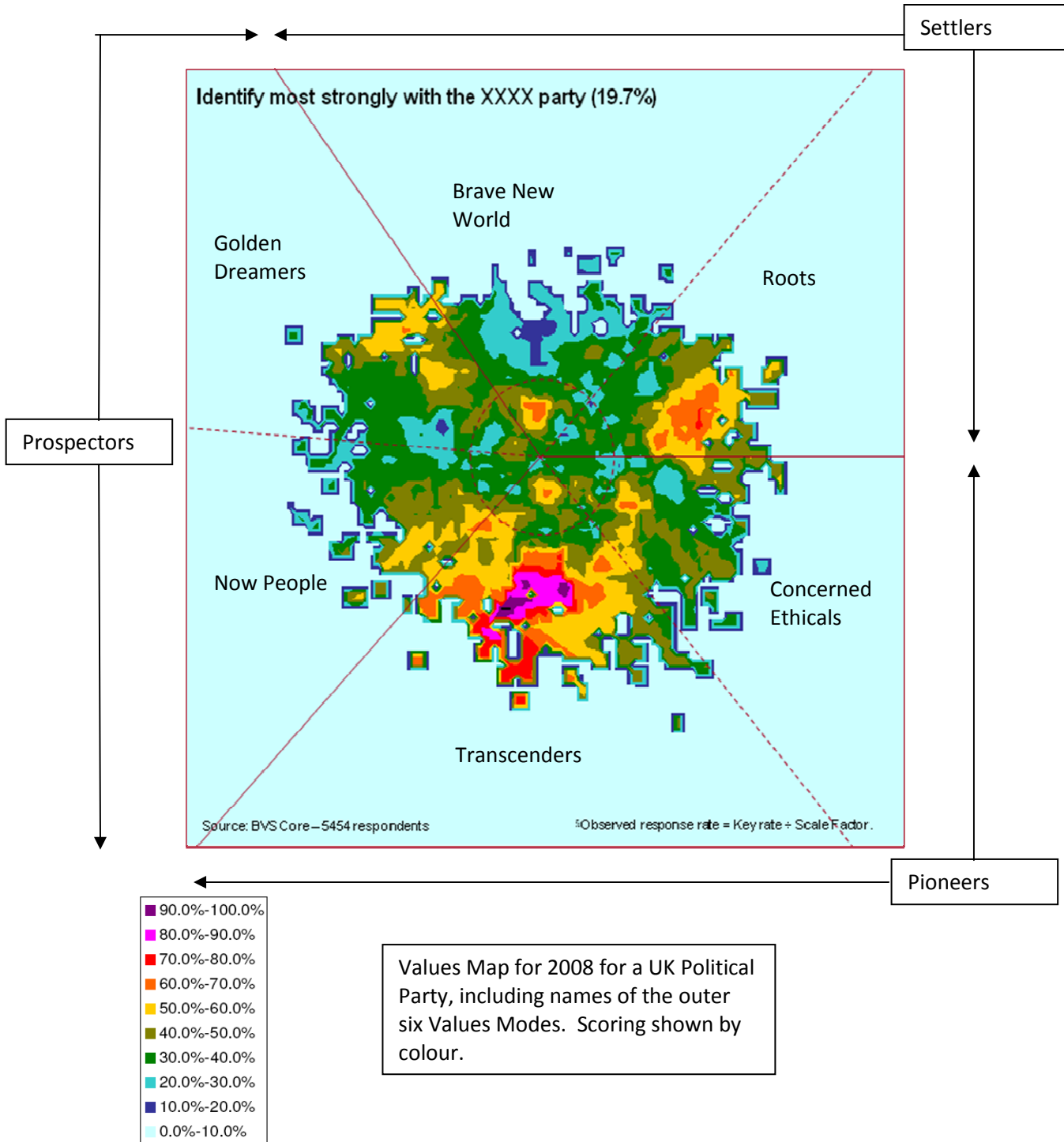
I’m told the 2008 survey also shows a contraction in the ‘top end’ Prospector Values Modes – those closest to making the transition to becoming Pioneers (eg the Now People, above, but particularly the Tomorrow People on the cusp of becoming Pioneers) – probably because of feelings of fear, uncertainty and doubt engendered by recession. The entry state Prospectors, the “Golden Dreamers”, have increased in numbers: the world of the X Factor and dreams, rarely fulfilled, of short cuts to success.

Once people cross over to become Pioneers it’s thought they never ‘go back’ but they may drop back from Prospector towards Settler in times of stress, when the possibilities to succeed seem fewer. Despite the Prospector-contraction, the 2008 survey is said to show Pioneers are now the biggest single group. Indeed numbers of ‘Concerned Ethicals’ – the judgemental faction of the Pioneers – have increased: political constituency offices should brace themselves for more persistent questions on the blog and earnest visits about ‘issues’. NGOs may find there are plenty of takers for ‘network’ initiatives

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in the Obama House Meeting style, especially amongst older CEs (for an age profile in England see the data accompanying the marine report discussed in Newsletter 43).

Here's a changed party map – compare it with the 2005 surveys at <http://campaignstrategy.org/valuesvoters/> but which party is it?



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Society is going to feel very different in 2009 and beyond. Further details will be published at [www.cultdyn.co.uk](http://www.cultdyn.co.uk) and [www.campaignstrategy.org](http://www.campaignstrategy.org) in coming months.

## **Put Not Your Trust In Polls – Until You’ve Read The Actual Questions (And The Answers)**

Polls, ie quantitative surveys where you are usually asked set questions, can easily be used to lead our thinking and focus our attention without us realising what is going on. During an election race for example, “horse race polls” may maintain a media focus on just the larger parties – who is ahead? - by not including the smaller ones. By measuring things, by providing numbers, by being quantified, polling takes on some of the clothes of scientific enquiry and with them, an aura of objectivity, even impartiality. Yet by selecting the questions a pollster or commissioner selects what is important and what is not, and by the wording of the questions, the possible consequential meaning of the results – and thus, often, a media agenda. And even when, in the back of our minds, we know this, as soon as we refer to the results we have taken the bait, and the framing effect of the poll result begins to do its work.

But it’s not just politicians and journalists who love polls, and even when conducted with the best of intentions, they can mislead. NGOs and many sorts of companies and agencies are fond of commissioning polls. Polls can be useful [1] in campaigns but the very factors that make them seductive to the media (their apparent clarity, quantified results) also make them dangerous. In particular, polls are usually a poor guide to ‘why’ – they offer a far less reliable insight into motivation and perception that does qualitative research.

### **Polling biodiversity**

Below I discuss two polls used to probe ‘public attitudes’ to and ‘understanding’ of ‘biodiversity’. Here the commissioners hope to use the polls to devise communications campaigns but really how useful are they?

Of course biodiversity is a subject of great importance – the diversity of life on earth measured as species, the connections between them, the webs and links of ecosystems, the genetic variety within systems and species, communities, or populations. Biodiversity is disappearing. Future medicines are going with it, unknown, uncharted: the fruits of evolution washed away in the destruction of rainforests and other environments before even the privateers of the pharmaceutical industry have laid hands on it. All over the world, our world is getting smaller, plainer, emptier of life, more of a graveyard to extinct species and varieties.

Biodiversity as a concept devised to describe this variety, originated in the 1980s when scientists interested in trying to work out where most of the natural variety on earth lay, and why, shortened the term ‘biological diversity’. It has been used in dozens of analyses (such as the UN Millennium Environmental Assessment [2]) laws, treaties and conventions, and has given rise to many targets and objectives.

The EU for instance notes [3]:

*“EU Heads of State or Government agreed in 2001 “to halt the decline of biodiversity [in the EU] by 2010” and to “restore habitats and natural systems”. In 2002, they joined some 130 world leaders in*

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*agreeing "to significantly reduce the rate of biodiversity loss [globally] by 2010". Opinion polls show that these concerns for nature and biodiversity are strongly supported by EU citizens."*

'Biodiversity' however, is not a term that has come up through the ranks of what is understood, so much as come top down from an elite world of science and policy. More than a few scientists and policy makers have identified public understanding of 'biodiversity' as a key part of the problem in achieving its conservation. Even in the rich EU biodiversity continues to decline, and the EU plans more action including public campaigns, to 'address' this. The 'EU Action Plan to 2010 and Beyond' [4] specifies "*Building public education, awareness and participation for biodiversity*" as one of four key 'supporting measures'. It hopes to see "10 million Europeans actively engaged in biodiversity conservation by 2010, 15 million by 2013."

A pivotal document widely quoted in the EU in developing its strategy is a Eurobarometer Poll, "*Eurobarometer" public opinion survey on the "Attitudes of Europeans towards the issue of biodiversity"* (no.219) [5]. Based largely on this survey, an EU-commissioned report scoped out a communications campaign [6]. The consultants who penned it, Gellis communications, state:

*"The term 'biodiversity' is known by more than 60% of Europe's general public and accepted amongst all stakeholder groups. The campaign should thus not replace the word, but should establish a catchy way of communicating the subject of biodiversity loss and its consequences."*

Gellis then go on to lay out a series of options for a three year large scale communications campaign. It's not at all a bad paper – you may find it has interesting or useful ideas for campaign design but is it right that because 'biodiversity' is known by stakeholders (Gellis interviewed biodiversity professionals in the 'Green Spider Network' and thirty others) and "by more than 60% of Europe's general public" according to the poll, it should be used as the lynchpin of a campaign, ultimately designed to get people to engage with actions such as local conservation management?

As the Gellis campaign scoping study itself notes:

*"Among the Eurobarometer respondents, 65% are already aware of the word biodiversity, even if only 35% think they know what it actually means"*

In fact the Eurobarometer survey first asked if respondents had heard of 'biodiversity' and if they knew what it meant. Gallup, which conducted the Eurobarometer study, noted: "*only 35% of EU citizens said they knew the meaning of the term biodiversity, while 30% said they had heard of the term but did not know its meaning. Thirty-five percent claimed they had never heard of the term."*

The next step was to explain to respondents that "*Biological diversity, or biodiversity . is the term given to the variety of life on Earth (such as plants, animals, oceans) which forms the web of life of which we are an integral part."*

Respondents were then asked to explain this - loss of biodiversity - in their own words. Question 2 was "*Can you please tell me what the phrase "loss of biodiversity" means to you?"*

So this is where we find, according to Gallup, "a majority of EU citizens were able to define the meaning of 'biodiversity loss' in their own words". Yes they could describe this 'loss' but that was after they had been told what they were 'losing' – so what does that really mean?

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The responses were then coded [7] into various options – that is, sorted by the interviewers. On this basis Gallup reported “41% of respondents said that biodiversity loss meant that certain animals and plants were disappearing or would disappear and 20% said it meant that certain animals and plants were endangered or would become endangered”. Gallup concluded that *“The general public understood biodiversity loss mostly as a species-focused concept or as a concept related to changes in natural habitats.”*

So what does this tell us? What is it testing? Given that the respondents had first been told a definition of biodiversity and then asked what loss of it would mean ‘to you’, it might be testing a number of things: Their ability to recall what they had just heard, for example. Had they been listening? And were they confident in giving a “don’t know”? Remarkably while only 6% of Bulgarians and Latvians were remained unable to say what such a ‘loss’ meant to them after the ‘it’ had been explained, some 45% of Irish, 34% of Swedes and 31% of Brits still happily opted for “don’t know”. This variation seems just as likely to be down to national culture about answering questions or owning up to ignorance (or laziness) as it is to understanding of ‘biodiversity’ or whether, for some reason, the Latvians have greater convictions about their place in “the web of life” than the Irish do. We cannot tell from the survey – yet because these processes generate numbers, the results take on a significance that is easily passed from one report to the next and can end up influencing policy, and years of effort and public expenditure.

EU Commissioner Stavros Dimas (a politician and apparently the ultimate commissioner of this survey), wrote about the survey on his blog [8]

*“Opinion polls are one of the defining features of modern politics and can allow policy makers to get a real feeling for what the public thinks... Perhaps the most important conclusion is that the loss of national biodiversity is seen as a serious problem by 88% of the EU population. Globally the situation is an even greater worry with 94% of Europeans seeing it as a problem. The reasons for this strength of feeling are also clear since over 90% of Europeans believe that we have a moral responsibility to act as guardians of nature. And, while the moral case is seen as the strongest reason for protecting nature, there is also a clear feeling that there are important economic reasons for nature protection. 75% agreed that Europe will get poorer as a consequence of the loss of biodiversity.*

*Given this strength of public support, it is surprising that protecting biodiversity is not higher on the political agenda. Perhaps the reason is that – unlike climate change – relatively few people feel that there is a direct link between the loss of biodiversity and their own quality of life. This was another finding of the survey – although, interestingly, 70% felt that there would be direct impacts in the future.*

*There were two other particularly interesting findings which should give policy makers pause for thought. The first is that, while there is a lot of support for nature protection, the term “biodiversity” is not well understood in many countries (84% of Cypriots have never even heard of it). Perhaps we need a more user friendly way of getting the message across.”*

There are two important but potentially weasel words here: ‘understanding’ and ‘message’. Is biodiversity just a term, or is it a “message”, a cause, an ‘issue’? In *How To Win Campaigns* I argue that in constructing communications strategies it’s usually best to avoid the use of the term ‘message’ altogether because it is a compound or multivalent term, for example possibly including channel or

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required action or motivating trigger, and instead suggest breaking it down and building it up again by using the CAMPCAT formula[9].

Perhaps more important in this case, we have two possible meanings of ‘understanding’.

First, ‘understanding of biodiversity’ could mean how the people surveyed think about, perceive and conceive the things that scientists see as biodiversity. For example if they already see it as ‘nature’ (and have feelings and convictions about that) then might it not be more sensible (more effective) to talk about it as “nature”? If as Commissioner Dimas says *“there is a lot of support for nature protection”*. This would be following the marketing dictum, ‘start from where your audience is’.

Alternatively ‘understanding of biodiversity’ could mean people’s understanding of *our* (the poll commissioners) understanding of biodiversity. It seems implicit in the Gallup Eurobarometer poll that this is what the EU needs to measure and while Dimas at least raises the possibility that this is wrong, the Gellis study makes the assumption explicit. The Gellis study notes:

*“among the general public few respondents (only 2%) perceive the loss of biodiversity as a threat to ecosystems as providers of goods and services and thus to their economic well-being. This deficit can become another rather tangible angle of a future communications campaign – a fact that has also been emphasized by many expert interview partners”*.

So built into this thinking is the idea that the overall task is to remedy deficits in ‘understanding’ of the second sort. That is to get the public to think of biodiversity in the same way as the scientists. But is this right? The EU strategy aims to get the public to undertake real-world actions, to be “actively engaged” – might the best approach not be to use whatever the most effective, short, simple and robust point of understanding is, that can drive those actions? It might, for instance, be communicating around nature and animals, and maybe climate?

Even if the task really is to ‘educate’ the public into seeing biodiversity in the ‘scientific’ terms, is the poll a reliable guide? The conclusion that only 2% saw biodiversity *“as providers of goods and services and thus [... ] economic well-being”* is apparently drawn from the interviewers coding 2% of responses about loss of biodiversity as meaning “Loss of potential for producing medicines, food and fuel”. But does the 2% coded really shows this? The definition of biodiversity given to the public didn’t mention medicines or “ecosystems as providers of goods and services” so is it surprising that it wasn’t mentioned much in responses. ‘Plants and animals’ on the other hand were cited to explain the variety of life’ so it is hardly a surprise that “41% of respondents said that biodiversity loss meant that certain animals and plants were disappearing or would disappear and 20% said it meant that certain animals and plants were endangered or would become endangered”.

So despite the apparent objectivity and scientific method of such a survey, how much more reliable is it than a series of well observed conversations about biodiversity? Ie qualitative research? My answer would be not much or not at all. Indeed without qualitative research I think it’s likely to be fundamentally misleading.

The methodology of the survey – first telling people what something meant and then asking what loss of it meant – colours everything that comes afterwards. It would be accurate, if perhaps unkind, to say that most objectively the survey simply showed that most people were paying attention. (It also found that

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those with a higher level of education gave ‘better’ responses – an almost universal feature of surveys that rely on ability to pay attention).

So if you were about to allocate millions of Euros to a campaign of public communication around ‘biodiversity’, how useful would these surveys really be? To my mind the more interesting findings lie in national differences of association. As Gallup noted, for instance, in a footnote after asking about the ‘Natura 2000’ network of nature sites ostensibly designated to protect biodiversity in the EU:

*“The high awareness level of the Natura 2000 network in Bulgaria and Finland might have been due to the controversial selection process of potential candidate areas to join the network in these countries. In Bulgaria, the government was accused of having excluded almost half of the protection areas from the list of potential candidates proposed by scientists because of investors’ interests. In Finland, the government was accused of having excluded potential candidates from the candidate list, and this was declared illegal by the Finish supreme administrative court in 2000.”*

In other words, ‘biodiversity’ has acquired meaning as a result of specific real world ‘local’ experiences.

The Eurobarometer survey goes on to ask quite a few questions, including (with numerous options):

How informed do you feel about the loss of biodiversity?

Why it can be important to halt the loss of biodiversity?

How serious is it locally and globally?

Will the decline and possible extinction of animal species, flora and fauna have an impact on you personally?

What threatens biodiversity the most? (many options)

and it analyses the results in great depth across the 27 states. It’s a big, expensive survey. All these responses follow the process of having first told people what biodiversity is. So that’s what you are testing – not what would happen if you went out and used the term *without* first being able to explain it, which is perhaps more likely reality.

### **The UK North-East ‘Understanding Of Biodiversity’ Study**

The North East Biodiversity Forum’s ‘Attitudes towards Biodiversity in the North East of England’ was published in December 2007 and is also posted online [10]. Conducted by consultancy ‘MarketWise Strategies’, this study is in some ways methodologically more sophisticated than the Gallup Eurobarometer. Unlike the Gallup survey it asked and reported on open ended questions. In other words it included questions where the respondents were not prompted about what ‘biodiversity’ meant or first told what it meant and then asked about its loss. As such its results are probably more indicative of the ‘real’ understanding of biodiversity that is ‘out there’ (in their case, in north east England) and which you would encounter if you undertook a campaign of some sort.

Rather than 60%, 35% or 21%, the unprompted ‘right’ understanding of biodiversity revealed in this survey was around 9%. Follow the links at ref [10] and you can see the responses given, which MarketWise decided were ‘correct’ in around 9% of cases. This is a good example of why you can trust the results of a survey more if you can see the actual questions and actual responses, rather than just an interpretation.



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MarketWise report that 32% of north east England respondents claimed to have definitely heard of biodiversity, which they note is higher than the 26% recorded in a Defra 2001 (UK Govt) survey of public attitudes. That is also very similar to the Gallup (2007) survey result of 35% for the EU (in that survey 28% in the UK said they had ‘heard of it and knew what it meant’ and 32% that they had ‘heard of it but did not know what it meant’). This suggests that the unprompted results EU-wide might be similar – 10% or less ‘really’ knowing what biodiversity ‘is’.

The north east England study also asked a similar question to the Eurobarometer study, in that respondents were given four possible meanings of biodiversity and asked which was correct. These were ‘waste that breaks down naturally’, ‘the variety of living things’, ‘rubbish that can be burnt for fuel’ and, ‘the use of trees to off-set carbon emissions’. Of these the most popular was “waste that breaks down naturally” at 33% (37% amongst women).

This suggests that people are guessing, which is what we do when we don’t understand something. Using cues like “bio” and “d-something”, “biodegradable” is an easy gut option, and the most likely source of reference is probably adverts for “biodegradable” products such as washing up liquid. 31% ‘got the right answer’ but knowing what we do – that only 9% got it unprompted – this is similar to simple guesswork. After all, a purely random result would give 1 in 4 chance of selecting each option, or 25%. To their credit, MarketWise explained that they knew people were guessing: “some attempted to work out the meaning from the word’s elements: It must be something about biological stuff - what you eat?”

For me, these results (and these are not particularly ‘bad’ studies at all) illustrate an unfortunate truth about polling. The meaning of responses is so dependent on interpretation by both the respondents and those who set the questions and those who receive the ‘results’ that the apparent ease, clean-ness, clarity and convenience of a poll over a ‘messier’ and ‘more subjective’ process of qualitative research (such as focus groups or paired interviews), is largely illusory. Certainly it is always better to use qualitative research to gain understanding and then, if necessary, to use quantitative polling to put numbers to those perceptions and segments.

[1] see for example <http://www.campaignstrategy.org/articles/12basicguidelines.pdf> and pp 54 - 57 in *How To Win Campaigns*, Chris Rose, pub Earthscan 2005

[2] <http://www.millenniumassessment.org/en/index.aspx>

[3] <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:52006DC0216:EN:NOT>

[4] HALTING THE LOSS OF BIODIVERSITY BY 2010 — AND BEYOND,  
[http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/biodiversity/comm2006/pdf/sec\\_2006\\_621.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/biodiversity/comm2006/pdf/sec_2006_621.pdf)

[5] Conducted in the 27 Member States of the EU, the results are at:

[http://ec.europa.eu/public\\_opinion/archives/flash\\_arch\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/flash_arch_en.htm)

[6] [http://ec.europa.eu/environment/pubs/pdf/biodiversity/biodiversity\\_scoping\\_study.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/pubs/pdf/biodiversity/biodiversity_scoping_study.pdf)

[7] The codes were: Certain animals and plants are disappearing/will disappear; Certain animals and plants are/will become endangered; Decline in natural habitats/less variety - in general; Loss of natural heritage such as nature parks/endemic species/natural landscapes; Forests will disappear/decline; Climate change; Problems with clean air and water/CO2 emissions; Problems for the economy/Loss of material wealth; Loss of potential for producing medicines, food and fuel; Don’t care about this issue; Problems in my garden; Less opportunities for tourism; Others; DK/NA

[8]<http://blogs.ec.europa.eu/dimas/strong-opinions-on-nature/>

[9] see Campaign Strategy Newsletter No 20 December 2005 at [www.campaignstrategy.org](http://www.campaignstrategy.org)

[10] visit [http://www.nebiodiversity.org.uk/public\\_attitudes\\_research/default.asp](http://www.nebiodiversity.org.uk/public_attitudes_research/default.asp) for a summary and links to the full report and the open question responses