

Young People and Identity: summary research findings

The following material is taken from the three pieces of research the Identity and Passport Service conducted with young people. A commitment was given to publish this material once all the work was completed.

1. Mylifemyid – online research forum (July to October 2008)

The research objectives were to understand young people's lives, their issues around identity, and if and how owning an Identity Card could make their lives easier. Members were self selecting and took part in discussion forums, online polls, and surveys as part of the process. The community consisted of 1147 British residents aged 16 to 25.

The community was split between those who arrived at the site via advertising placed on young people's websites like Facebook and Myspace (537 members), and those who arrived via links placed on websites independently of IPS, and included those opposed to the NIS such as the No2id site and The Register (610 members). 59% of those arriving via advertising supported the NIS, in line with public opinion tracking at the time. However, 62% of those arriving from links were strongly opposed to the NIS and these members of the community were very vocal on the discussion threads on the site.

The key finding was that young people have a frequent need for an identity token but are satisfied with the existing identity tokens they use (passport or driving licence). They saw no particular need for a third identity token. The discussion forum was dominated by anti NIS lobbyists but despite the negative comments they failed to shift opinion in those who supported the NIS and most members held the same view of the NIS throughout the life of the community.

2. Understanding young people's attitudes to identity issues and the NIS (September to November 2008)

A qualitative study to gauge views on some proposed propositions for the youth market. Key findings from this study showed:

- 16-17 year olds own an identity token but tend not to carry it with them.
- Most 18+ young adults carry ID with them at all times. They use ID to get into clubs/bars, get student discounts (if appropriate) and buy restricted products. Identity tokens are mainly student cards and driving licences.
- Respondents had difficulty recognising any USP that the Identity Card could offer and were unclear about how much the Identity Card would cost, is it compulsory, will it have biometrics etc.
- Younger respondents were more likely to feel positive about the introduction of the NIS but all respondents were reluctant to pay for the card.
- While compulsion was unpopular, lack of compulsion invalidated the propositions tested as respondents were unconvinced that they would work with a voluntary product.
- However the greatest barrier to purchase of the Identity Card seemed to be the ubiquity of the driving licence which was seen as both useful and popular.

3. IPS Concept Evaluation Research (February to April 2009)

A robust programme of qualitative and quantitative research was then conducted among a wider sample of British adults aged 16-75 (1,000 25+ adults were interviewed and a boost of

500 young people). The objective of the research was to validate the findings of the original qualitative work with young people and to test the proposition envisaged for the tactical launch in 2009 across the whole population. In addition to the quantitative phase 20 discussion groups and 16 in depth interviews were conducted.

The key findings:

- Respondents were broadly in favour of the introduction of ID cards (78% of 16-25 year olds and 67% of 26-75 year olds agree with government plans) because of the societal benefits that ubiquity of the card could deliver. However while 27% of 16-25 year olds and 22% of 26-75 year olds claimed they would buy a voluntary product at £30, more detailed consideration of the proposition in discussion groups (specifically the voluntary nature of the card) caused this to unravel in some cases. Respondents split into three main groups attitudinally
- People who felt as a consumer proposition a product at £30 needed to deliver more personal benefits for them to want to purchase the card
- People who were keen to purchase an ID card as they saw clearly the ways that the product would make their life easier and safer.
- People who would buy the Identity Card because it is the right thing to do and they have “nothing to hide”

Positioning around **safety** and **convenience** had the greatest credibility and resonance with the public; however reassurance around **data security** and their own level of personal **control** was still important.

Findings from all these studies have helped to inform the development of the ID card proposition for the current public launch.

Research methodology and sample

1. Mylifemyid

The research was carried out by Virtual Surveys on behalf of the Identity and Passport Service (IPS) and was conducted amongst 16 to 25 year old British residents, using a site called mylifemyid, an online research community. The community ran for three months and comprised 1147 young people, who took part in polls, online forums, and surveys.

Online Research Communities

A research community is a specialised form of an online community. A research community is created to use the tools of Web 2.0, to provide a new medium for listening to people and for generating insight.

Although a research community looks, in many ways, like a natural online community there are differences. The key difference is that a research community has a specific job to fulfil. This reason may be a short term one, such as researching a new look for a service, or it may be ongoing, for example assessing customer satisfaction and engagement.

Site Moderation

The site was moderated for thirteen hours a day (9am – 10pm), seven days a week. The role of the moderator included:

- To articulate the discussion guide, to ensure that IPS's research subject matter was investigated;
- To stimulate debate;
- To respond to member queries and to help members use the system;
- To prevent abuse and to protect members from bullying;
- To analyse the discussions and to produce a report for IPS.

Site Activity

The mylifemyid site was open from 9 July to 15 October 2008. The community was visited by 26,378 people. It had 1147 members who posted 3885 comments. During the three months the community was operating, there were 388 separate discussion threads. Of these threads, just 59 were created by the research team; the other 329 threads were created by the members. A detailed breakdown of the demographics of the members and also of the statistics for the site visits is available in the appendix of the full report.

Source of Members

Members for mylifemyid were mainly sourced from two routes, through advertising and via links on other websites.

The advertising route comprised 50 million online ads, which were mostly placed on social network sites, such as Facebook. These 50 million adverts resulted in 537 members. 59% of these members supported the NIS, in line with our public opinion tracking survey over the same period. There was also an SMS campaign conducted via Blyk and included the use of 50,000 messages. However, SMS messages did not prove very successful and only a handful of members were recruited this way.

The other 610 members arrived via links that were on various sites on the Internet. Some of these links were on government websites such as the IPS and Direct.gov websites, others were on neutral sites (such as the Scouts), and others were on sites that were either unfavourable to the NIS (such as The Register) or were actively opposed to the NIS (such as No2ID website). 62% of these members were strongly opposed to the Scheme, and were very vocal on the site.

2. Understanding young people's attitudes to identity issues and the NIS

Purpose

The research was commissioned to provide insights into complement the mylifemyid research, to provide additional insights into young people's lives, specifically their attitudes towards and requirements regarding identity, the National Identity Scheme and the ID card specifically in preparation for the proposed voluntary roll-out to young people from 2010. Research focussed on the following areas:

Identity issues among young people: how proving their identity affects their everyday lives; their requirements and experiences of identity issues.

How ID cards could help or improve their lives: perceptions of identity cards and what they could mean for young people.

Responses to current proposition: exploring reactions to potential propositions.

Methodology

A mixed qualitative methodology was adopted, comprising group discussions with mainstream and hard to reach young people, and individual depth interviews with youth professionals and young people for who an individual interview was more appropriate. Group discussions were operated in two different formats: 'standard groups' (before which participants filled in ID diaries but were not given any information about the NIS), and 'proposition groups' (before which half the group was provided with NIS information and then asked to 'sell' the idea to their peers during the group).

Sample

All fieldwork was conducted between 29th September and 4th November 2008. Groups comprised 7-8 people and lasted 90 minutes. Depth interviews covered similar topic areas to the 'standard groups' and lasted 60 minutes.

The sample was structured as follows:

20 groups of young people which included:

- 6 each of 16-17, 18-20, 21-25 year olds
- 2 'hard to reach' groups
- equal numbers of BC1 and C2DE groups
- one group each of people with no government-issued ID, risk-takers, people with experience of ID theft, Gay/Lesbians, Christians, Male Muslims, Female Muslims, Hindus/Sikhs, African-Caribbeans
- spread evenly between Leeds, London, Glasgow, Bridgend and Belfast

10 individual interviews with young people:

- 4 physically disabled people
- 4 people with learning disabilities
- 2 young offenders

18 with youth professionals:

- 12 with youth contacts (4 teachers, 4 advisers (including one from a local Police force), 4 youth workers)
- 6 youth representatives from local and national organisations representing the rights and needs of young people.

3. IPS Concept Evaluation Research

Purpose

Prior to this piece of research, qualitative research had been undertaken with 16-25 year olds to discover key benefits and develop a proposition for this age group. In addition, work had been carried out looking how to extend the final offer to the general public and explore the boundaries in which the NIS may operate. Work was therefore required to both validate the existing work among the youth segment and explore the extent to which this proposition could be extended to the wider UK population.

Sample & Methodology

The study was made up of two stages of research covering both qualitative and quantitative interviewing. The core target audience for this research was defined as UK citizens (aged 16-74 years), including both passport holders and non-holders. In addition to the core sample, a small sub sample of EEA citizens was interviewed. The sample was balanced across age, gender and social grade within the overall 16-74 demographic. A total of 1500 quantitative interviews were completed with British Nationals between the 13th and the 20th March 2009 in the main study. All quantitative interviews were completed face-to-face via hall tests, and lasted a total of 35 minutes. During the qualitative phase of research a total of 17 mini groups, 3 triad groups, and 16 depth interviews were conducted between 24th February to 1st April 2009.

To ensure the sample covered all sub groups both in terms of socio economic representation and IPS groups of interest the following design was devised:

Qualitative phase

17 mini groups:

Groups were designed to cover a cross section of population types including those who were parents and early adopters in Manchester (defined as those who claimed to both be interested in taking out an ID card should they become available and were keen to do so within a year of launch). All mini group sessions lasted a total of 1.5 hours, and involved around six individuals per group.

4 triad sessions with early adopters:

The Triad sessions were designed to research the opinions of potential early adopter audiences in locations over and above Manchester. All triad sessions lasted a total of 1.5 hours and were with a range of demographic audiences

16 in depth interviews with 'hard to reach' audiences. All depths were an hour long and conducted in English. Depths were undertaken with a mixture of hard to reach audiences across a range of ages and social grades and covered the following hard to reach groups:

- 4 EEA Immigrants (including a mix of nationalities)
- 4 disabled respondents (including a mix of disabilities)
- 2 in-depths with members of Sikh faith
- 2 in-depths with members of Hindu faith
- 2 in-depths with members of Muslim faith

- 2 in-depths with Afro-Caribbean members of the public.

Quantitative phase

The target audience for this research was defined as UK adult citizens (aged 16 to 75 years) – including both passport holders and non-holders. As in the qualitative work, those involved with civil liberty groups, and No to ID Cards were excluded from the research.

To ensure a robust sample of British Nationals at the total level, and to provide readable bases of the key subgroups to be analysed, a total of 1500 face-to-face interviews were conducted. All results in this report are based on a weighted data set.

A total of 500 youth interviews were conducted to provide a robust sample of this group in its own right. In addition, a total of 1000 interviews with a representative selection of UK adults aged between 26-75 years were carried out to enable detailed interrogation of the wider audience data.

A quota sampling approach was implemented to ensure that the sample was representative in terms of gender, age and social grade. In terms of locations, a total of 28 interviewing locations were selected for hall tests prior to initial fieldwork. These covered the following regions:

- Northern Ireland
- Wales
- Scotland
- NW/Manchester/Liverpool
- Newcastle/NE
- Greater London
- Yorkshire
- East Midlands
- West Midlands/Birmingham
- Anglia
- Remaining South East
- South West