ESOMAR

ICC/ESOMAR International Code on Market, Opinion and Social Research and Data Analytics

A summary:

This summary is provided for informational purposes only and shall not, under any circumstances, serve as a substitute for the ICC/ESOMAR International Code on Market, Opinion and Social Research and Data Analytics.

1. **Purpose of the Code**:
   The ICC/ESOMAR International Code on Market, Opinion and Social Research and Data Analytics is designed to ensure that users and commissioners of research, and the general public have confidence in the way research is collected and the conclusions drawn. The ICC/ESOMAR International Code of Conduct sets standards to maintain public trust in research, ensure compliance with local and international laws by promoting ethical standards, transparency, and accountability in a rapidly evolving digital and data-driven environment. More importantly, ethical standards are at the core of the research ecosystem, guaranteeing its integrity, accountability and professional excellence.

2. **Scope:**
   The ICC/ESOMAR International Code of Conduct is binding for all ESOMAR members who are required to undersign the code as a condition of membership the code applies to both multi-country projects and purely national research projects. ICC members are also required to follow this Code, and the local ICC body ensures compliance. It is also binding on national associations who adopt the ICC/ESOMAR International Code of Conduct and on their members.

3. **Fundamental Principles**:
   - Legality, honesty, transparency, and truthfulness.
   - Due care and respect for research participants.
   - Clear communication and data protection.
   - Ethical behaviour to maintain public trust.
   - Oversight and responsibility for all research activities.

4. **Definitions:**
   The ICC/ESOMAR International Code of Conduct defines key terms such as AI, synthetic data, passive data collection, vulnerable individuals, and non-research activity.

   Research, which includes all forms of market, opinion and social research, including data analytics applied for research purposes, means the systematic gathering, analysis and interpretation of information about individuals and organisations. It uses the statistical and/or analytical methods and techniques of the applied social, behavioural, data and other sciences to generate insights and support decision-making by providers of goods and services, governments, non-profit organisations and the general public.

A. Responsibilities to data subjects

1. **Article 1 – Duty of Care**
   Participation must be voluntary and not result in harm; researchers must distinguish research from non-research activities and inform data subjects accordingly.

2. **Article 2 – Children, Young People and Other Vulnerable Individuals**
   Special care should be taken for researching children and vulnerable persons, obtain appropriate consent, use age-appropriate content and methods.

3. **Article 3 – Data Minimisation**
   Only collect data necessary for the research purpose; minimise data shared with third parties.

4. **Article 4 – Primary Data Collection**
   When collecting personal data, ensure the prompt identification of the researcher, voluntary participation, consent in the case of re-contact, conditions for retaining personal data and possibility for amendment.

5. **Article 5 – Use of Secondary Data**
   Aligns with the purpose and quality of the original data collection, avoids harm, and respects contractual restrictions or objections from data subjects.

6. **Article 6 – Data Protection and Privacy**
   Emphasises consent, clarity and accessibility of the privacy notice, security and duration when holding personal data, non-traceability, breach notification and responsibilities when transferring it.

B. Responsibilities to clients

7. **Article 7 – Fit for Purpose**
   Research must meet agreed quality standards, be appropriate for the target population, be transparent about limitations, provide technical information, offer research-backed insights and inform about the usage of AI and related technologies.

8. **Article 8 – Transparency, Confidentiality and Responsibility**
   Researchers must disclose biases, comply with IP restrictions, declare the use of subcontractors, maintain confidentiality and resolve disputes in good faith.

C. Responsibilities to the general public

9. **Article 9 – Publishing Findings**
   Requires clear, non-misleading, accessible and data-driven reporting, with disclosure of technology use like AI or synthetic data and consent if publishing personal data.

D. Responsibilities to the research profession

10. **Article 10 – Professional Responsibility**
    Researchers must be honest, transparent, truthful, objective, use scientific approaches, protect research's reputation, avoid misleading claims, and declare conflicts of interest.

11. **Article 11 – Legal Responsibility**
    Mandatory compliance with all applicable laws and whenever higher standards are set by the Code, and respect for privacy or IP when using AI or related technologies.

12. **Article 12 – Compliance**
    Researchers and third parties must comply with the Code, e.g., a clause in the contract, and cooperate when breaches are investigated by ESOMAR or relevant bodies.

13. **Article 13 – Implementation**
    The Code must be adopted and enforced at all levels; interpretation requests go to ESOMAR or ICC.