

CASE STUDY

Text Analytics for Market Research

Infotools, an international market research technology company, were looking for a text analytics technology provider to enhance their data services. They chose Thematic because of their strong expertise in analyzing verbatims using NLP, their flexible API and a value-based pricing model.

Infotools successfully tested Thematic on a tricky task, figuring out key issues for telco customers across several European countries, and decided to integrate it firmly into their service offering.

Infotools: visualisation and data science for market research

Infotools Ltd is a market research technology company founded in 1990 and currently employing over 140 staff. Their clients include multinational telecommunication, airlines, and consumer goods companies.

Infotools offer data preparation and data design services to turn market research data into powerful visualizations that reveal insights and help companies understand their data effectively. The rising popularity of open-ended questions and the need to code their answers, called verbatims, lead Infotools to search for a text analytics provider.

The rise of open-enders and the need for automated coding

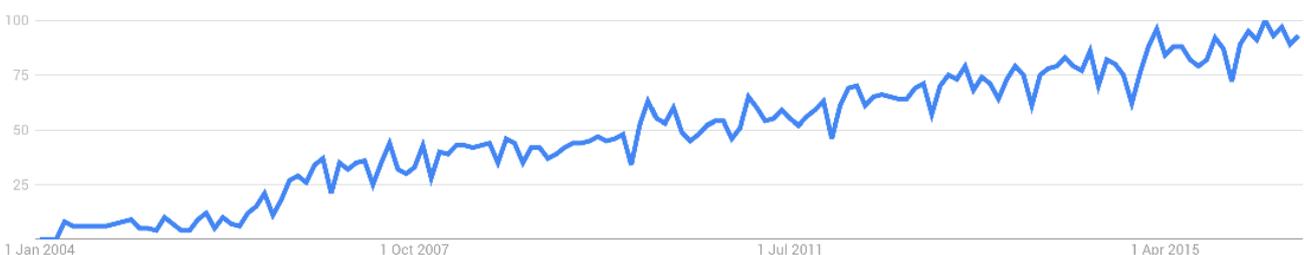
Several reasons lead Infotools to automated analysis of open-ended questions.

1. Significantly more surveys are conducted.

The Internet, the spread of mobile devices and popular survey software mean that running a survey is easier and more responses can be collected in a shorter time.

2. Surveys are short and open-enders heavy.

Traditional multi-pages surveys with scale questions lead to survey fatigue. In order to improve the response rate, modern surveys are short, often focused on a single metric like the Net Promoter Score, along with one or two open-ended questions for free-form answers.



Popularity of 'Net Promoter Score' according to Google Trends

3. **Open-ended questions are key to insight.** The advent of NPS surveys made open-ended questions more popular. Two questions, “What impressed you?” and “What can we improve?”, offer insights into what drives people to become promoters or detractors, and are often more valuable than the scores themselves.
4. **Manual coding isn’t practical.** Verbatims traditionally have been analyzed by using human coders who create code frames from the initial sample of responses, and extend it with new codes, as new responses come in. Because running a survey used to take 6 to 12 weeks, it has not been an issue. But when thousands of responses can come in overnight, coding them weeks later is impractical.
5. **Manual coding is bias prone and inconsistent.** Coding is a subjective task, and when companies code responses over many months, consistency is the key. Finding a group of subject matter experts dedicated to coding responses over time is challenging.

Infotools concluded that if machines could analyze many open-ended answers, it would be a huge win, and ventured into finding the right provider of text analytics services.

We have been using the Thematic for the past 6 months to process and analyse market research text responses. We have successfully employed Thematic for some of our major clients with outstanding results. Their layered approach is particularly flexible and has provided the ability to tune and customise the output to meet business needs. The team at Thematic is a pleasure to work with, always helpful, responsive to feedback and questions, and professional in their dealings.

Brian Potter
Data Scientist at Infotools

Search for the right text analytics solution

Infotools were searching for a text analytics technology across the world. Each supplier had their own way of describing their offering and the challenge was to understand what exactly is being offered and how it applies to market research. A thorough review of text analytics solutions revealed the following problems with what’s currently offered in the market:

- Text analytics solutions rarely specialize in analysis of survey answers.
- Commonly, text analytics companies charge for each transaction, i.e. comment analysis, whereas data scientists typically re-analyze each dataset multiple times as they seek to optimize the model parameters.
- Creators of text analytics solutions focus too much on the technology and too little on the actual problem that needs solving.
- Often the solution is a black box that needs to be operated by NLP experts.
- Sometimes results are simply hard to interpret, particularly when they don’t link back to the original response.

Three key needs for using text analytics for market research

But the search for the right solution has helped Infotools to solidify their key needs for the right text analytics solution to integrate with:

Need	Description
Built for surveys	A text analytics solution should be able to handle survey specifics, such people’s responses that fall into the ‘Nothing’ category (no clear answer to the question), or ‘Other’ (different answer to most).
Value-based pricing model	A text analytics solution needs a pricing model based on the value it delivers rather than the number of transactions.
Easy to use	A text analytics solution must be able to be operated by an in-house data analyst (with little skills in NLP) who should be able to do occasional tweaks.

Thematic provides the best text analytics for market research

When they came across Thematic, it became quickly apparent that it was a good fit and choosing their solution was straightforward:

- Thematic is built specifically for the analysis of responses to open-ended questions;
- Thematic charges per survey rather than per transaction, meaning that their data scientist can run multiple experiments on the same data until they are satisfied with results;
- Thematic has an easy-to-use API, where their in-house data scientist learned how to process text data and optimize after just two 2-hour training sessions;
- Thematic can handle survey responses in multiple languages, meaning that it is suitable for Infotools' multi-national clients.

Infotools has tested Thematic on a number of datasets, such as answers to a survey about 'What do you think is the biggest problem in the US today?', responses to an NPS survey for a real estate agency with a variety of location and demographic data, and finally results from a large telco NPS survey sent to people from a number of European countries. Overall a positive result which led to a successful partnership.

A powerful solution

A large European telecommunication provider struggled with making sense of their customer's comments. They sent out NPS surveys and received several thousands of comments a month: too many for a single person to read. In addition, their customers were all over Europe and so comments were in a multitude of languages from Spanish to Polish, requiring expensive human translation.

Infotools challenged Thematic: Could they provide a unified analysis of customer comments, disregarding the language? Thematic used a clever combination of machine translation and advanced text analytics to identify themes across comments in any language.

Comparing themes from manual vs. machine translations has shown that the results of the clustered themes are similar enough: the decision made using this analysis will be the same. The themes were sufficiently accurate to warrant this new fully-automated approach.

By using Thematic, the telecommunication company now could get to the insights in their customer comments faster and at a third of the cost. But the real value add was in all the new surveys that they now could run, at a scale that never was possible before.

Try Thematic on your data

In only 30 minutes, we'll show you how Thematic works on your data and give you advice on how to improve your customer feedback analysis.

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