Surveys are everywhere. You will find them in doctors’ offices, schools, airplanes, and hotel rooms. Surveys are used to collect information from or about people to describe, compare, or explain their knowledge, feelings, values, and behavior. Surveys typically take the form of self-administered questionnaires and interviews. Self-administered questionnaires can be completed by hand (“paper and pencil") or online (Internet or web-based on computers and tablets). Interviews may take place in person (“face-to-face") or on the telephone (landline and mobile/cell).

Survey data are used by program planners, evaluators, administrators, managers, researchers, and policy leaders in diverse fields, including business, health, education, social welfare, and politics. They are used because they get information directly from people.

Surveyors must decide on the survey’s overall purposes and specific questions. They also need to know who and how many people will be contacted (sampling) and when and how often the survey will take place (design). Surveyors must also process, analyze, and interpret data.

Choosing among survey types (self-administered questionnaires or interviews) and administration methods (mail, telephone, or web) requires (1) identifying the combination most likely to produce credible and accurate results and (2) balancing the desired survey types and administration methods against available resources.

Survey purposes and methods fall on a continuum. Some surveys can have far-reaching, generalizable effects, and their methods must be scientific. Surveys of the population’s health conducted by the U.S. government are examples of scientific surveys. Other surveys are conducted to meet specific needs; their methods may not always achieve the highest standards of scientific rigor, but they must still produce accurate results and so must use reliable and valid techniques. Polling students in a particular school to identify their summer reading choices so as to be sure the library is well stocked is an illustration of a survey designed to meet a specific need.

Surveyors must be concerned with protecting respondents’ privacy and assuring confidentiality of responses. Most institutions have rules for protecting “human subjects” and ensuring that their consent to respond is an informed consent. Online surveys have special rules for guarding confidentiality. These surveys may be vulnerable to outsiders and need protection across three communication arms: surveyor to respondent, respondent to web server, and web server to surveyor.
H OW TO CONDUCT SURVEYS

What Is a Survey?

Surveys are information collection methods used to describe, compare, or explain individual and societal knowledge, feelings, values, preferences, and behavior. A survey can be a self-administered questionnaire that someone fills out alone or with assistance, or a survey can be an interview done in person or on the telephone. Some surveys are on paper or online, and the respondent can complete them privately at home or in a central location—say, at a health center. The respondent can either return the completed survey by snail mail or online. Surveys can be interactive and guide the respondent through the questions. Interactive surveys also may provide audiovisual cues to help.

Here are at least three good reasons for conducting surveys:

Reason 1: A policy needs to be set or a program must be planned.

Examples: Surveys to Meet Policy or Program Needs

- The YMC Corporation wants to determine which hours to be open each day. The corporation surveys employees to find out which 8-hour shifts they are willing to work.
- The national office of the Health Voluntary Agency is considering providing day care for its children’s staff. How many have very young children? How many would use the agency’s facility?
- Ten years ago, the Bartley School District changed its language arts curriculum. Since then, some people have argued that the curriculum has become out of date. What do the English teachers think? If revisions are needed, what should they look like?

Reason 2: You want to evaluate the effectiveness of programs to change people’s knowledge, attitudes, health, or welfare.

Examples: Surveys in Evaluations of Programs

- The YMC Corporation has created two programs to educate people about the advantages and disadvantages of working at unusual hours. One program takes the form of individual counseling and specially prepared, self-monitored DVDs. The second program is conducted in large groups. A survey is conducted 6 months after each program is completed to find out whether the employees think they got the information they needed. The survey also aims to find out whether they would recommend that others participate in a similar program and how satisfied they are with their work schedule.
- The Health Voluntary Agency is trying two approaches to child care. One is primarily “child centered,” and the children usually decide from a list of activities which ones they would like to do during the hours they are in the program. The other is academic and artistic. Children are taught to read, play musical instruments, and dance at set times during the day. Which program is most satisfactory in that the parents, children, and staff are active participants and pleased with the curriculum’s content? The agency surveys parents, children, and staff to get answers.
- The Bartley School District changed its language arts curriculum. A survey is conducted to find out whether and how the change has affected parents’ and students’ opinions of the high school program.

Reason 3: You are a researcher who uses a survey to get information about how to guide studies and programs.
Examples: Surveys for Research

- Because the YMC Corporation has so many educational programs, it wants to research how adults learn best. Do they prefer self-learning or formal classes? Are reading materials appropriate or are films and DVDs better? How do they feel about computer-assisted learning or learning directly from the Internet? As part of its research, and to make sure all the possibilities are covered, the corporation conducts a survey of a sample of employees to learn their preferences.

- The Health Voluntary Agency is considering joining with a local university in a study of preschool education. The Agency conducts a survey of the parents participating in the new day care programs. The survey asks about the participants’ education and income. Researchers need data such as these so they can test one of their major assumptions—namely, that parents with higher education and incomes are more likely to choose the more academic of the two preschool programs.

- The Bartley School District is part of a U.S. government-funded national study of the teaching of the English language. The study’s researchers hypothesized that classroom teaching depends more on their teachers’ educational backgrounds and reading preferences than on the formal curriculum. A survey is conducted to find out teachers’ educational backgrounds and reading habits so that those data are available for testing the researchers’ hypothesis.

When Is a Survey Best?

Many methods exist for obtaining information about people. A survey is only one. Consider the youth center that has as its major aim to provide a variety of services to the community. It offers medical, financial, legal, and educational assistance to residents of the city who are between 12 and 21 years of age, regardless of background. The program is particularly proud of its coordinated approach, arguing that the center’s effectiveness comes from making available many services in one location to all participants. Now that the center is 10 years old, a survey is to be conducted to find out just how successful it really is. Are participants and staff satisfied? Which services do young people use? Is the center really a multi-service one? Are people better off with their health and other needs because of their participation in the center? A mailed self-administered questionnaire survey is decided on to help answer these and other questions. Here are some excerpts from the questionnaire.

Examples: From an Overly Ambitious Self-Administered Questionnaire

5. Is your blood pressure now normal?
   Yes  1
   No   2

7. Which of the following social services have you used in the last 12 months? (Please indicate yes or no for each service.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Services</th>
<th>1. Yes</th>
<th>2. No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Medical........</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal...........</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial.......</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational.....</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10. How satisfied are you with each of the following services? Please indicate your satisfaction for each service.
11. How much time in a 5-minute period does the doctor spend listening (rather than, say, talking) to you? (Please check one)

- Less than 1 minute
- About 1 or 2 minutes
- More than 2 minutes

The questionnaire was shown to a reviewer whose advice was to eliminate Questions 5, 7, and 11, and keep only Question 10. The reviewer stated that surveys are not best for certain types of information. Here is the reasoning:

Question 5 asks for a report of a person’s blood pressure. Is it normal? In general, information of this kind is most accurate if it is obtained from other sources—say, a medical record. Many people might have difficulty recalling their blood pressure with precision and also would be at a loss to define “normal” blood pressure.

Question 7 may be all right if you feel confident that the person’s recall will be accurate. Otherwise, the records of the center are probably a better source of information about which services are used.

Question 11 asks the patient to tell how much time the doctor spends listening rather than talking. If you are interested in the patient’s perceptions, then the question is fine. If, however, you want data on the actual time the doctor listened rather than talked to the patient, observation by an impartial observer is probably best.

Question 10 is appropriate. Only participants can tell you how satisfied they are. No other source will do so as well.

Surveys are by no means the only source of information for making decisions, nor are they necessarily the most relevant. Some other sources of information are the following:

- Observations or eyewitness reports; filmed, videotaped, and audiotaped accounts
- Performance tests that require a person to perform a task (such as teaching a lesson to a class); observers assess the effectiveness of the performance
- Written tests of ability or knowledge
- Record reviews that rely on existing documentation, such as reviews of medical and school attendance records; analysis of the content of published and unpublished articles and diaries or of recorded and filmed documentaries
Surveys can be used in deciding policy or in planning and evaluating programs and conducting research when the information you need should come directly from people. The data they provide are descriptions of feelings and perceptions, values, habits, and personal background or demographic characteristics such as age, health, education, and income.

Sometimes surveys are combined with other sources of information. This is particularly true for evaluations and research.

**Examples: Surveys Combined with Other Information Sources**

- As part of its evaluation of child care programs, the Health Voluntary Agency surveyed parents, children, and staff about their degree of participation and satisfaction. Also, the agency reviewed financial records to evaluate the costs of each program, and standardized tests were given to appraise how ready children were for school.
- The YMC Corporation is researching how adults learn. Achievement and performance tests are given at regular intervals. In addition, a survey provides supplemental data on how adults like to learn.

**Self-Administered Questionnaires and Interviews: The Heart of the Matter**

All surveys consist of (1) questions and responses. To get accurate data, you must account for a survey’s (2) sampling and design, (3) data processing or “management” and analysis, (4) pilot testing, and (5) response rate. Survey results are presented as written (printed on paper or reproduced electronically) and oral reports.

**Questions and Responses**

Information from surveys is obtained by asking questions. Questions are sometimes referred to as *items*. The questions may have forced-response choices.

**Example: Forced-Choice Question**

What is the main advantage of multiple-choice over essay questions?

- Can be scored objectively
- Are best at measuring complex behaviors
- Can have more than one answer
- Are the least threatening of the question types

Questions on surveys may be open-ended.

**Example: Open-Ended Question**

What is the main advantage of multiple-choice over essay questions?

Answer here

The selection, wording, and ordering of questions and answers require careful
thought and a reasonable command of language.

**Survey Sample and Design**

Surveys are data collection methods used to obtain information from and about people: From and about which people, how often, and when? As soon as you raise questions such as these, you must become concerned with the *sample* and *design* of the survey. The sample is the number and characteristics of people in the survey. The design refers to how often the survey takes place (just once, or *cross-sectional*; over time, or *longitudinal*), whether the participants are selected at random or are chosen some other way, and how many separate groups are included.

Consider these three surveys:

Survey 1: What do graduates from the class of 2012 know about physical fitness?

*Survey method*: Online questionnaire  
*Sample*: All 1,000 graduates from State College’s class of 2012  
*How often survey takes place*: Just once—at graduation  
*How participants are selected*: All graduates are eligible  
*How many groups*: Just one—the class of 2012  
*Design*: Cross-sectional

Survey 2: Does knowledge about physical fitness change over a 12-month period among graduates of the class of 2012?

*Survey method*: Online questionnaire  
*Sample*: All 1,000 graduates from State College’s class of 2012  
*How often survey takes place*: Twice—at graduation and 12 months later  
*How participants are selected*: All graduates are eligible  
*How many groups*: Just one—the class of 2012  
*Design*: Longitudinal cohort

Survey 3: Over time, do differences exist among graduating classes in their knowledge of physical fitness?

*Survey method*: Online questionnaire  
*Sample*: A 75% randomly selected sample of graduates from the classes of 2012, 2014, and 2016 to equal 2,250 graduates  
*How often survey takes place*: Three times—at graduation and 12 and 24 months later  
*How participants are selected*: Randomly  
*Design*: Longitudinal and comparative

Survey 1 asks for a portrait of the class of 2012’s knowledge of physical fitness, and a mailed questionnaire is to be used. This portrait is called a cross-sectional survey design. Survey 2 wants to know about changes in knowledge of physical fitness over a 1-year period: from graduation forward 12 months. The design is longitudinal. The entire class is a “cohort” of people.

Survey 3 is longitudinal because survey data are collected from each of the three graduating classes over three points in time: at the time of graduation and 1 and 2 years later. The design also is comparative because knowledge can be compared between any two and among all three classes at graduation, 1 year later, 2 years later, or across all three times. An illustration of the design for Survey 3 can take this form:
Survey 3 differs from Surveys 1 and 2 in how the graduates are selected for participation. In Survey 3, a 75% sample of graduates will be randomly selected to participate. In the other two surveys, all graduates, not just a sample, are eligible. Random selection means that each graduate has an equal chance of being included.

All three surveys are online, but their samples and designs vary.

**Planning for Data Analysis**

Regardless of your survey’s design or size, you must think ahead to how you plan to analyze the survey’s data.

Will you compute percentages so that your results look like this?

Of the total sample, 50% reported that they were Republicans, 42% were Democrats, 5% were Independent, 1% belonged to the Green Party, and 3% had no party affiliation.

Will you produce averages to appear this way?

The average age of the respondents is 56.4 years. The median educational level is 13 years.

Will you compare groups and report something like this?

A total of 60% of the men, but only 20% of the women, were Republicans.

Respondents do not differ significantly in satisfaction with the present government.

Will you look for relationships such as this?

The survey found no association between how liberal or conservative people were and their educational attainments.

High school graduates who were 30 years of age or older were significantly more likely to vote in the last election than were older, less educated respondents.

Will you look for changes over time?

Since 2007, statistically significant differences have been found in the number of men participating in 2 or more hours of child care per day.

**Pilot Testing**

A pilot test is a tryout, and its purpose is to help produce a survey form that is usable and that will provide you with the information you need. All surveys must be pilot tested before being put into practice. Self-administered questionnaires depend heavily on the clarity of their language (it does not matter if it is a written or online questionnaire), and pilot testing quickly reveals whether people understand the directions you have provided and if they can answer the survey questions. A pilot
test of a face-to-face interview also will tell you about interviewers. Can they follow the interview form easily? Are the spaces on printed surveys large enough for recording responses? Do interviewers know what to do if the computer “freezes” while they are in the midst of a computer-assisted interview? Does the respondent understand how to move back and forward through an online survey? Pilot tests also can tell you how much time it takes to complete the survey.

Testing helps make the survey run smoothly. Whenever possible, you should try to duplicate the environment in which the survey is to take place. That might mean obtaining permission from people just to be in the tryouts, but not in the survey, although they are eligible for full participation.

Response Rate

The surveyor wants everyone who is eligible to respond to all questions. Pilot testing helps improve the response rate because it can eliminate severe potential sources of difficulty, such as poorly worded questions and no place to record answers on printed questionnaires. Furthermore, if the entire set of survey procedures is carefully tested, then this, too, can help the response rate. Before you do a telephone interview, ask these questions: Do you have available a current list of telephone numbers? Are you willing to make telephone calls at the time the survey respondents are available? Do you have a plan for reaching respondents who do not return calls left on their answering machines or voice mail? For online surveys ask the following: Do you have available a current list of e-mail addresses? Do you know how to ensure privacy of responses? Other ways of ensuring good response rates exist, regardless of survey type, such as keeping surveys short and simple and providing incentives for participating.

How high should the response rate be? If you are conducting a large, complex survey, you will want to use statistical procedures to answer this question. If your survey is relatively simple (say, a pool of teachers in a school or nurses in three hospitals), then you have to decide how many people you will need for the results to be believable. If 20 people are eligible for completing a mailed, self-administered questionnaire and only 10 respond, you may feel different from the way you will feel if, at another time, 200 of 400 respond. Both surveys have a 50% response rate, but reporting on the views of 10 of 20 people may appear to be less convincing than telling about 200 of 400. Except when done statistically, the desired response rate tends to be entirely subjective, and the general rule is “higher is better.”

Reporting Results

Survey results are reported daily on the Internet and TV and in newspapers and magazines. To many, a survey is a poll usually of some, but not all, people about an issue of immediate political, social, or economic concern. Survey results typically look like this.

**Example 1: The Look of Survey Results**

Question: If the election were held today, would you vote for Candidate X?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Example 2: The Look of Survey Results

What is your favorite color?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>20%</th>
<th>40%</th>
<th>60%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Red</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>50.00%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blue</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orange</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>50.00%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key Analytics

- Mean: 2.000
- Confidence Interval @ 95%: [0.040 - 3.960]
- Standard Deviation: 1.414
- Standard Error: 1.000

100% chose the following options:
- Red
- Orange

Source: Taken from www.questionpro.com.

Example 3: The Look of Survey Results

Number of Applicants 65 Years and Older: 1990–2015

Source: A Survey of Applicants—Senate Committee.

More information on standard errors is found in Chapter 5, and more information on confidence intervals and standard deviations is provided in Chapter 6.
To get results such as these requires many steps, and all surveys follow them:

- Deciding on the type of survey (mailed or online questionnaire; telephone or face-to-face interviews)
- Selecting the survey’s content and writing questions and trying out the form
- Deciding who should participate (Everyone? A sample of people?) and how often (Just once? Each year for 5 years?)
- Administering the survey (Who should conduct the interview? By when must the online questionnaire be submitted?)
- Processing the data (How will data be entered: manually or automatically from survey to database?)
- Analyzing and interpreting the results (Was the response rate good enough? What do the numbers or differences between people mean? Just how do people feel about Candidate X? Have opinions changed over time?)
- Reporting the results orally or in writing using text, charts, tables, and graphs (Who is the audience? How long should the report be? Which data should be presented?)

No credible survey can omit any single step, although, depending on its purposes and resources, some steps will receive more emphasis in any given survey than in another.

**Reliability and Validity**

A reliable survey results in consistent information. A valid survey produces accurate information. Reliable and valid surveys are obtained by making sure the definitions and models you use to select questions are grounded in theory or experience. No single survey type starts out with better reliability and validity than another. Choose the survey method that is most precise and accurate for your specific purposes. For example, if you are worried that the people you are surveying cannot read well, an oral (face-to-face or telephone) interview is likely to produce far better results than a written one.

Focus groups and pilot tests help you decide which type to use and whether you have done a good job of designing the survey and making it user-friendly. Respondents or survey administrators (the people who do the interviewing or hand out the questionnaires) who have trouble with the survey will use it incorrectly, introducing bias, and that in turn reduces the accuracy of the results. A well-designed, easy-to-use survey always contributes to reliability and validity.

**Usefulness or Credibility of Results**

The results will be useful if they are valid and if the survey method is one that users accept as correct. Find out before you start which method is the one people want. Sometimes the people who will use the results have strong preferences.

**Costs**

This refers to the financial burden of developing and administering each type of survey. The costs associated with written questionnaires (on-site and mailed) include paper, reproduction, and incentives. Mailed questionnaires require an up-to-date address list (which you may
have to purchase), postage, and envelopes. Sometimes you have several follow-up mailings, adding to the costs.

The costs of face-to-face and telephone interviews include phone charges or, in large surveys, the costs of purchasing a telephone system and paying for miscalled and out-of-date telephone numbers as well as hang-ups. You also need to pay for writing a script for the interviewer, training the interviewers, monitoring the quality of the interviews, and providing incentives to respondents.

Online surveys require extensive development and testing. One way to save on development is to purchase user-friendly online commercial survey programs like QuestionPro.com. (There are others.) You will have to learn how to use the developers’ software, however, and this can be time-consuming and costly. And even the best software cannot make up for a sloppy survey.

The Special Case of Online Surveys

Online surveys are self-administered questionnaires. Respondents complete online surveys on laptops, desktops, notebooks, tablets, and even on cell or mobile phones. Surveyors like online surveys, and respondents are becoming used to them. Surveyors like online surveys because they can easily reach very large numbers of people across the world and because online survey software is accessible and relatively inexpensive.

Online surveys sometimes run into trouble because surveyors do not plan ahead adequately. Survey notices are sent out to unsuspecting respondents who then delete them as spam. Or the survey is sent to everyone on a list of e-mail addresses, and many of the addresses are incorrect. Other problems include failure to provide incentives to overloaded respondents who are overwhelmed with survey requests or too many or hard-to-understand questions. As with any other survey type, the surveyor has many careful decisions to make about the content and format of the questions and responses, the sample size, who will be included in the survey and who will be excluded, and how to guarantee that the results are accurate and secure. Online software cannot make up for a poorly designed and implemented survey that is not used appropriately.

Here is a checklist to use in deciding when to use online surveys.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Checklist for Deciding the Best Uses for Online Surveys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• The survey needs wide geographic coverage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• You are hoping to reach a very large number of people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• You have access to valid e-mail addresses and permission to use them. Unsolicited surveys may appear as spam or junk mail.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• You or your agency or institution conducts surveys relatively frequently so that any investment in technological and software infrastructure is worthwhile. Developing software to create survey questions can be costly. Commercial companies abound who can help design and implement surveys and analyze data. That’s the easy part. There is always a learning curve, however, and learning new software takes time, and time uses financial resources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• You have designed some survey questions to be answered by all respondents, but other questions will only be answered by some respondents. For instance, if you want to</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
explore people’s exercise habits, but not all people report that they exercise, you only want to ask the exercisers about their activities. Online surveys can be programmed to distinguish between who is to answer questions and who is to skip them. This saves the surveyor the need to resort to complex instructions.

- The surveyor wants to use multimedia such as video clips and voice-over in describing a new idea, product, or service.
- You need results in a hurry. Online surveys can produce real-time data as each person completes the questionnaire. It is important to remember that the statistical results produced by most survey software packages are relatively simple: numbers, averages, and so on. The graphics that are produced are also simple and include pie charts and line graphics. More complex analyses and reports take more time and expertise.
- You want to compare survey data over time. Online survey data can easily be stored in a database for future use. New survey data can be added to the database from time to time from the same or from different groups of people, and you can compare data over time for one or more groups of respondents.
- You plan to study survey behavior. With online surveys, the date and time of survey completion and the time spent on each question are known. This information can be used to see if there are differences among people in how much time they need to complete some or all of the survey. The data can be used to help you improve the survey questions.

At least four potential concerns accompany most web surveys. They are the following:

1. **Multiple addresses.** Many people have many e-mail addresses or points of online contact through social media. Although some potential respondents may consolidate their addresses so that they can view messages from all sources whenever they check, others do not. Some people only check one or two sites frequently, and others check their e-mail infrequently. Be certain that the addresses you have are accurate and commonly used, drawing a sample that you can count on, or getting the desired response rate may be problematic.

2. **Privacy and confidentiality.** Many people are suspicious of sending information over the web. Surveyors must learn how to guard respondents’ privacy and convincingly communicate the strength of their efforts to respondents. It is important to note that not everyone knows if their computer or tablet is secure or how to maximize security, nor are they aware of who has access to their browsing history. The surveyor, of course, does not have control over privacy lapses that may occur because of a poorly secured device. Nothing is secure on the web unless you secure it.

3. **Identity of the respondents.** The surveyor has no real way of knowing who is actually completing the questionnaire.

4. **Technological differences.** Respondents vary in their Internet connections and browsers and may set their own text size and color settings. Some surveys
do not permit use of the back function on the browser and install a special back arrow. The survey should be tested on all commonly used browsers. If necessary, respondents should be instructed on how to go back and forward in the survey. Computers (desktops, laptops, tablets) lose their connections, and it is a good idea to set up a system so that in case of loss of power or a connection, the respondents will be able to return to the survey without losing their place.

Many web surveys are done through online vendors who sell software and survey processing services. Many firms do practically everything for the surveyor. They will send out the survey, track respondents, analyze data, and produce reports. They don’t usually create the survey, but they may provide referrals to consultants who do.

If you decide to purchase online survey software, be prepared to spend up to a week learning how to use it. Most vendors provide excellent tutorials in how to select question types, number pages and questions, and decide on features such as background colors and logos. It is very important that you read the fine print regarding how much assistance you will have from the survey vendor.

Surveyors are tempted to rely on their vendors to update and maintain the survey and the survey data. But service contracts tend to be limited, and so these guidelines should be followed.

Guidelines for Surveyors Who Work with Commercial Survey Companies

- Download your data frequently, and store your files safely. Your access to your data may disappear when you discontinue your service.
- Create offline copies of every online survey so that you can re-create the instrument in a paper-and-pencil format or use it with another online service. Make sure that you can save the survey on your computer.
- Be wary of the company’s list of suggested survey questions. Are they appropriate for your respondents? What evidence has been provided that they have ever been used with anyone? By whom have they been used?

You can go online for information on how to evaluate vendors. Go to any search engine and use these key words: “compare online surveys.”

The Special Case of Cell or Mobile Phones

Many large surveys that have historically relied on landline sampling are now also using cell phone samples. Unfortunately, surveyors are finding that cell phone surveys can be more expensive than they thought. U.S. federal regulations prohibit the use of automatic dialing to cell phone lines, and hand dialing increases costs. Also, screening for eligible respondents can raise the costs. At the present time, many minors (17 years of age and younger) use cell phones, but older people may still prefer landlines. Reaching an eligible respondent such as the head of a household or an older adult can mean extra effort and expense.

Cell phone surveys are also complicated by the fact that they are attached to individuals rather than geography, so an additional screen must be added to ensure that the respondent resides in the
area for which the surveyor wants to collect data. The process becomes even more complicated when you consider that some people have landlines, some have landlines and cell phones, and some only have cells. No one really knows if these groups differ from one another, and if there are differences, whether they affect the survey’s results.

Cell phone surveys almost always require incentives for participation because the respondent otherwise pays for the call directly or indirectly.

**Making the Decision**

To help you decide among the different types of surveys that may be relevant to your needs, Table 1.1 compares the advantages and disadvantages of the major survey types and reminds you of their special needs and costs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1.1 Comparing Survey Types</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Characteristics</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mailed</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Online</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Advantages</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Self-Administered</td>
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<tr>
<td>-------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mailed</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You can tailor questions to the needs of the respondent and surveyor without having to add complicated instructions.</td>
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HOW TO CONDUCT SURVEYS

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<th>In Person</th>
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<tr>
<td>Costs</td>
<td>Printing, paper, envelopes, stamps for repeated mailings, incentives for respondents</td>
<td>If you decide to design your own survey, a great deal of programming time is needed. If you use an online service, you must pay a license fee and learn how to use the company’s software. Incentives for respondents</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Training and supervision, incentives, telephones and telephone charges, computers and technical expertise, incentives for respondents</td>
<td>Training, space, travel, incentives for respondents</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Incentives</td>
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A Survey Continuum: From Specific to General Use

Surveys have become a major means of collecting data to answer questions about health and social, economic, and political life. How extensive and scientific must a survey be?

Compare these two surveys.

Example: Survey with a Specific Use

The directors of the Neighborhood Halfway Houses want to provide services that are appropriate for residents. At present, many complaints have arisen over the lack of adequate fitness facilities. A survey will be conducted to poll the 5 health care providers, 100 residents, and 10 full- and part-time staff to find out what facilities are desirable and affordable.

Example: Survey with a General Use

The County Health Department is concerned with the effectiveness of its 10 halfway houses. Together, the 10 houses have 20,000 residents and 220 full- and part-time staff. The County Health Department has negotiated arrangements for health care services from a number of providers in the public and private sectors. As part of its effectiveness study, the County Health Department is surveying a random sample of residents, staff, and providers at all houses. NextDoor County is interested in adopting the County Health Department’s halfway house model and is anxiously waiting for the results of the survey and evaluation.

The justification for the first survey is one halfway house’s concern with its own
needs. The reason for the second is the County Health Department’s interest in the effectiveness of all its halfway houses. Also, NextDoor County is interested in the survey’s results. Survey 1, with its limited impact, can be relatively informal in its methods. Survey 2, in contrast, must be rigorous in its sampling plan, questionnaire construction, and data analysis and interpretation. Survey 1 is concerned primarily with usefulness.

Survey 2 also is concerned with validity and generalizability: If adapted in another place (NextDoor County), will the County Health Department’s halfway house model be equally effective?

Each time you do a survey, you must evaluate where its purposes fall on a continuum that goes from specific to general use. You have some leeway with a survey designed to meet specific needs. All surveys that aim to be generalizable in their findings must be conducted with rigor.

**Ethics, Privacy, and Confidentiality**

Some people have become suspicious of surveys. They fear that the information they provide will be used inappropriately. Many techniques exist for protecting each person’s privacy and ensuring that information will be used only with the person’s knowledge and for clearly stated purposes. The surveyor needs to reassure potential respondents that these techniques have been incorporated into each survey. It is the ethical—right thing—to do.

All completed printed or written surveys should be kept in locked files, and only a limited number of staff should have access to them on a “need-to-know” basis. At the conclusion of data analysis, the surveys should be shredded. Furthermore, you can separate identifying information (e.g., names, birthdates, Social Security or government-issued identification numbers) from survey responses by assigning codes to individuals and using the codes to link them to their responses. Online survey takers can be permitted to assign their own user names and passwords when logging in to take a survey.

The use of surveys and concern for ethical issues are completely interwoven. Surveys are conducted because of the need to know; ethical considerations protect the individual’s right to privacy or even anonymity.

If your survey is for a public or private agency that is receiving U.S. government funds, you should know that the federal government has specified the legal dimensions of informed consent, privacy, and confidentiality. These dimensions include the following:

- A fair explanation of the procedures to be followed and their purposes
- A description of any risks and benefits
- An offer to answer any inquiries
- An instruction that the person is free to withdraw consent and discontinue participation without prejudice

Confidentiality is protected by the “Protection of Human Subjects” guidelines of the Code of Federal Regulations sometimes called the Common Rules. *Confidentiality* refers to the safeguarding of any information about one person that is known by another. A surveyor who has the names and addresses of people, even in coded or without identification, “de-identified,” may not use this information to reveal identities. In many surveys, confidentiality is a real concern because complete anonymity is practically impossible. A code number, an e-mail address, or even sometimes just a ZIP or postal code may lead to the survey respondent’s identity.

If you work for a private agency, organization, or business, you should
check the rules of informed consent and confidentiality. Is there a human subjects’ protection committee or Institutional Review Board (IRB) whose approval you must get? If you are a student, check to see whether you can ask the questions you are planning. Also, you may be part of a larger project that has already received approval for its activities as long as it conforms to certain standards—among them, the informed consent of respondents.

**Informed Consent**

The consent form gives potential respondents sufficient written information to decide whether to complete a survey. Here is a list of contents to include in an informed-consent form.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contents of an Informed-Consent Form</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• A title such as “Consent to Participate in Survey”</td>
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<tr>
<td>• The name of the survey</td>
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<tr>
<td>• The purpose of the survey</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Procedures to be followed, including where the survey will take place and its duration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Potential risks and discomforts, including answering questions that are personal or being in a closed room for 2 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Potential benefits to respondents and society, including new knowledge or better information to develop programs or policies. Sometimes the benefits are not yet really known.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Payment for participation. Say how much participants will be paid; if no payment is provided, say so.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Confidentiality. If the respondent’s name is to be kept confidential, describe coding procedures, who will have access to the surveys, and where the completed surveys will be kept. If information is to be shared with anyone, state with whom. You may be required by law to reveal survey results.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Participation and withdrawal. Can the participants withdraw at any time? What happens to them if they do? (For example, do they still retain any incentives? Will they still receive the same education, social benefits, or health care they came for?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Identification of surveyors. Who should be called if questions arise about the survey?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**The Internet and Ethical Surveys**

An online survey involves a web of computers that interact with one another. Communications take place between the surveyor and the respondent, the respondent and the web server, and the web server and the surveyor. Security breaches are possible anywhere within the web unless you put protections in place.

**Communication between the Surveyor and the Respondent**

It is not uncommon for a surveyor to contact a respondent by e-mail. The e-mail will discuss the survey and invite the participant to click on a URL or paste it into a browser such as Mozilla’s Firefox, Google’s Chrome, Apple’s Safari, or Microsoft’s Internet Explorer. Unfortunately, e-mail is not always secure or private. Many people are unaware of whether their computers are secure or even how to secure them. E-mail programs maintained by employers often are not private. If people do not log off or are careless about passwords, their privacy can be compromised easily. Also, inadequate passwords are easy to crack. If you conduct a survey that requires people to use a password, you must ensure that the password setup is secure.
Communication between the Respondent and the Website

When a respondent enters sensitive data in the blank spaces of a web-based questionnaire, it is similar to a shopper providing a credit card number when shopping online. Online merchants use a Secure Sockets Layer (SSL) protocol that allows secure communications across the Internet. An SSL protocol encrypts (converts into code) the user’s survey input, and it “decrypts” it when it arrives at the website. Many potential survey respondents are becoming aware of how easily their responses can be intercepted unless they are secured, and without guarantees that responses are encrypted, some of them may refuse to take the survey. You must decide in advance whether to use SSL and how to explain your security choices to respondents.

Communication between the Website and the Researcher

Sensitive identifiable data need to be protected in transit by using either an SSL protocol or a secure file transfer protocol.

Data Protection

Some people are reluctant to complete online surveys or even connect to survey sites for fear that their privacy will be compromised. All databases storing sensitive and identifiable information must be protected, regardless of whether they are created and maintained by commercial firms or by individuals. Encrypting the databases probably provides the most security.

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All reputable organizations develop or adapt rules for reassuring respondents that privacy will be respected. Here is a minimum set of rules for a privacy policy:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Minimum Criteria for a Survey Organization’s Privacy Policy</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. Describes exactly which survey data will be stored in the survey’s database</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Explains why any data are being stored</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Explains whether the organization gives, sells, or transfers information and, if it does, to whom and under which circumstances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Tells how the site monitors unauthorized attempts to change the site’s contents</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Discusses who maintains the site</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. If relevant, explains how cookies are used. Cookies are small amounts of information your browser stores. Cookies allow web-based applications to store information about selected items, user preferences, registration information, and other information that can be retrieved later. Are the cookies session specific? If not, can users opt out of the webpage feature that stores the cookies beyond the session?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following is the Centers for Disease Control’s privacy policy (http://cdc.gov/privacy.html). Although the CDC’s site is used for many purposes (not just for surveys and survey reports), its privacy policy is easy to read and illustrates how to comply with the minimum set of criteria for a privacy policy.

CDC’s Privacy Policy Notice

Thank you for visiting the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

(Continued)
(Continued)

website and for reviewing our Privacy Policy. CDC does not collect any personal information when you visit our website unless you choose to provide that information. The CDC privacy policy is as follows:

During a visit to the CDC website, if the website is simply browsed or information downloaded, certain information will be gathered and stored automatically about the visit. This information does not identify you personally. We automatically collect and store only the following information: [Description of data that are stored in the CDC’s database]

- the Internet domain (for example, “xcompany.com” if a private Internet access account is used, or “schoolname.edu” if connecting from a university’s domain) and IP address (an IP address is a number that is automatically assigned to a computer when surfing the web);
- the operating system and information about the browser used when accessing the site;
- the visit date and time;
- if www.cdc.gov is designated as a home page;
- the pages visited; and
- the address of the website visited immediately prior to visiting the CDC site.

Collection and analysis of this information in the aggregate will help us enhance site performance, improve informational materials available on our website, and improve overall customer service. If an e-mail message to CDC is sent or a questionnaire, form, or other online survey found on the CDC website is completed, CDC will maintain the information in accordance with applicable federal law. [Why data are being stored]

CDC does not disclose, give, sell, or transfer any information about CDC website visitors unless required for law enforcement or otherwise required by law. [Whether data are given, sold, or transferred]

For site security purposes and to ensure that this service remains available to all users, CDC employs software programs to identify unauthorized attempts to upload or change information, or otherwise cause damage. [What is done to monitor unauthorized use]

This site is maintained by the U.S. Government and is protected by various provisions of Title 18, U.S. Code. Violations of Title 18 are subject to criminal prosecution in Federal court.

Certain CDC webpages use “cookies,” which are small amounts of information stored by your web browser software on your workstation.

Use of Cookies

CDC webpages use two types of “cookies”: session-based and persistent. [Types of cookies used] The majority of cookies used are session-based. [How cookies are used] These bits of information are stored temporarily in your computer’s random access memory (RAM) as a line of text. When you close your browser, the cookie is destroyed and no trace of it remains on your hard drive. These session cookies are used solely as a method to improve the user experience for those visiting the site. In very few cases, the CDC website uses
persistent cookies to store information for a longer period. In those cases, the webpage is clearly noted and the user can choose not to use that webpage feature. [User can opt out] As noted above, in no case does CDC disclose, give, sell, or transfer any personal information about CDC website visitors unless required for law enforcement or otherwise required by law.

Look at the following excerpt from a privacy statement. The statement comes from a very large corporation that conducts surveys. As you can see, the company is truthful about the potential for other companies to track customers’ activities. However, consumers are left with the obligation to (1) be aware that unwanted cookies may be placed on their hard drive and (2) if they prefer, to do something about it by contacting the privacy officer.

This excerpt raises several questions: Will the respondents actually know if cookies are on their hard drive? How does the respondent get in touch with the privacy officer? Information is available in the “Contact Us” portion of the site, but the respondent has to look for it. It makes sense that the public is increasingly suspicious of online surveys and how their data are used.

You can help avoid some of these problems by being certain you have considered all the pitfalls of sending surveys and survey information into cyberspace.

If you plan to use the Internet (including e-mail) to (1) communicate with study participants or (2) to send participant information to a collaborator or contractor, you should be able to complete the following questionnaire for maintaining an ethically sound online survey.

### Example Questionnaire: Maintaining an Ethically Sound Online Survey

1. Describe the measures that will be taken to ensure that the web server hosting the Internet site is protected. In the description, provide information on physical security, firewalls, software patches(updates), and penetration drills.

2. If a password or other secure authorization method is to be used to allow access to the website, ask these two questions:
   - How will user passwords be distributed?
   - How will passwords and web access be terminated?

3. If the user session is encrypted, describe the method of encryption that will be used.
4. Explain who will have administrative access to data on the web server. Give names, study roles, and organizational affiliations.

5. Explain in detail the administrative safeguards put in place to restrict unauthorized and unnecessary access.

6. Describe how the information will be used. Will you give, sell, or transfer information to anyone?

7. Give the name and address of the application owner, that is, the persons or person who maintains the application.

8. If e-mail is used to contact respondents, describe the measures taken to assure respondents that the communication is from an authorized person.

9. If respondents are asked to contact the surveyors using e-mail, describe how the respondents will be authenticated to adequately ensure the source of the e-mail communication.

10. Explain how the study consent form describes the potential risks to privacy associated with the use of e-mail.

11. If e-mail is to be used to send study data to investigators, vendors, or others, explain if and how the e-mail will be encrypted.

12. If respondents are to send you attachments by e-mail, tell them if the attachments will be encrypted or password protected.

13. If automated e-mail routing systems are used, describe the security controls that will be in place. Specifically, describe the testing and disaster recovery procedures.

14. If contractors or vendors have access to survey respondents’ personal identifiable or confidential information,

   - describe the language that is included in the contract to protect respondent privacy and
   - describe the security requirements that will be provided to contractors or vendors who are designing or hosting web-based services for the project.

15. Give the name of the person on the survey project responsible for ensuring that the survey organization’s policies and procedures for confidentiality and security are followed for this project. Provide his or her professional position and affiliation.

16. Give the name of the person responsible for the general security administration for the information technology associated with this particular survey. Provide his or her professional position and affiliation.

Each survey has different limits on what it needs to collect and from whom. Some survey samples are more “vulnerable” than others and need different safeguards. The following is an informed-consent form typical of one that could be used in an online survey of teachers in a large school district. The survey’s purpose is to identify needs for improvement in the workplace.

**Example: Informed-Consent Form for an Online Survey**

Your individual responses to survey questions will be kept confidential by The
Survey Project and its survey contractor, Online Systems, Inc. Confidential data are information, such as an individual’s or school’s identification, that may not be released outside of The Survey Project, except with permission from the respondent. Individuals may grant The Survey Project permission to release confidential data that describe themselves. An authorized representative of a Survey Project member school may grant The Survey Project permission to release confidential data that describe his or her school. [Comment: This defines and describes the limits of confidentiality.]

Online Systems, Inc. will generate aggregate reports that contain schoolwide and departmental information to help your school identify, prioritize, and implement improvements in the school workplace that will increase student engagement. Information will not be reported in instances where respondent groups contain less than five individuals. [Comment: It may be possible to identify individual views in very small groups. This would violate privacy.] Data from open-ended questions will be provided to your school in deidentified, redacted form. Only deidentified record level data will be retained by The Survey Project, and only deidentified aggregate analyses will be shared in publications and research presentations with the academic community. [How the data will be used] The Survey Project may release deidentified responses to individuals who agree to protect the data and who agree to The Survey Project’s confidentiality policies. Online Systems, Inc. will store data on secure servers and will destroy all identified data within 2 years of survey administration. By participating, you will be contributing valuable information to your school. [Comment: Servers will be secured. The vendor must destroy identifiable data within 2 years.] The Survey Project and Online Systems, Inc. have taken numerous steps to protect participants in the Survey Project. Ethics Board requirements require that you are informed that if the information collected were to become public with individual identification it could prove personally uncomfortable. [Comment: This is a risk of participation.]

This survey has been reviewed and approved according to The Survey Project’s policies and procedures. By continuing, you acknowledge that you have read and understood the above information and agree to participate in this survey. [Comment: This is an online survey, and the respondent is not asked to “sign” to indicate willingness to participate. Signing software is available, but most surveys accept survey completion as informed consent.] If you have any questions about the survey, contact . . . If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, contact . . . [Comment: Whom to contact with questions]

Some large institutions and companies have ethics boards and privacy officers who can help you ensure an ethical survey. Many surveyors and survey companies, however, are not technically sophisticated regarding privacy, nor are they trained in online survey ethics. You can learn more about ethical survey research by going online to the National Institutes of Health’s guidelines on ethical research (http://grants.nih.gov/grants/policy/hs/ethical_guidelines.htm) and the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative, which provides training in ethical research with human subjects (https://www.citiprogram.org/Default.asp).
Surveys are information collection methods used to describe, compare, or explain individual and societal knowledge, feelings, values, preferences, and behavior.

Surveys are best when you need information directly from people about what they believe, know, and think.

A survey can be a self-administered questionnaire that someone fills out alone or with assistance. Self-administered questionnaires can take the form of written or online surveys. Written surveys may be completed by mail or on location.

A survey can be an interview done in person or on the telephone.

All surveys consist of questions that include the opportunity to respond. That is why the term *questionnaire* is often used interchangeably with the term *survey*.

To get accurate survey data, you must take into account the survey’s questions, response choices, sampling methods, response rate, design, and data analysis.

Survey results are presented as written (printed on paper or reproduced electronically) and oral reports.

A reliable survey produces consistent information, while a valid one results in accurate information.

Mail surveys are often used because people are familiar with them; however, the response rate is often dismal without a great deal of follow-up and incentives.

Interviewers need training, which may be time-consuming and costly.

The Internet is an efficient method of reaching a wide audience, but technical expertise is needed whether you do it on your own or use a commercial firm to assist. Online surveys, like all surveys, require careful advance planning.

Cell phone surveys can be costly, and it is difficult to sample among people who just have landlines, those with landlines and cell phones, and those with only cell phones.

Surveys may be done for specific or general purposes. Survey findings that are needed for many people and places will require special attention to how they are designed.

All complete written surveys should be kept in locked files, and only a limited number of staff should have access to them on a need-to-know basis. At the conclusion of data analysis, the surveys should be shredded.

Separate identifying information (e.g., names, birthdates, Social Security numbers) from survey responses by assigning codes to individuals and using the codes to link them to their responses.

Online survey takers may be given the option of choosing their own identification names and passwords when logging into a survey.

If e-mail addresses are used to inform participants about and provide a link to the survey, these should be made available only to a select group of surveyors.
If a survey is for a public or private agency that is receiving U.S. government funds, there are stringent legal dimensions of informed consent, privacy, and confidentiality. These dimensions include the following:

- A fair explanation of the procedures to be followed and their purposes
- A description of any risks and benefits
- An offer to answer any inquiries
- An instruction that the person is free to withdraw consent and to discontinue participation without prejudice

Informed consent to participate in a survey implies a willingness to complete it because respondents understand the survey’s purpose and procedures, the potential risks and benefits of responding, whether there is payment for participation, how confidentiality will be handled, and whether withdrawal without penalty is possible.

A survey’s privacy policy should do the following:

- Describe the data that will be stored in the survey’s database
- Explain why the data are being stored
- Explain whether the organization gives, sells, or transfers information and if it does, to whom and under which circumstances
- Inform how unauthorized attempts to change the site’s contents are monitored
- Discuss who maintains the site, and if relevant, explain how cookies are used. Are they session specific? If not, can users opt out of the webpage feature that stores the cookies beyond the session?

**THINK ABOUT THIS**

Read the description of each survey below and then answer these questions:

1. What is the survey about?
2. Name the survey method.
3. Is this the method you would have chosen to achieve the survey’s objectives? Explain.

**SURVEY DESCRIPTIONS**

Predicting Heart Problems from the Stress of the September 11, 2001, Terrorist Attacks on the United States

Health researchers wanted to examine the degree to which stress resulting from the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks on the United States forecasted heart problems in the nation
3 years after. They enlisted a national sample of adults in a web-based survey of their stress. The people who participated had completed a health survey before the attacks so the investigators had “baseline” information on them. Within 2 weeks of the attacks, the participants completed web surveys, and they continued to do so 1, 2, and 3 years after. The researchers contacted the survey participants’ physicians to find out whether they had diagnosed cardiovascular (heart) ailments over the 3-year period. The researchers found that acute stress responses to the September 11 attacks were associated with a 53% increased incidence of cardiovascular ailments over the 3 subsequent years.

School Furniture and Lower-Back Pain

This survey was designed to find out whether some types of school furniture prevent or cause lower-back pain in children. Five hundred forty-six schoolchildren ages 14 to 17 years answered a written questionnaire about sitting positions during school hours and the presence and severity of lower-back pain. The dimensions and the weight of the children’s school bags were measured, as were the types and dimensions of the school furniture. The findings were that more than half of the adolescents experienced lower-back pain during the preceding 3 months, and about one-quarter reported reduced daily function or care seeking because of lower-back pain. Lower-back pain occurrence was not found to be associated with the types or dimensions of the school furniture or body dimensions but was positively associated with carrying the school bag on one shoulder.

Male and Female Participation in Jazz Improvisation

Three hundred thirty-two surveys were given to students enrolled in middle school, junior high school, high school, college, and community jazz programs within 60 miles of a major midwestern university. The survey was administered during jazz band rehearsals and took approximately 10 minutes to complete. Jazz band directors and/or student teachers administered the survey to middle school and high school participants, who were instructed to take the survey home for a parent’s signature indicating approval for the child’s participation in the study. The findings indicated that females are significantly less confident, are more anxious, and have less self-efficacy (attitude) toward learning jazz improvisation.

Satisfaction with Paid Personal-Assistance Services

Traditional public home care programs in the United States rely on public or private agencies to hire and fire home care workers, schedule and direct services, monitor quality of care, discipline workers if necessary, and pay workers and applicable payroll taxes. In the agency-directed model, clients can express preferences for services or workers but have no formal control over them. This survey was concerned with comparing consumer-directed versus agency-directed home care on satisfaction with paid personal assistance services among Medicaid beneficiaries in Washington state. The survey was primarily conducted through telephone interviews using a computer-assisted telephone interviewing system, but there also were a few in-person interviews. The survey found that, among the older population, but not younger people with disabilities, beneficiaries receiving consumer-directed services were more satisfied than individuals receiving agency-directed care.
Teen Drivers’ Licensing Preferences and Practices

This survey used probability sampling methods to identify 1,383 15- to 18-year-olds from a nationally representative sample of U.S. households. The teens completed an online survey so that the surveyors could learn about national licensing rates, interest in early licensure, and reasons for delay. Some of the teens came from cell phone–only households; Internet access was provided to those without it. The survey found that at 16 years, teens were about equally divided among those in the learner stage and those with a restricted or full license. For teens old enough to start the licensing process, lack of a car, costs, parent availability, ability to get around without a car, and being busy with other activities were leading reasons for delay.

Parents’ Choice of Treatment for Their Children with Autism

Parents of children with autism spectrum disorders have a limited number of evidence-based treatments from which to choose. Nine hundred and seventy parents responded to an online survey that asked about the treatments currently in use, those discontinued, and reasons for discontinuation. The survey found that most families adopt multiple treatment approaches. Parents were most likely to discontinue nonevidence-based treatments when they did not see improvement in their child’s functioning.

Comment on the adequacy of the following section of a survey organization’s Privacy Policy.

**Information Security**

The Survey Organization’s employees understand the need for user privacy, and we maintain strict security procedures to protect your information. The Organization has appointed a Privacy Policy Administrator to monitor privacy practices. Access to user data is strictly limited to specific individuals who are trained to respect user privacy. The access given to these employees is restricted to their need of such information for business reasons. A log of those who accessed the data is maintained and monitored to prevent security breaches.

**ARTICLES**


