

# MARKETING RESEARCH USING ONLINE SURVEYS

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**Abstract:** *In this article, quality criteria for electronic survey design and use based on an investigation of recent electronic survey literature are presented. The results show that a hard-to-reach audience can be reached using the quality criteria that are most important for reaching these types of audiences. It is presented one online questionnaire for the academic staff community at Transilvania university of Brasov, Romania. The Limerik one was tested.*

**Key words:** *marketing research, academic research, online survey.*

## 1. Introduction

Some knowledge concerning the design and use of paper-based surveys does translate into electronic formats. However, electronic surveys have distinctive technological, demographic, and response rate characteristics that affect their design, distribution, and response rates. In this article, we present the results of a comprehensive investigation into the nature of electronic surveys and current methodological approaches.

Quality criteria across five important methodological components are explored.

These include survey design, participant privacy and confidentiality, sampling and participant selection, distribution and response management, and survey piloting.

This is followed with a case study of one survey applied at Transilvania University, using the Limerik type of electronic questionnaire. Text-based e-mail electronic

surveys have existed since 1986 and Web-based surveys since the early 1990s (Kehoe & Pitkow, 1996, [2]; Kiesler & Sproull, 1986, [3]). The differences between the two have been reduced now that e-mail is multimedia capable. However, there are several important differences. Web-based surveys allow automatic verification and survey response capture in databases. Copyrighted software applications such as SurveyWiz, FactorWiz, QUIS, Survey Pro, Survey Said, Zoomerang, Survey Monkey, and WebSurveyor eliminate manual construction and 186 Andrews, Nonnecke, Preece administrative challenges (Birnbau, 2000; McCoy & Marks, 2001, [3]). However, Web-based surveys do not provide e-mail's "push" affordance and must be integrated with it to create the "pull" effect to bring people to the survey.

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## 2. Survey Design Quality Criteria

- Supports multiple platforms and browsers/e-mail clients
- Controls for browser settings
- Detects multiple submissions automatically
- Presents questions in a logical or adaptive manner, for example, provides control of when and how questions are displayed
- Allows saving responses before completion
- Collects open-ended or quantified-option responses
- Provides automatic feedback with completion
- Uses paper questionnaire design principles. Provides automatic transfer of responses to a database
- Prevents survey alteration
- Provides response control and economical displays
- Provides for links to definitions, menus, button and check box options, animation, sound, graphics options, and so forth
- Does not require familiarity with survey presentation software
- Displays appear quickly to participant
- Tracks response source of response failure

## 3. Privacy & Confidentiality Quality Criteria

- Participants can designate conditions of release, use, retention and disposal of personal data
- Sample only from public e-mail lists, online communities and automated mailing lists

- Send invitations and surveys separately
- Collect data through Web pages
- Provide multiple response options
- Use “re-mailers” to ensure anonymity
- Do not troll through observation
- Do not use “cookies”
- Do not use links from personalized sites
- Provide disclosures
- Provide third party privacy certification
- Use credible domains
- Use encryption for sensitive material
- Use hypertext links for long disclosures
- Disclose sampling procedures
- Obtain community leader consent
- Provide survey results to respondents
- Use self-selected user identifications and passwords (option)
- Provide “rather not say” response option. Allow people to “opt-in” (Establish credibility quickly through subject lines and opening statements. Guarantee that no one will see one’s personal data, not anonymity as researchers will know who the participants are, and explain the method for maintaining confidentiality .

## 4. Survey Design Features Affecting Response Rates

In Transilvania University of Brasov, Romania we design one online questionnaire tasted to academic university staff about **Attitudes, Difficulties and Interest of the Academic Community in Institutional Repository**.

We present our design of survey and methodology:

Warning: You are still using the default password ('password'). Please change your password and re-login again.

Administration -- Logged in as: admin

Surveys: ATITUDINI, OPINII ŞI COMPOR...

Survey ATITUDINI, OPINII ŞI COMPORTAMENTE ALE CADRELOR DIDACTICE UNIVERSITARE PRIVIND CONSTITUIREA UNUI DEPOZIT DIGITAL INSTITUȚIONAL CU PRODUCȚIA ȘTIINȚIFICĂ A UNIVERSITĂȚII TRANSILVANIA (ID:12256)

Groups: Please choose...

Edit survey - step 1 of 2

General | Presentation & navigation | Publication & access control | Notification & data management | Uploaded resources management

Base language: Romanian - Românesc

Additional languages:

Administrator:

Admin email:

Bounce email:

Fax to:

Save and continue >>

Fig. 1. *How to do a survey*

We used Limerik.

Warning: You are still using the default password ('password'). Please change your password and re-login again.

Administration -- Logged in as: admin

Surveys: ATITUDINI, OPINII ŞI COMPOR...

Survey ATITUDINI, OPINII ŞI COMPORTAMENTE ALE CADRELOR DIDACTICE UNIVERSITARE PRIVIND CONSTITUIREA UNUI DEPOZIT DIGITAL INSTITUȚIONAL CU PRODUCȚIA ȘTIINȚIFICĂ A UNIVERSITĂȚII TRANSILVANIA (ID:12256)

Groups: Please choose...

Title: ATITUDINI, OPINII ŞI COMPORTAMENTE ALE CADRELOR DIDACTICE UNIVERSITARE PRIVIND CONSTITUIREA UNUI DEPOZIT DIGITAL INSTITUȚIONAL CU PRODUCȚIA ȘTIINȚIFICĂ A UNIVERSITĂȚII TRANSILVANIA (ID 12256)

Survey URL (Romanian): <http://econ.unitbv.ro/limesurvey/index.php?sid=12256&lang=ro>

Description: ATITUDINI, OPINII ŞI COMPORTAMENTE ALE CADRELOR DIDACTICE UNIVERSITARE PRIVIND CONSTITUIREA UNUI DEPOZIT DIGITAL INSTITUȚIONAL CU PRODUCȚIA ȘTIINȚIFICĂ A UNIVERSITĂȚII TRANSILVANIA

Welcome: În vederea efectuării unui studiu privind „ATITUDINI, OPINII ŞI COMPORTAMENTE ALE CADRELOR DIDACTICE UNIVERSITARE PRIVIND CONSTITUIREA UNUI DEPOZIT DIGITAL INSTITUȚIONAL CU PRODUCȚIA ȘTIINȚIFICĂ A UNIVERSITĂȚII TRANSILVANIA”, vă rugăm să aveți amabilitatea de a răspunde la următoarele întrebări. Vă asigurăm de confidențialitatea răspunsurilor dumneavoastră. Corectitudinea acestora este de o mare importanță pentru reușita cercetării.

Administrator: Your Name (your@email.org)

Fax to:

Expiry date: -

Template: default

Base language: Romanian - Românesc

Additional languages:

Exit link:

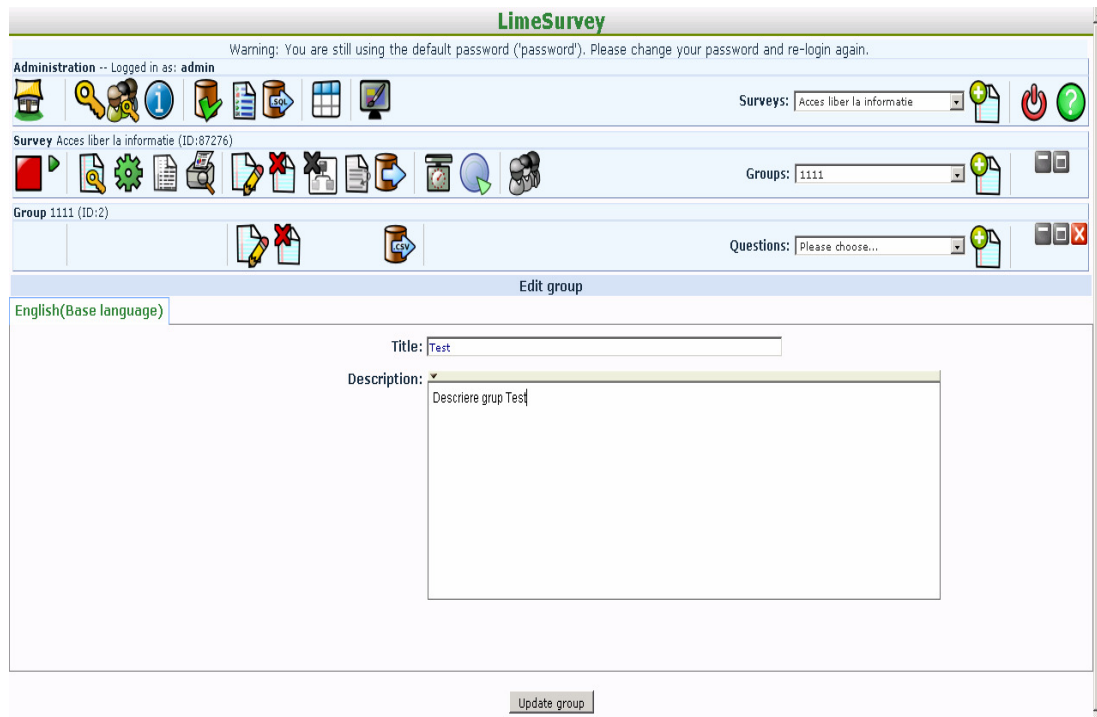
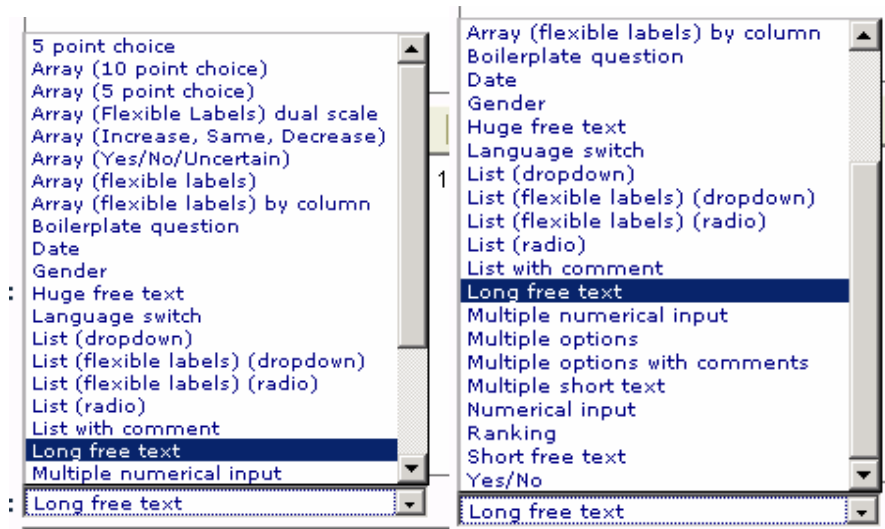
Number of questions/groups: 34/3

Survey currently active: Yes

Survey table name: lime\_survey\_12256

Hints: Answers to this survey are anonymized.  
It is presented question by question.  
Participants can save partially finished surveys  
No email notification  
Regenerate question codes: [Straight] [By group]

Fig. 2. *How to modify a question*

Fig. 3. *Creating one question group*Fig. 4. *Question types*

Following the introduction and informed consent pages, the survey questions were divided into three sections, each having a “submit” (save) button. Questions were not numbered. The first section contained demographic questions, the second section contained questions about the online community where the invitation was posted, and the last section contained questions about an online community that the participant had permanently left. This

last section was optional. Coded questions used drop-down menus, radio buttons, and check boxes with nominal scales, Likert scales, semantic differential scales, and single and multiple choice selection options (Figure 4). Open-ended questions were limited to optional opportunities at the end of a coded question set and were presented via text-input boxes with wrapping and scrolling, not single-line entry.

**Browse responses**

**Data entry**

ATTITUDINI, OPINII ȘI COMPORTAMENTE ALE CADRELOR DIDACTICE UNIVERSITARE PRIVIND CONSTITUIREA UNUI DEPOZIT DIGITAL INSTITUȚIONAL CU PRODUCȚIA ȘTIINȚIFICĂ A UNIVERSITĂȚII TRANSILVANIA

ATTITUDINI, OPINII ȘI COMPORTAMENTE ALE CADRELOR DIDACTICE UNIVERSITARE PRIVIND CONSTITUIREA UNUI DEPOZIT DIGITAL INSTITUȚIONAL CU PRODUCȚIA ȘTIINȚIFICĂ A UNIVERSITĂȚII TRANSILVANIA

**Grup 1**

1 \*Considerați că oferirea unui serviciu de tip depozit instituțional digital de către universitate, reprezintă o condiție esențială pentru alinierea universității la cercetarea științifică internațională:

2 \*La care din următoarele tipuri de publicare ați apelat mai des?

3 \*Va rugăm să ordonați avantajele publicării în acces liber (răspuns multiplu)?

**Your choices:**

**Your ranking:** 1:  2:  3:  4:

4 \*Cum apreciați volumul de informații pe care le dețineți, despre publicarea în acces liber?

5 \*Considerați că este nevoie de constituire unui depozit instituțional digital cu producția științifică a universității?

6 \*Va rugăm să apreciați calitatea informațiilor deținute de aceste materiale :

Proiectele de diploma a studenților

Dizertații masteranzi

Teze de doctorat

Volumele unor conferințe

Buletinul universității

Articole științifice

Fig. 5. *Introducing data and visualizing questions*

**Export results**

**Export responses (52 Columns)**

**Questions**

Abbreviated headings

Full headings

Question codes

Filter incomplete answers

**Answers**

Answer codes

Full answers

**Format**

Microsoft Word (latin charset)

Microsoft Excel (all charsets)

CSV File (all charsets)

PDF

**Column control**

Choose columns:

1: id

2: completed

3: 12256X3M8

4: 12256X3M4

5: 12256X3M51

6: 12256X3M52

7: 12256X3M53

8: 12256X3M54

9: 12256X3M6

10: 12256X3M7

11: 12256X3M8pds

12: 12256X3M8dm

13: 12256X3M8td

14: 12256X3M8vc

15: 12256X3M8bu

Fig. 5. *Results*

### 5. The Quality Criteria for Electronic Surveys Provide Choices

We did not implement all the recommended criteria for quality electronic surveys but did implement those that made sense for the research objectives, context, and content of this study. As discussed previously, the survey succeeded in reaching a significant portion of hard-to-involve academic staff online community participants. From the case study experience, the most important criteria contributing to survey success appeared to be the following:

- For design, all the criteria except adaptive question presentation, which was not used.
- For privacy and confidentiality, the criteria of full disclosure of study purpose and sampling procedures, those items that help to establish researcher credibility, and the promise of confidentiality and not requiring identification, although as mentioned earlier, compromises may be needed to protect researchers from unpleasant, unsolicited e-mail.
- For encouraging high response rates, the multistep invitation and survey presentation process. Most important,

we responded to all inquiries rapidly and in detail.

### 6. Conclusion

The electronic survey had good participation from the community that we wanted to survey.

Dependance on internet connection, and not having the possibility of saving answers, led to having a few abandoned initiatives.

### References

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