Q. Why use ... Electronic Questionnaires?

A. To gather feedback quickly and cheaply. Electronic questionnaires eliminate the costs associated with printing and distributing paper-based questionnaires. Collecting data in electronic format reduces time and costs required for data processing and may increase public confidence in the anonymity of their responses. With group response technology you can obtain instant feedback.

Please see also the section on Surveys and Questionnaires

How to do it...

- Technical background: The questionnaire is created using Hyper Text Mark-up Language (HTML) and made available to potential respondents via a web server. When the respondent has completed the questionnaire they submit the web form back to the web server. The web server processes the data by executing programs created as part of the web form either for sending data to a designated email address, or inserting it into a database created especially for the purpose of storing and retrieving the data.

- Practical solution: Web-based survey tools can be easily identified by an internet search and will enable you to create your own questionnaires.

- Web-based survey services allow simple analysis of frequencies of response to each question, but cannot provide more complex analyses; for example if there are statistically significant differences between groups. The data gathered can be imported into spreadsheets and statistical packages which can be used to carry out more complex analyses.

Pros

- Information can be collected from a large group of people.
- Surveys are easy to design and administer.
- Simple analyses can be completed very quickly.
- Responses can be anonymous.
- Web-based questionnaires can be made to look more visually appealing, and the data generated is in a predictable format.

Cons

- If this tool is incorrectly used, accurate information will not be gathered.
- When using an online survey, there is no opportunity to clarify the meaning of a question.
- Online surveys may have a low response rate and have the risk of excluding people with language, literacy and/or IT access issues. Piloting the survey is essential in identifying and avoiding such limitations.
- Web-based questionnaires may require more technical expertise to create them, the cost of which may not be justifiable if targeting a relatively small number of people.
Top Tips

Please check the Top Tips for ‘Surveys and Questionnaires’.

Sources and further information