




OpenQuestion: A survey building platform written in Python

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Summary

[OpenQuestion](#) is a survey building platform written in Python. Surveys can be developed using a GUI or by writing Python code. OpenQuestion is built on the open source Anvil App Server, a runtime engine for writing full-stack web applications in Python (Luff & Davies, 2020).¹

OpenQuestion has many of the features that exist in other survey platforms. For example,

- A web-based GUI for survey development and data acquisition
- Familiar survey widgets (e.g., text box, drop down, slider)
- Several authentication options for survey developers
- Configurable survey settings (e.g., open/closing dates)

In addition, OpenQuestion includes a number of other developer-friendly features. For example,

- A Python interpreter can be connected to OpenQuestion, giving admins and developers access to the application's database
- Surveys are represented (in the backend) as a Python dict and can therefore be programmatically created and modified
- Query strings can be used in survey URLs to associate arbitrary data with a given submission
- Markdown widgets can be used for embedding images, GIFs, rich text, links, and more

Another notable Python library that can be used for web-based data collection is Docassemble (Pyle, 2017). Web forms in Docassemble (so-called guided interviews), are developed by writing YAML, Markdown, and Python. In contrast to OpenQuestion, Docassemble is focused on document generation based on the answers provided in the guided interview. OpenQuestion on the other hand, is designed for surveys that save submissions to a backend table. Further, surveys in OpenQuestion can be designed using a GUI (as well as by using Python) and therefore developers with limited technical expertise may have a lower barrier to entry.

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¹Note that an Anvil account is not required to use OpenQuestion.

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