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# Internet-Based Research - SBE

Georgia Institute of Technology - Group 2 Social / Behavioral Research  
Investigators and Key Personnel

## Quiz Results

You correctly answered **4 of 5** quiz questions.

### Question 1

<b>Question</b>	Consent to participate in research is an ongoing process. Which of the following strategies would help ensure that participation in a survey about a sensitive personal topic remains voluntary throughout a study?
<b>Your Answer</b>	Designing the survey so that subjects are not forced to answer one question before going to the next.
<b>Result</b>	<b>Correct</b>
<b>Comment</b>	Voluntary participation in research includes the right to withdraw from a study at any time and the right to choose not to answer questions. On-line surveys that force subjects to answer one question before going to the next violate the requirement that all participation in research be voluntary. Providing contact information for the researcher, privacy policies, and description of the survey are important, but they do not address the requirement.

## Question 2

<b>Question</b>	Revelations about the Facebook Emotional Contagion study highlights what key ethical consideration to conducting research using social media?
<b>Your Answer</b>	Participants who use social media have expectations of privacy that may be at odds with the reality that their data is available publicly.
<b>Result</b>	<b>Incorrect</b>
<b>Correct Answer</b>	Users of social media sites, like Facebook, may not fully understand all of the terms to which they are agreeing to when accepting a sites' terms of use.
<b>Comment</b>	The use of information on social media sites may meet the definition of research with human subjects and fall under the purview of a research ethics committee. It is true that social media users may have expectation of privacy that are at odds with how information is made available on social media; however, the main ethical considerations the Facebook Emotional Contagion study presents are rooted in questions about consent. In the Facebook Emotional Contagion study, the researchers did not secure individual consent from the 700,000 Facebook users whose news feed they manipulated. Instead, they relied on language in the terms of use Facebook users agreed to ("analysis, testing, [and] research") as a means to argue they did not need to consent each individual. This highlights that key issue that individuals on social media may not fully understand all of the terms to which they are agreeing to when accepting a sites' terms of use.

## Question 3

<b>Question</b>	Which of the following methods could be considered a "best practice" in terms of informing respondents how their answers to an on-line survey about personal information will be protected?
<b>Your Answer</b>	The investigator uses the informed consent process to explain how respondent data will be transmitted from the website to his encrypted database without ever recording respondents' IP

addresses, but explains that on the internet confidentiality cannot be absolutely guaranteed.

**Result****Correct****Comment**

Although there are no guaranteed methods to assure absolute confidentiality of research data collected on-line, some internet-based research experts have identified “best practices” for describing commonly accepted confidentiality protections, such as including explanations about how data are transmitted from the subject to the investigator, how the investigator will maintain and secure the data. Consent processes should also include a discussion to emphasize that there is no way to guarantee absolute confidentiality if data are of a personal or sensitive nature.

## Question 4

**Question**

Researchers designing online studies should consider the following with respect to participant protections.

**Your Answer**

Re-identification methods are unique to internet-based research.

**Result****Correct****Comment**

One of the biggest risk of harm to subjects taking part in social and behavioral sciences research is the inadvertent disclosure of private identifiable information that could damage their reputations, employability, insurability, or subject them to criminal or civil liability. In most internet-based research, the primary risk of harm is loss of confidentiality. Because re-identification methods are unique to internet-based researchers, researchers need to carefully consider how to best ensure participant protections when designing online studies.

## Question 5

**Question**

The internet can be used as a research tool or as the object of a study. Which of the following examples best describes an investigator using the internet as a research tool?

**Your Answer** An investigator uses his Facebook wall to post a URL link to a survey he is hosting on SurveyMonkey.

**Result** **Correct**

**Comment** Investigators use the internet as a research tool when they actively engage, or interact, with their participants on-line. This can include distributing an instrument via email or hosting a web-based survey on an on-line survey provider, recruiting subjects from on-line panels, conducting interviews on-line, facilitating focus groups in private chat rooms, and posting on-line experiments or interventions on web-based service providers.

**You scored 80% on the quiz.**

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