

Reflection – Borrowed Techniques

As it is known, Human Computer Interaction is a field that involves multiple disciplines. In order to better understand human behaviors when interacting with computer technologies and put them into practical applications, it uses knowledges and methodologies from other fields in order to carry out its objectives effectively. Among those methods lie one of the most popular for research on groups of people: surveys.

A qualitative and quantitative method from the field of psychology, surveys provide questions to a group of participants of the researcher's interest, preferably a large sample, to answer by themselves to directly provide their thoughts, feelings and behaviors on particular subjects the researchers wish to know and understand.

In HCI, the method had little to no change as in its original form it was already useable for its purposes. For this field surveys are employed to measure and understand the characteristics of the users of interest, their feedback about user experience on certain pieces of computer technology, and over time comparisons.

One of the biggest upsides this method has for research is its ease of employment on a large population. Due to the nature of surveys, researchers can apply them in a variety of ways such as directly providing the participants questionnaires to answer them physically or sending them a web page or a Google Forms to do so online. This allows them to very easily get a large sample to obtain the information they need in a short amount of time and at a relatively low cost.

However, the great downside of this method is that the data collected through it would be shallow. It can provide a general consensus of the population's thoughts on the matters of interest, but nothing too deep for greater understanding. Other problems it has are that elaborating the questions for the survey can be difficult as they need to both be easy to understand by the participants and be able to provide the desired data, and the method has no guarantee that all of the participants will answer them.

Surveys are a useful tool for HCI as it is for many other fields due to its great versatility and ease to employ and gather great volumes of data for research, but with the stated downsides the methods come with, is strongly recommended in HCI that the surveys should be complemented with other research methods to ensure greater quality of data.

Link:

Price, P., Jhangiani, R., & Chiang, I. (2015). *Research Methods of Psychology – 2nd Canadian Edition*. Victoria, B.C.: BCcampus. Retrieved from <https://opentextbc.ca/researchmethods/>

Niess, J. (2022). *Surveys in HCI*. Retrieved from <https://www.uio.no/studier/emner/matnat/ifi/IN2020/h22/timeplan/07-hci-methods-short.pdf>