Survey

# Description

Libro, p. 34-36

Surveys are mainly used to gather information of the users (who they are and how they will use the future system). In order to reach this purpose, unambiguous questions and statements are prepared. They are often analysed statistically. They can be sent by hand, by post, online and by e-mail.

# Benefits

* Effective source of information to better understand the users in order to design better systems and avoid the risk of bad design
* can reach a large number of people
* useful only if they provide answers to questions raised by design team
* can quantify concepts
* “Providing **stakeholders with confidence** that a design is, or will be effective. Gathering larger sample sizes, in comparison to qualitative research, often speaks the language of business stakeholders. Whether we like it or not, there is often a perception when it comes to research that more is more”[[1]](#footnote-1)

# Best practices

In order to create and conduct an effective survey, these steps should be covered:

## 1. Creation of the survey

* find out the what are the most important points such as
  + decision points
  + uncertainties in the design team by thinking of the usage of the product
  + needs to be discovered
* involve decision makers
* decide how it will be analysed at the end
* analyse the product context of use to detect the uncertain and problematic aspects
* test it with some potential survey users by creating survey condition as closer as possible

There are two different types of question structure: open and closed.

* **closed questions:** the respondent can answer the question by choosing predefined options.

Examples of such questions are:

* + - simple checklists: ex. “yes”, “no”, “I don’t know”
    - rating scale: the extremities are semantically opposite words such as “very important” and “very useless”
    - Likert scale: a scale with semantically similar words that when analysed shows a user’s attitude, example: “Always”, “Sometimes”, “Every Once in a While”, “Rarely”, “Never”

Closed questions are easy to analyse as it should only count the number of response of each option.

* **open questions:** the respondent is more free to answer these type of questions. They typically begin with “What do you…”, “How do you…” or “What ways…”.

A good practice for these questions is to limit the space of answer so that respondents will tend to prioritize their answers.

Open questions are used when there are not predetermined answers. They will provide richer data in terms of contents and quantity. In fact, the analysis will take more time as each answers need to be read, grouped and classified.

Generally, an effective survey contains open and closed questions

Provide the participant with an estimate of completion time up front, as well as something that indicates their progress

## 2. Test the survey

* guarantee that the survey
  + is well designed and follow a logical flow
  + has simple and few questions (no more than two sides of a page)
  + is comprehensible for a large group of people (clear and unambiguous questions as nobody will help them at the time they will compile it)
  + is not boring (avoid impertinent and complicated questions)
  + will gather the information you are looking for
  + includes “other” or “comments” to give the possibility to the users to add some more information the survey didn’t ask

## 3. Conduct the survey

* send the survey to individuals people by naming their role (ex. Manager, director, secretary and so on) rather than anonymously
* reward to respondent is also a good incentive to obtain more participants

## 4. Result

* analyse data should be as automatic as possible
* tools such as spreadsheet and statistics package (like SPSS) are commonly used
* statistical procedures mostly used are
  + count the frequency response to options;
  + cross-tabulating responses to one series of questions or options against another series of questions or options in order to see the correlation among them

# Example

Sources

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Likert_scale>

<http://www.usability.gov/how-to-and-tools/methods/online-surveys.html>

http://uxmastery.com/better-user-research-through-surveys/

1. http://uxmastery.com/better-user-research-through-surveys/ [↑](#footnote-ref-1)