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## Topic

Surveys are a simple and effective way to get feedback, but people often don't know how to design a survey to get useful information from participants.

## Description

Write a How-to guide on creating a simple survey. Share some brief Dos and Don'ts and explain your reasoning.

## References

Rosenberg, S. (2020, October 18). *Respectful Collection of Demographic Data - Managing on the Margins*. Medium.  
<https://medium.com/managing-on-the-margins/respectful-collection-of-demographic-data-56de9fcb80e2>

Tierney, J. (2011, August 18). *Do You Suffer From Decision Fatigue?* The New York Times.  
<https://www.nytimes.com/2011/08/21/magazine/do-you-suffer-from-decision-fatigue.html>

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# How to Write a Demographics Survey

It can be interesting and helpful to see a demographics breakdown of your community. You can glean information about your users that can be used to make smarter decisions or you can simply share your findings in a report. While creating a survey might seem like a straightforward task, if you don't word your questions carefully, you might be presented with unusable data and will have wasted your users' time as well as your own.

Here are some tips for writing a simple and easy-to-understand demographics survey!

## 1. Give your respondents some wiggle room

Let's say you want to ask your users if they're male or female. Information on gender can be quite useful, but you should know that not everybody identifies as one or the other of those two options. Remember that your experiences are not the same as everyone else's, and try to design your questions and answers with an open mind.

## 2. ...But keep it within reason

If you find yourself scoffing at the possibility of your respondents identifying outside the gender binary, it might be tempting to include additional gender options such as elf, extraterrestrial, or attack helicopter. Doing this signifies to your users that you don't take their identity seriously, and they may avoid answering the survey truthfully even if the rest of your questions are worded sincerely.

When in doubt, give the user the option to fill in their own answer.

## 3. Focus on relevant information

While you might be interested in what type of first pet your users owned, try to keep questions related to the theme of your survey. If you stray too far away from your survey's purpose, users will begin to feel like they're not providing useful answers and will become discouraged.

## 4. Don't overwhelm your respondents

Decision fatigue is a real phenomenon and users have to think about and decide on an answer for each of your questions. Keep the options concise and consider adding a fill-in option instead of trying to define all the possible answers.

## 5. Don't be afraid to ask about what makes your community unique

Is your community a forum for Beanie Baby collectors? Consider adding a question asking when users began collecting or how big their collection is. Are you a local mountain biking page? Users might be interested in knowing who grew up in the area and where the transplants came from!

## 6. Have fun!

You'll be able to learn lots of interesting information about your community with a demographics survey. You can even create more engagement for your users by asking them to suggest questions for the survey!