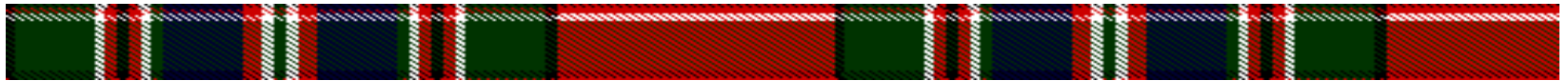


Survey Methods



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RCPT 336: Research & Technology Applications in Recreation, Parks and Tourism

What will we cover?

- Different types of surveys with advantages and disadvantages
- Techniques for developing useful surveys and writing good questions
- Avoiding errors and raising response rates

Before you start a survey...

What do you want to know?

-  *Determines the content*

Who do you want the information from?

-  *Determines the sample*

What are you going to do with the information?

-  *Determines the end product*

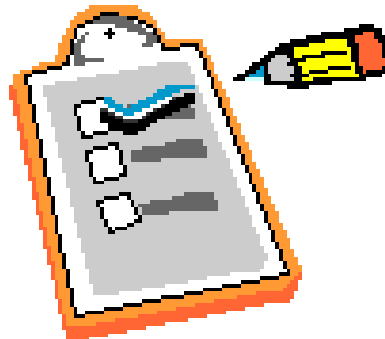
Mail Surveys

Advantages

- *Fewest resources*
- *Easiest*
- *Greatest privacy*
- *Reduced interviewer bias*

Disadvantages

- *Non-coverage error*
- *Non-response error*
- *Lack of control*
- *Time requirements*



Telephone Interviews

■ Advantages

- *Better response rate*
- *Rapid turnaround*
- *Greater interview control*

■ Disadvantages

- *Non-coverage error*
- *Interviewer bias*
- *Measurement error*
- *Personnel & phone costs*



Face-to-Face Interviews

■ Advantages

- *Best for complex & lengthy questions*
- *Greatest interviewer control*
- *Richest source of information*

■ Disadvantages

- *High costs*
- *Interviewer bias*
- *Time requirement*
- *Requires well trained interviewers*
- *Difficulty finding respondents*



Advantages of Online Surveys

- **Can be very inexpensive compared to other methods**
 - *No postage, printing, long distance, interviewers, data entry*
- **Quick turnaround**
 - *Information available as soon as someone completes the survey*
- **Response quality**
 - *Fewer missed questions, outliers, invalid responses*
 - *Open-ended responses tend to be longer*
- **No interviewer bias**
- **Adaptability**

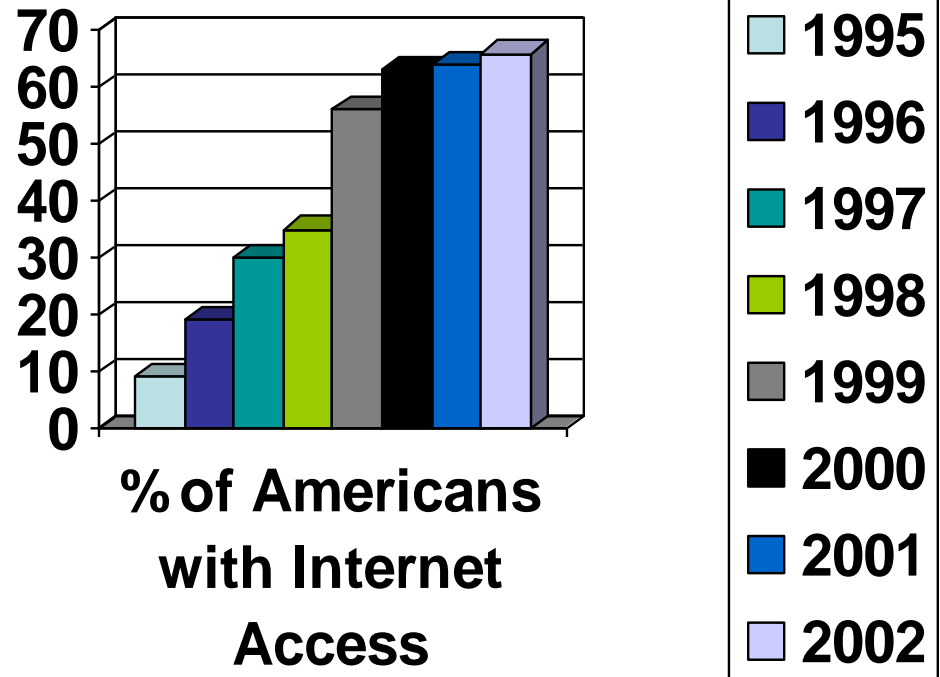
Disadvantages of Online Surveys

■ Not representative of the population

- *Younger*
- *More highly educated*
- *More likely to be white*

■ Self selection

■ Survey fatigue



Source: Harris Survey, 2002

More Disadvantages

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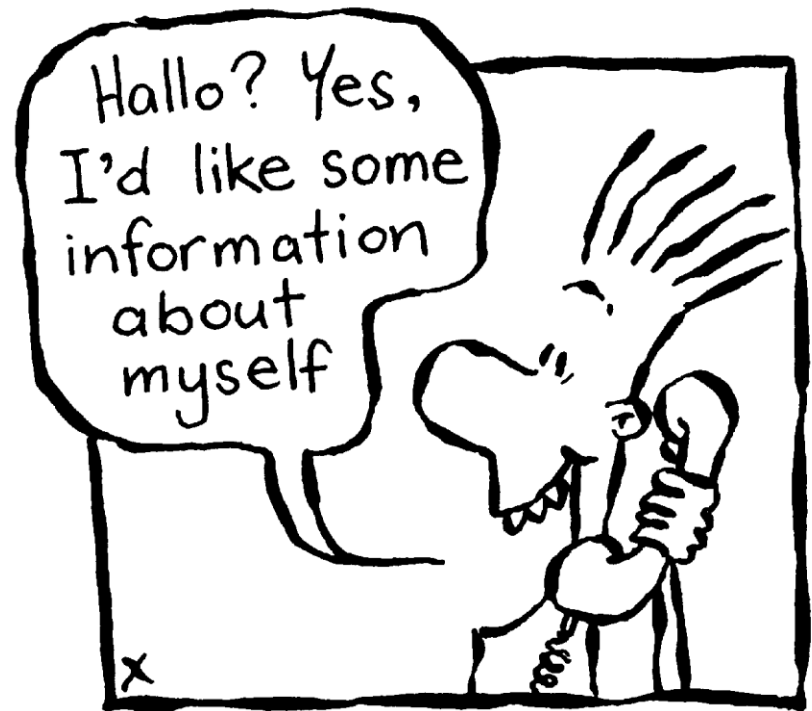
- Privacy or security issues
- Technical problems
 - *Freezes, crashes, double entry, Internet attacks*



**"This is our most reliable computer!
It breaks down at the same time every day
so you can plan your schedule around it."**

Ways to Recruit a Sample

- Creating a web presence
- E-mailing a specific sample
- Posting to newsgroups and listservs



Raising Response Rates

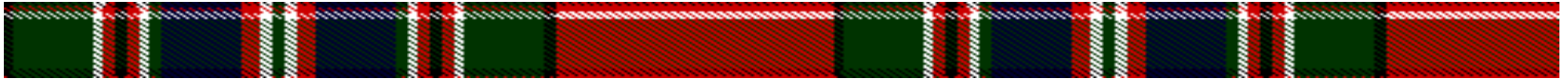
- **Pre-notification (forewarning)**
- **Salience (timeliness or interest)**
- **Incentives (can bias the sample)**
- **Survey length (shorter the better)**
- **Multiple contacts & reminders**
- **Personalization (Dillman method)**

Survey Errors

- **Coverage error**: leave part of the population out of the sample
- **Sampling error**: occurs whenever sample size is smaller than population
- **Non-response error**: occurs when non-respondents are different from respondents
- **Measurement error**: difference between a respondent's answer and the correct answer



Survey Design



Survey Structure

1. Introduction about the importance of the survey and why the questions are being asked
2. Interesting and applicable questions at the beginning
3. Conclusion that expresses gratitude for their participation

Simplicity! Pretest!
Keep Your Eye on the Data Prize!

Writing Good Survey Questions

■ Types of Questions

- *Open-ended (no set answers)*
- *Close-ended (choose from predetermined answers)*
 - Ordered categories in a continuum (age, income)
 - Unordered categories (religion, favorite ice cream)
- *Partially close-ended (predefined answers with optional fill in the blank)*
- *Checklists (dummy variables – yes/no)*
- *Likert scales (measure attitudes by asking level of agreement/disagreement with a series of statements)*

Common Errors

- Close-ended answers that are not mutually exclusive, balanced, or exhaustive
- Double-barreled questions
- Interpretation problems (abbreviations, jargon, vague categories, overly specific)
- Question order
- Response sets

Poor Survey Questions

- 1. How often do you binge drink?**
seldom, quite a bit, often, all the time
- 2. Do you support President Bush and his policies on international terrorism?**
- 3. How much do you earn a year?**
\$10-15,000, \$15,000-\$40,000, over \$50,000
- 4. Your leisure time is valuable.**
disagree, neutral, agree, strongly agree