Surveys:
Tools and
good practice

Surveys: Tool and Good Practice – Key Resources

Data Protection

Staff Guidance on Data Protection
Extensive information from the Compliance team for University of Oxford staff who need to handle personal data.
https://compliance.admin.ox.ac.uk/staff-guidance

Data Protection by Design
Framework which all University of Oxford activities involving personal data need to work through.
https://compliance.admin.ox.ac.uk/data-protection-by-design

Creating Privacy Notices
Pre-written privacy notices for key groups, plus guidance on creating your own.
https://compliance.admin.ox.ac.uk/creating-privacy-notices

Conducting Compliant Surveys
Guidance from the Compliance team on complying with data protection requirements when running a survey.
https://compliance.admin.ox.ac.uk/conducting-compliant-surveys

Data Protection and Research
An overview of data protection considerations from a research perspective.
https://researchsupport.admin.ox.ac.uk/policy/data

Local Information Governance Staff
Guidance may also be available from information governance staff in your department or division.
For example, the Medical Sciences Division has its own Information Governance team:
https://www.medsci.ox.ac.uk/divisional-services/support-services-1/infogov

Information Security

InfoSec Third Party Security Assessment (TPSA)
Any third party service used to store or process University data should go through this process.
https://www.infosec.ox.ac.uk/third-party-security-assessment
You can also email the InfoSec team if you have specific questions: grc@infosec.ox.ac.uk

Survey Tools

Jisc Online Surveys
Oxford has a subscription to this service, so it is available free of charge to all University members.
To request an account, visit https://help.it.ox.ac.uk/jisc-online-surveys
To find out more about the service, visit https://www.onlinesurveys.ac.uk/

Microsoft Forms
A tool for building straightforward forms and surveys. Part of the Nexus 365 suite of tools.
For more information, visit https://help.it.ox.ac.uk/microsoft-forms
To access the service, sign in using your SSO credentials at https://forms.office.com/

SharePoint

SharePoint includes basic survey functionality – though one of the options above will generally provide a more user-friendly option.

For more information about SharePoint, visit https://sharepoint.nexus.ox.ac.uk/

REDCap

An instance of this survey tool is run by the Medical Sciences Division for their members.

To find out more or to request access, visit https://www.medsci.ox.ac.uk/support-services/teams/information-technology/collaborative-tools/survey-tools

Qualtrics

A sophisticated survey tool with advanced functionality, which has been through the TPSA process. A few University departments have subscriptions for the use of their members.

For more information about the tool, visit https://www.qualtrics.com/

SmartSurvey

A third party survey tool which has been through the TPSA process, and is suitable for use with confidential data.

For more information about the tool, visit https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/

Exercise caution with other third party tools: if used for personal or confidential data, they need to pass a TPSA, and to meet other data protection requirements.

Other Resources for Researchers

Survey Advice Service

The IT Services Research Support team offers advice on running surveys for researchers. This includes help selecting a survey tool and with data protection issues, and basic feedback on surveys.

https://help.it.ox.ac.uk/survey-advice-service

Research Services

Research Services can help with data sharing or processing agreements.

https://researchsupport.admin.ox.ac.uk/contracts/when/transfer-sharing

Research Ethics Guidance

All University research activities involving human participants require ethics review.

https://researchsupport.admin.ox.ac.uk/governance/ethics

Participant Recruitment Services

These services recruit participants for surveys and other types of research. To ensure that all data protection requirements are met, a data sharing agreement needs to be in place between the service and the University – contact Research Services or the Compliance team for help.

Testable Minds: https://minds.testable.org/

Prolific: https://www.prolific.co/

Surveys:
Overview of tools and good practice

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Resources for your learning

These slides are available via the ITLC Portfolio:

https://skills.it.ox.ac.uk/
survey-tools-and-good-practice-course-pack

A handout listing key resources is also available

Today's session

- Data protection for surveys
  - Definitions and general guidelines
- Overview of survey tools
  - Strengths and weaknesses
  - University support
- Tips for designing questions

Data protection for surveys

Data protection

- Certain types of data need special handling
- This has implications for:
  - Your choice of survey tool
  - How you run the survey

- Quite a bit to think about
- No one-size-fits-all solution
- But plenty of help available within the University

Data protection legislation

- The Data Protection Act 2018 brought the GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation) into UK law
- Legal protection for **personal data**
  - Information about an identifiable living individual
- Additional protection for **special category personal data**
  - A subset of personal data, including:
    - racial or ethnic origin
    - political opinions
    - religious or philosophical beliefs
    - trade union membership
    - genetic or biometric data
    - health data
    - sex life and sexuality

Data protection by design

- Framework which all University activities involving personal data need to work through
  - Worth checking whether established activities are covered
- Initial screening assessment, followed by one of two additional questionnaires (DPA or DPIA)
- Sign-off by department and (for DPIA) Compliance
- Details on the Compliance website: https://compliance.admin.ox.ac.uk/data-protection-by-design

Key data protection requirements for survey tools

- Data must be stored securely
  - Choose a survey tool approved by the Information Security team's Third Party Security Assessment process
- Data can't be transferred outside the UK or the European Economic Area unless appropriate safeguards are in place
  - Choose a survey tool which stores its data on servers in one of these regions

Other requirements for personal data

- Only collect what's actually needed
- Only collect data for specified, explicit, and legitimate purposes
- Process data fairly, legally, and transparently
- Ensure data is accurate and up to date
- Don't retain data for longer than necessary

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Prescribed information

- Information that must be provided when collecting personal data from individuals
- Often placed in an information sheet or privacy notice
- University's Compliance website includes guidance on privacy notices: https://compliance.admin.ox.ac.uk/creating-privacy-notices

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Prescribed information

- Name of data controller
  - Usually the University
- Contact details of data protection officer
  - data.protection@admin.ox.ac.uk
- What will be done with the data, for what purposes, and who it will be shared with
- Lawful basis for processing
- The data subjects' rights under GDPR

Minimising personal data

- Does your project actually require personal or special category data?
- Can you allow respondents to remain anonymous?
  - Tokens or unique identifiers may be an option
- Might you end up with personal data, even if you're not explicitly asking for it?
  - Combined information might identify an individual
  - Any free text field carries some risk
  - Is any data being collected automatically – e.g. IP addresses?

Further information

University data protection guidance
https://compliance.admin.ox.ac.uk/staff-guidance-on-data-protection

Guidance on conducting compliant surveys
https://compliance.admin.ox.ac.uk/conducting-compliant-surveys

Compliance team
- information.compliance@admin.ox.ac.uk
- Allow plenty of time

Divisional or departmental Information Governance staff
- E.g. https://www.medsci.ox.ac.uk/divisional-services/support-services-1/infogov for Medical Sciences

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Additional information for researchers

Data protection and research
https://researchsupport.admin.ox.ac.uk/policy/data

Research ethics guidance
https://researchsupport.admin.ox.ac.uk/governance/ethics

All research involving human participants requires ethics review

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Example surveys

- Take a few minutes to explore these short example surveys:
  Jisc Online Surveys
  https://oxford.onlinesurveys.ac.uk/surveys-tools-and-good-practice-example-survey
  Microsoft Forms
  https://forms.office.com/r/aMY1UanU7b
- Designed to illustrate
  - Provision of the prescribed information
  - Seeking participants' consent

Survey tools

Preliminaries

- Worth having a clear idea of the functionality you need before you start
  - Survey tools vary quite a bit
  - More advanced features may not be available without payment
  - Creative workarounds are sometimes possible
- Do you want to manage distribution and analysis in the survey tool, or separately?

University services or third party?

- University services may be
  - Locally hosted and maintained
  - Accessed via a whole-University subscription
- These have generally gone through a checking process
- More assurance regarding information security and data protection
  - But watch out for recommendations about what a service is suitable for

University services or third party?

- Unwise to assume a third party service is OK because it's in use elsewhere in the University
- Third party services should go through an InfoSec Third Party Security Assessment (TPSA)
  - See https://www.infosec.ox.ac.uk/third-party-security-assessment or email grc@infosec.ox.ac.uk
- Subscriptions should be arranged via the University
  - Consult departmental administrator or research facilitator

Survey tools

Centrally supported

- Jisc Online Surveys
- Microsoft Forms
- SharePoint surveys

Locally provided

- REDCap
- Qualtrics

Third party tools

- SmartSurvey
- SurveyMonkey and Google Forms

Centrally supported tools

Jisc Online Surveys

- Designed for use in academic contexts
  - Developed at Bristol University (as BOS); now run by Jisc
- Easy to use and reasonable functionality
- Oxford has a subscription, so free to University members
- Suitable for personal and confidential data
- Online Surveys website: https://www.onlinesurveys.ac.uk/
- Request an account: https://help.it.ox.ac.uk/jisc-online-surveys

NB. A new version of Jisc Online Surveys is in development, and due to launch in 2023

Jisc Online Surveys

Microsoft Forms

- Part of the Nexus365 suite of tools
- Slightly more limited functionality than Online Surveys
  - But can do one or two things Online Surveys can't
  - More integration with other University systems
  - SSO integration permits University-only surveys
- Suitable for personal and confidential data
- More info at https://help.it.ox.ac.uk/microsoft-forms
- Access via https://forms.office.com/

SharePoint

- Available if you have a SharePoint site
- More limited functionality than many tools
  - Surveys are restricted to University members
- Suitable for personal and confidential data
- In most cases, Forms is a more user-friendly option
- SharePoint: https://sharepoint.nexus.ox.ac.uk/

SharePoint

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Locally provided tools

REDCap

- Run by the Medical Sciences Division for their members
- Good functionality
- But slightly less user friendly than some tools
- Data hosted within University
- Suitable for personal and confidential data
- Costs £100 per project per year
- Find out more and request access:
  https://www.medsci.ox.ac.uk/support-services/teams/information-technology/collaborative-tools/survey-tools

REDCap
Research Electronic Data Capture

Qualtrics

- Sophisticated tool with advanced functionality
- A few University departments have subscriptions
  - Very expensive otherwise
- Has passed a University Third Party Security Assessment
  - Suitable for personal and confidential data
- Qualtrics website:
  https://www.qualtrics.com/

qualtrics
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Third party tools

SmartSurvey

- Good functionality and good security
  - Has passed a University TPSA, and has ISO27001 certification
  - Suitable for personal and confidential data
- Very basic free version, plus a number of subscription options
  - Student and not-for-profit discounts available
- SmartSurvey website: https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/

SurveyMonkey and Google Forms

- Widely known third party services
- Basic version of both available free
  - SurveyMonkey also has subscription options
- Decent functionality, but some security concerns
  - Data may be hosted anywhere in the world
  - **Not recommended** for personal or confidential data
- SurveyMonkey: https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/
- Google Forms: https://www.google.co.uk/forms/about/

What about the EU-US Privacy Shield?

- Allowed US organisations to self-certify regarding data protection requirements
- Was intended to make it OK to store personal data with organisations on the list
- But was declared invalid by the ECJ in 2020
    - See https://compliance.admin.ox.ac.uk/international-transfers#collapse2895461 for more details
- If you *must* use a non-UK/EEA service, you'll need a data processing agreement
    - Contact Research Services or Compliance for help

Participant recruitment services

- Services which recruit participants for surveys and other types of research
- Examples include Testable Minds and Prolific
- The University and the service would be joint data controllers for the personal data involved
- A data sharing agreement needs to be in place before using them
    - Contact Research Services or Compliance for help

For further help

- IT Services offers a Survey Advice Service for researchers
    - Email researchsupport@it.ox.ac.uk
- Research Services can help with data sharing or processing agreements
    - https://researchsupport.admin.ox.ac.uk/contracts/when/transfer-sharing
- Information Compliance can help with data protection questions
    - https://compliance.admin.ox.ac.uk/

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Writing survey questions

Piloting surveys

- If at all possible, pilot your survey before launching it
- Helps identify ambiguities or unclear sections
- Pilot group should be as close as possible to the target audience
  - Though what's practical will depend on the survey
- Helpful to watch someone fill in the survey
  - Ask them to think out loud as they do so
  - Can be done via a Teams call with screen sharing

Spot the deliberate mistake…

With thanks to Liz Masterman from Technology Enhanced Learning

Your answers to this survey will be anonymised: your personal details will not be associated with any feedback or comments.

1. Name

2. Email address

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3. Have you been provided with the technology and furniture needed to do your job?

○ Yes
○ No

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4. How long have you been in your current role?

○ Less than a year
○ 2 to 3 years
○ 4 to 5 years
○ Over 5 years

5. Do you think that the idea that students should access official University communications, and/or messages from their tutors, directly in Facebook (i.e. by adding a special application to their Facebook account) is a good one?

○ Yes
○ No
○ Unsure

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6. How much do you expect to use the new phone system in your work?

	Not at all useful	Not very useful	Ambivalent	Useful	Very useful
Video conferencing	○	○	○	○	○
Mobile app	○	○	○	○	○
One-number service	○	○	○	○	○

Top tips

- Know why you are asking each question and what you will do with the responses
- Ensure questions are clear and unambiguous
  - Ask someone else to read your survey draft
  - Make sure answer options are complete, and match the question
- Ask only one thing per question
- Keep questions as concise as possible
  - Separate out contextual or explanatory information

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Thank you!

Any questions?

Ask now, or email
researchsupport@it.ox.ac.uk

Find the resources for this workshop in our IT Learning Portfolio

Download the files (and more) from the IT Learning Portfolio at

skills.it.ox.ac.uk/it-learning-portfolio