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Ins and Outs of Different Survey Methods



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why complete a survey?

Motivations*

1. interest
2. utility
3. civic responsibility
4. karma (survey developers only)
5. incentives

* Framed by sponsorship, topic, and time to complete

Incentive Options

1. nothing
2. prepaid monetary rewards* included in the initial solicitation
3. rewards* conditional upon return of the survey

* monetary or non-monetary

different approaches

Approaches

1. Mail – Paper & Pencil

2. Phone

3. Online

a. Email

b. Social Media



Mail – Paper & Pencil

Pros

- High likelihood of reaching the correct audience
- Easy to include prepaid payment
- No technology or technological literacy needed
- Personalization of invitation

Cons

- Response Rate
- Effort required to open, complete, and return
- Cost for paper, print and postage
- Environmental impact
- Ability to remind or follow-up



Phone Call

Pros

- High guarantee of reaching the correct audience
- No advanced technology needed
- Provides a personal touch from the sponsor of the survey
- Ease in reminder requests

Cons

- Probability of phone being answered
- Time required by staff
- Phone service costs
- Requires a database of phone numbers



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Google Forms



Email

Pros

- Easy to distribute
- Easy to create
- Inexpensive (potentially free)
- Can be completed virtually anywhere
- Short response time
- Personalization
- Ability to send reminders

Cons

- Response rate (~30% is reasonable)
- Required technology
- Required technological literacy
- Requires a database of email addresses

Overall, how satisfied are you with the stories in your News Feed?

- Very Dissatisfied
- Dissatisfied
- Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied
- Satisfied
- Very Satisfied



Social Media

Pros

- Easy to distribute
- Easy to create
- Free
- Can be completed virtually anywhere
- Short response time
- Ability to send reminders

Cons

- Response rate (< 20% expected)
- Reaching the correct audience
- Required technology
- Required technological literacy
- Membership
- Lack of personalization

In conclusion...

1. no silver bullet
2. costs and technology vary
3. incentives impact participation
4. design wisely
5. select based on your goals





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