

# Policy Research 101

## Avoiding Survey Fatigue

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# Outline

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## Strategies for avoiding survey fatigue ....

- Don't over-survey subjects
  - Minimize respondent effort
  - Write good questions
  - Maximize communication
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- Remember to wear more than one "hat"***
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# What Surveys Are Good For

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- ❑ Cheap, efficient way to get answers to a lot of questions from a lot of people
- ❑ Easy way to get answers to questions with predictable answers (who, what, how often)
- ❑ Can make it possible to generalize to a larger population (depending on sampling)



# Don't Over-survey Subjects

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- ❑ Coordinate the timing of your survey with others
  - ❑ Identify the largest possible pool of potential respondents
  - ❑ Sample, if at all possible, rather than surveying "anyone and everyone"
  - ❑ Avoid sampling those already sampled by others
  - ❑ Utilize multiple samples, asking each different questions
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# Minimize Respondent Effort

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- Don't ask questions for which there are available data
- Make authentication easy
- Pre-fill fields
- Use skip sequencing
- Make final submission easy



# Write Good Questions

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- ❑ Don't ask a question because someone else did
  - ❑ Ask questions whose answers you plan to use
  - ❑ Ask only relevant demographic questions
  - ❑ Ask questions that can be answered meaningfully
  - ❑ Avoid compound questions
  - ❑ Don't ask a survey question to promote something
  - ❑ Ask as few questions as possible to obtain needed info
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## *Write Good Questions*

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- ❑ Provide structured response options
  - ❑ Use “other—please specify” as needed, but sparingly
  - ❑ Offer response options that are distinct, concrete, and jargon-free; avoid abstraction
  - ❑ Avoid asking respondents to rank long lists
  - ❑ Don’t ask respondents to “split hairs”
  - ❑ Provide scaled responses “calibrated” to question
  - ❑ Provide one all-purpose, open-ended question at the end
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# Maximize Communication

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- ❑ Obtain permission to survey subjects, if needed
- ❑ Involve subjects in designing the questionnaire
- ❑ Choose pre-testers who represent subjects
- ❑ Announce survey in advance
- ❑ Relate survey to previous/concurrent ones
- ❑ Guarantee confidentiality, as appropriate
- ❑ Obtain (or claim in advance) permission to use quotes





## *Maximize Communication*

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- ❑ Estimate time needed to complete questionnaire as accurately as possible
  - ❑ If online, provide short, simple URL
  - ❑ Provide “preview” of questionnaire
  - ❑ Provide contact info for those with questions about survey
  - ❑ Announce how and when respondents will learn the survey results
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# Remember to Wear More Than One "Hat"

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- ❑ Survey Maker
- ❑ Survey Taker
- ❑ ... and don't forget other stakeholders and their "hats"



# Contact Information

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