



10 tips for a better survey

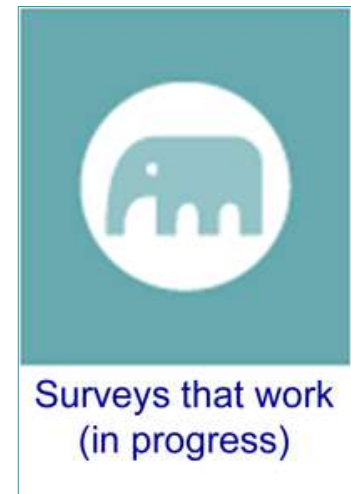
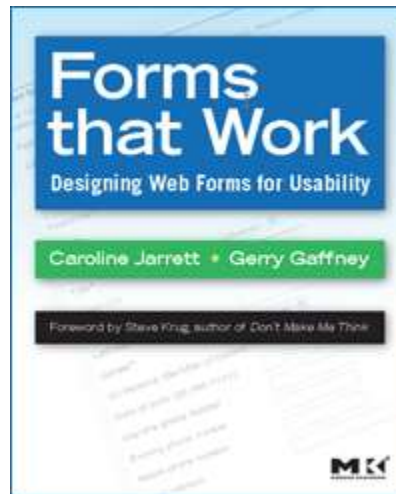
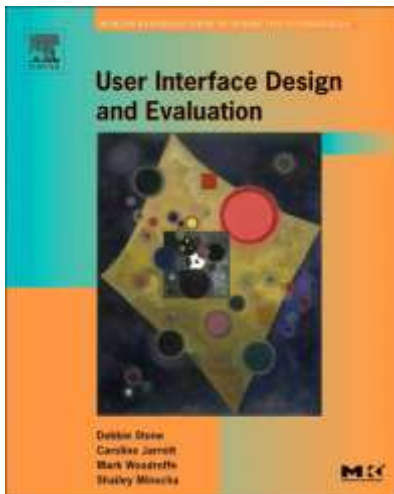
Caroline Jarrett

STC Summit 2011

Caroline Jarrett

twitter @cjforms

caroline.jarrett@effortmark.co.uk



Successful

Survey = Questionnaire + **Process**

*That involves
lots of testing*

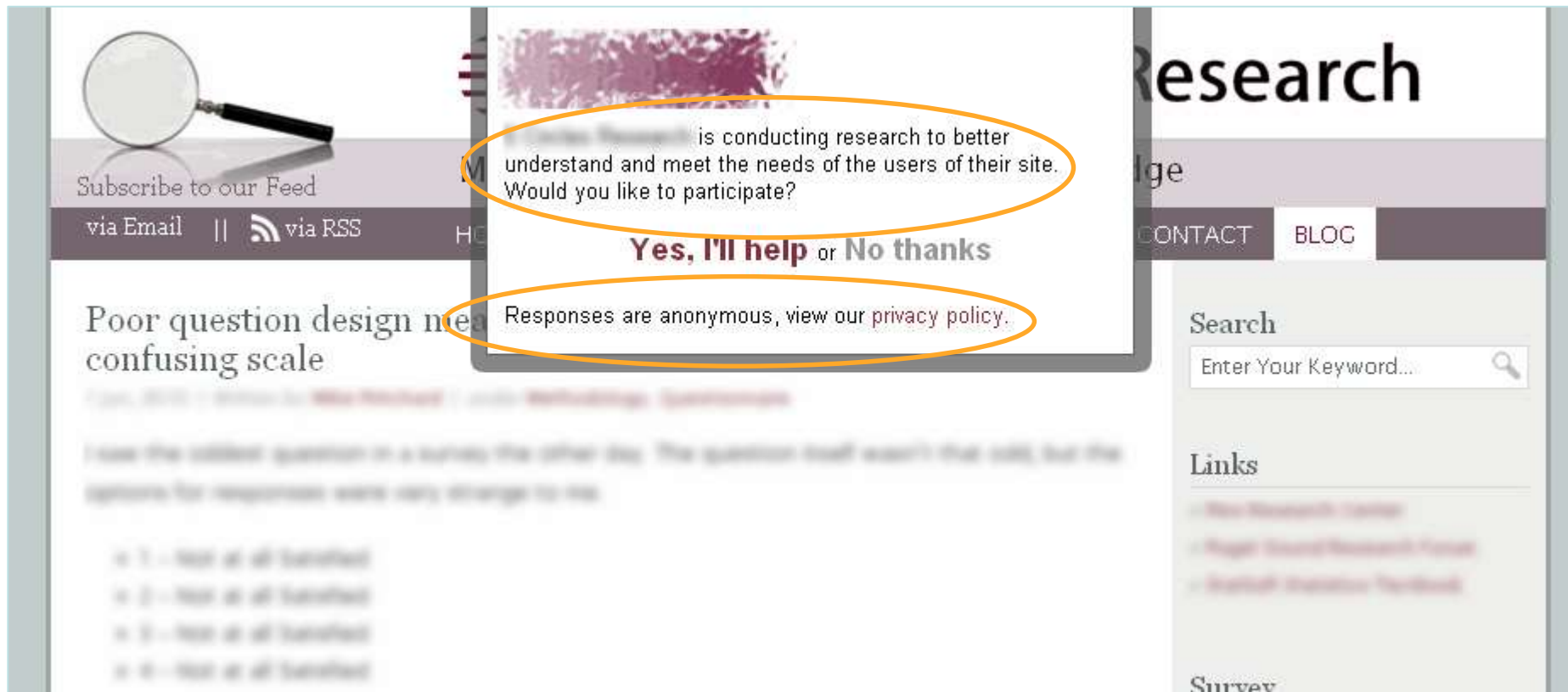
Outline

Tips about questions

Tips about process

Tips about testing

120 characters



48 characters



Visitor Profile Survey for Business A

Business A is conducting research to better understand and meet the needs of its site users.

All of your answers to this survey are anonymous and will only be reported in aggregate. No personally identifiable information is collected.

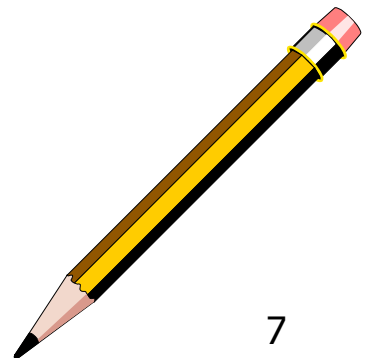
Survey Co is a third party company that conducts market research on behalf of publishers and clients. This research is used by clients to help better service their user-base, thus your feedback is of great importance.

Please see our [Privacy Policy](#) for more information on our data collection practices.

Continue

Tech writing challenge: rewrite in 140 characters

- XXX is conducting research to better understand and meet the needs of the users of their site. Would you like to participate?
- Responses are anonymous, view our privacy policy



Tip 1

One introduction is enough
(and think 140 characters)

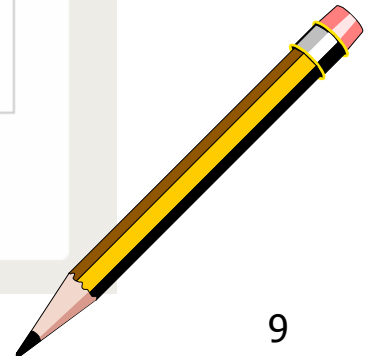
Try answering this question,
then tell me how you worked out your answer

Visitor Profile Survey for [REDACTED] (continued)

4. On average, how many hours per week do you spend using the Internet? (web surfing, IM)

- ☐ Less than one hour per week
- ☐ 1 to less than 4 hours
- ☐ 4 to less than 8 hours
- ☐ 8 to less than 12 hours
- ☐ 12 to less than 24 hours
- ☐ 24 to less than 36 hours
- ☐ 36 hours or more per week

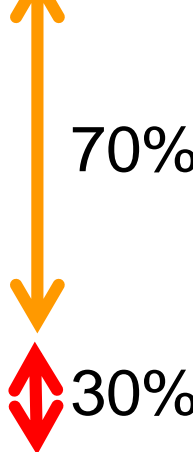
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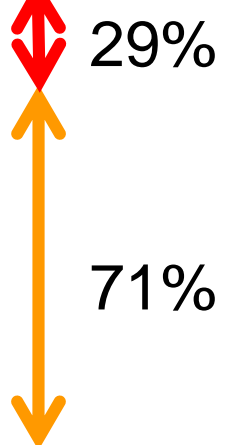
An example of scale effects:

How many hours a day do you study?

Low scale

- ½ hour or less
 - From ½ to 1 hour
 - From 1 to 1 ½ hours
 - From 2 to 2 ½ hours
 - More than 2 ½ hours
- 
- 70%
- 30%

High scale

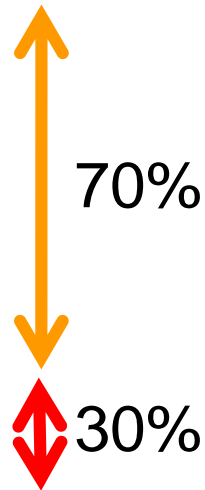
- 2 ½ hours or less
 - From 2 ½ to 3 hours
 - From 3 ½ to 4 hours
 - From 4 to 4 ½ hours
 - More than 4 ½ hours
- 
- 29%
- 71%

An example of scale effects:

How many hours a day do you study?

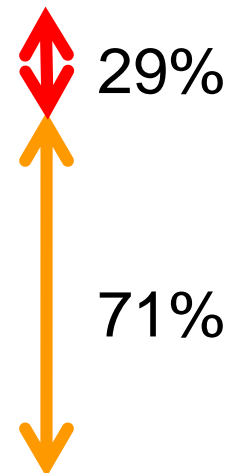
Low scale

- Very lazy
- A bit lazy
- Middling
- A bit diligent
- Very diligent



High scale

- Very lazy
- A bit lazy
- Middling
- A bit diligent
- Very diligent



Tip 2

Do not ask questions
about unremarkable
repetitive behaviours

What's missing from this question?

Visitor Profile Survey for [REDACTED] (continued)

5. Which, if any, of the following are you likely to do in the next 6 months? (Please check all that apply)

☐ Get married

☐ Purchase a new vehicle

☐ Have a baby

☐ Lease a new vehicle

☐ Buy a home

☐ Change job/occupation

☐ Refinance your existing home

☐ Start a business

☐ Move into a different rental unit

☐ Retire

☐ Start a major home improvement

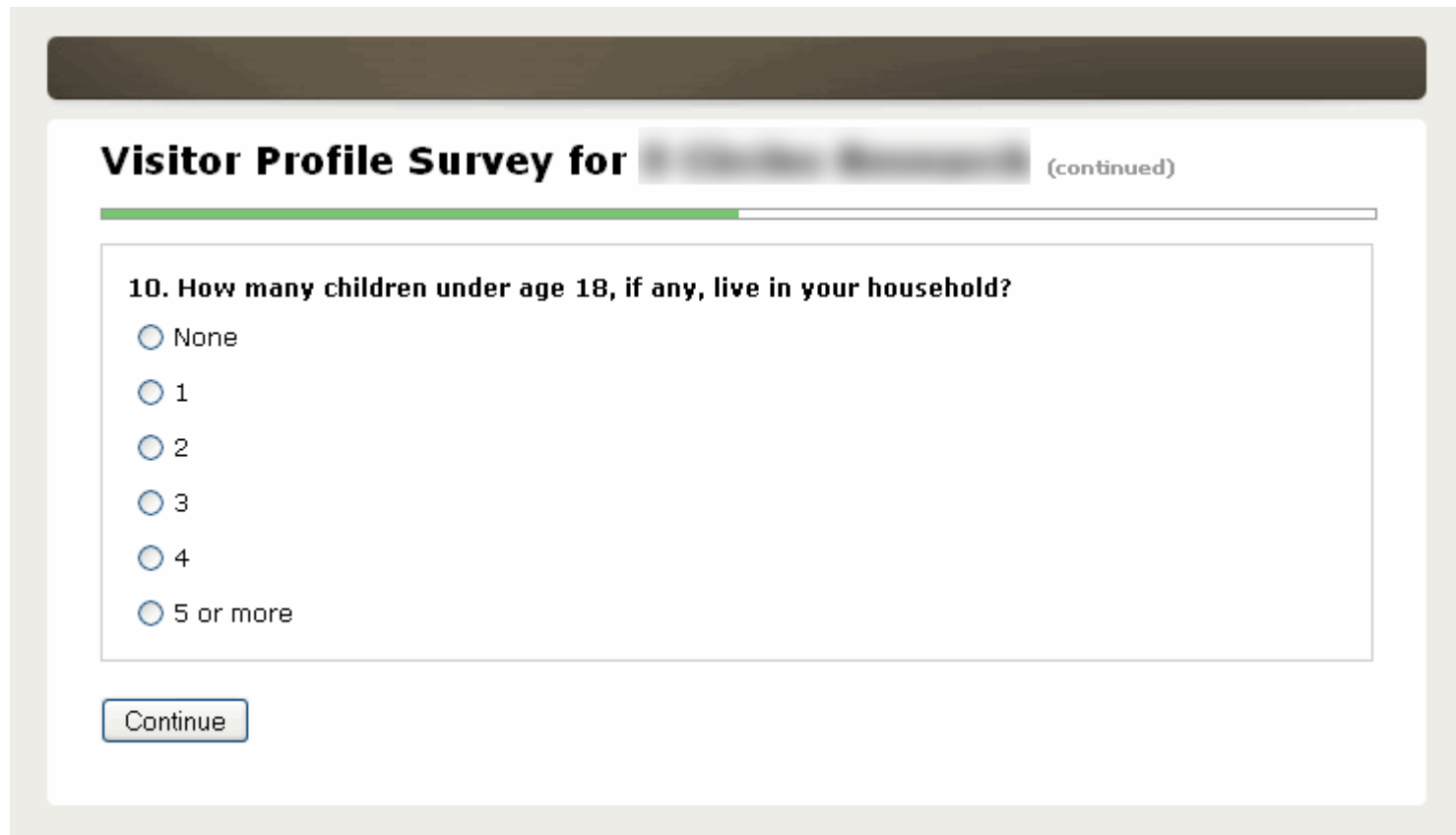
Continue

Tip 3

Always include 'other' in category questions

- Don't know
- Prefer not to answer
- All of the above

Watch the order of these two questions



The image shows a web-based survey form titled "Visitor Profile Survey for [redacted] (continued)". A green progress bar is visible above the question area. The question is "10. How many children under age 18, if any, live in your household?". It has six radio button options: "None", "1", "2", "3", "4", and "5 or more". A "Continue" button is located at the bottom left of the question box.

Visitor Profile Survey for [redacted] (continued)

10. How many children under age 18, if any, live in your household?

- ☐ None
- ☐ 1
- ☐ 2
- ☐ 3
- ☐ 4
- ☐ 5 or more

[Continue](#)

Visitor Profile Survey for [REDACTED] (continued)

11. Which of the following best describes your current living situation? (Please check all that apply)

- ☐ Live with a spouse or partner
- ☐ Live by yourself
- ☐ Live with your children aged 18 or younger
- ☐ Live with your children over the age of 18
- ☐ Live with parents
- ☐ Live with extended family members (siblings, grandparents, etc.)
- ☐ Live with others not a part of your family

Continue

Tip 4

Think of your questions
as a conversation with
your respondent

Jarrett, C. and Gaffney, G (2008) “Forms that work:
Designing web forms for usability”

Janice (Ginny) Redish (2007) “Letting go of the words:
Writing web content that works”

Visitor Profile Survey for [REDACTED] (continued)

19. What suggestions for improvement or general feedback, if any, do you have regarding your web site visit today?

Continue

Outline

Tips about questions

Tips about process

Tips about testing

Response relies on effort, reward, and trust

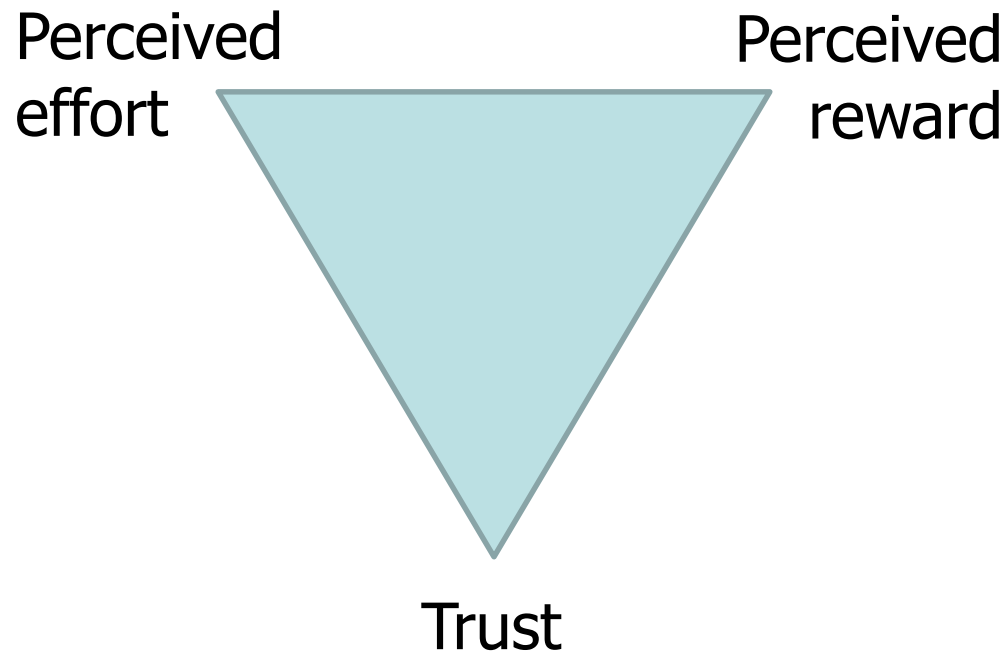
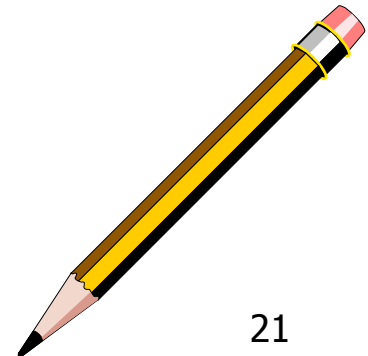


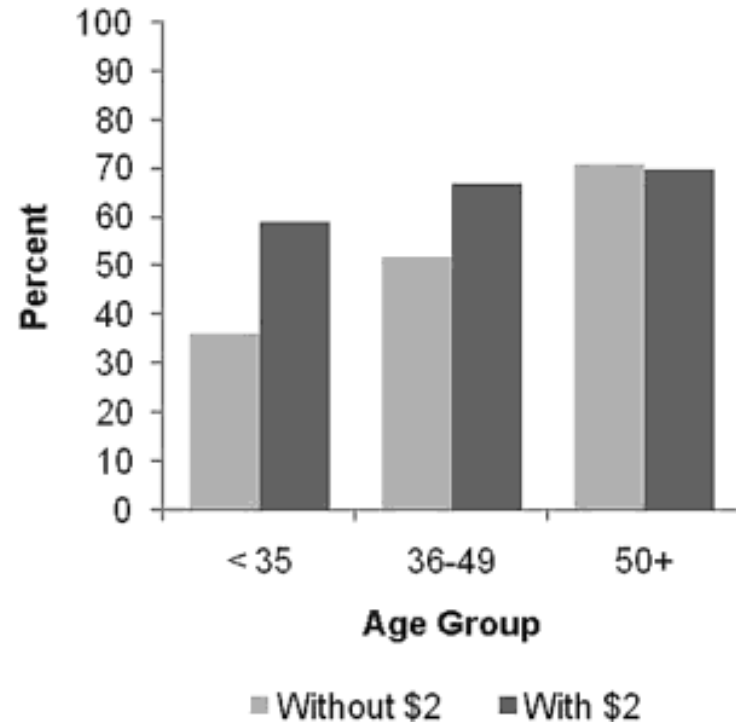
Diagram from Jarrett, C, and Gaffney, G (2008) "Forms that work: Designing web forms for usability" inspired by Dillman, D.A. (2000) "Internet, Mail and Mixed Mode Surveys: The Tailored Design Method"

How are response, effort and trust working here?



**In mail surveys,
a token incentive
works better than
no incentive or a
prize draw**

Figure 7.3 Effects of a \$2 incentive on the age composition of a completed sample of new driver's license holders in Washington State.



Source: The Influence of Different Techniques on Response Rates and Nonresponse Error in Mail Surveys, by K. J. Miller, 1996, Bellingham, WA: Western Washington University. Unpublished master's thesis.

Tip 5

Try to find an incentive that gives an immediate reward

**YOUR
OPINION
MATTERS.**

opinion-central

**TAKE A SHORT SURVEY AND
MAKE YOURSELF HEARD**

YES, I'LL PARTICIPATE

[NO THANKS](#)

Thank you for agreeing to take our survey! Please keep in mind that all your responses are 100% anonymous and confidential.

To make sure the survey is working correctly, sometimes we'll ask you to give a certain response. For example, "Respond 'Strongly agree' here." Please follow the directions and continue along.

OK, let's get started!

Continue »

0% Complete



[Privacy Policy](#) - [Help](#)

What is your 5-digit ZIP code?

☐ Outside U.S.

Continue »

1% Complete

[Privacy Policy](#) - [Help](#)

Survey Completed - Thank You

Thank you for your responses, however we have filled our quota for respondents such as yourself. Thanks again!

[Privacy Policy](#) - [Help](#)

Tip 6

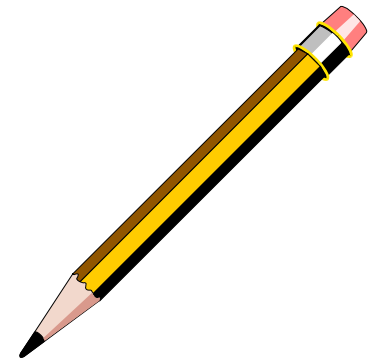
One good incentive:
allowing the respondents
to express their views

Write down your answers to this questionnaire

1. How many user surveys have you run?

NONE 1 to 5 6 to 10 more than 10

2. What is your top tip for a better user survey, based on experience of writing or answering?



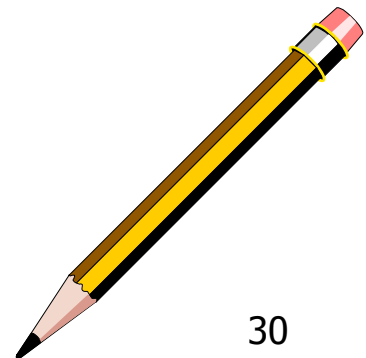
Now try it as an interview.

In pairs: use this as a script for an interview

1. How many user surveys have you run?

NONE 1 to 5 6 to 10 more than 10

2. What is your top tip for a better user survey, based on experience of writing or answering?

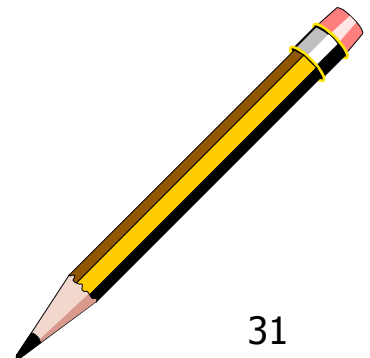


Now tell each other a story about your experience relevant to these questions

1. How many user surveys have you run?

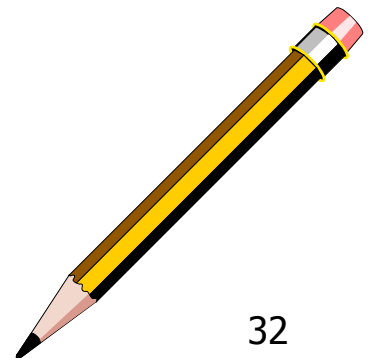
NONE 1 to 5 6 to 10 more than 10

2. What is your top tip for a better user survey, based on experience of writing or answering?



Now let's share data and stories



- What numbers have we collected?
- What open answers?
- What stories?




Tip 7

Interview some users
to find out what
they want to tell you

Did you answer the same question
that I asked?

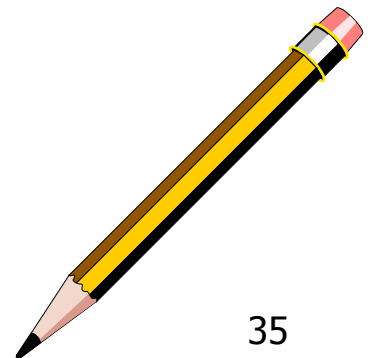
1. How many  user surveys have you  run?



Does your household have access to running water?



Picture credits: James Mooney, Caroline Jarrett



“Shared reference”:
both sides interpret in the same way

Text size: A- A+

Page 1 of 6 - [blurred] Council survey

*Please note: mandatory questions have a * next to them*

Q1. How did you find out about the website? *

Other:

Q2. In the last 6 months, approximately how many times have you visited this website? *

Q3. What was the main service area that you were interested in today? *

Other:

Q4. What was your main purpose for coming to the website today? *

Other:

Q5. If you had not come to the website for this purpose, what would be your preferred way of contacting the Council? *

Other:

Service area?

Tip 8

Ask users for stories to explore vocabulary and concerns



© Caroline Jarrett and Effortmark Ltd

If you use this cartoon in another context,
please credit Caroline Jarrett and Effortmark Ltd.

What recommendation will you make based on your results?

- What decision will you make?
- What happens if ...
 - The users all agree with your gut feel?
 - The users all disagree with your gut feel?
 - The users don't care either way?

Tip 9

Try writing your
presentation first
(before the questions)

Outline

Tips about questions

Tips about process

Tips about testing

“If you don’t have time to do the pilot, you don’t have time to do the study”

- Oppenheim, A. P. (1992) “Questionnaire Design, Interviewing and Attitude Measurement “
 - And in each subsequent edition
- Dillman, D.A. (2000) “Internet, Mail and Mixed Mode Surveys: The Tailored Design Method”
 - And in each subsequent edition
- Gillham, B (2000) “Developing a Questionnaire”
 - And in the second edition
- Jarrett, C (2010) “I wish I’d run a pilot”

Tip 10

Run a pilot

Caroline Jarrett

Twitter: @cjforms

Slideshare: cjforms

caroline.jarrett@effortmark.co.uk

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