

Total Survey Error for non-specialists

Creating better conversations

Caroline Jarrett

@cjforms

Total Survey Error Conference

Baltimore, September 2015



I'm a forms specialist



Blog

Government Digital Service

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Organisations: [Government Digital Service](#), [Cabinet Office](#)

My new favourite form. Really.

Caroline Jarrett, 22 September 2015 — [GOV.UK](#), [User research](#)

I have a new favourite form: [HMRC's Pay your self-assessment online](#). Enjoy!

But maybe before you do, you'd like a little explanation? OK, I'll back up a bit and explain.



Government Digital Service

The Government Digital Service (GDS) is leading the digital transformation of government.

[Find out more.](#)

What we do

Select Category ▼

Work for us

[Find out about current vacancies at GDS](#)

A conversation about measurement

[Performance](#) > [Department for Transport](#) > [Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency](#)

Dashboard

Tax disc renewals

Visit this service

[Renew a tax disc](#)

This dashboard shows information about how the **Tax disc renewals** service is currently performing.

[Transactions per year](#)

43.4m

Jan to Dec 2013

+1.30% ▲ Oct 2012 to Sep 2013

[Total cost](#)

£44.7m

Jan to Dec 2013

+17.23% ▲ Oct 2012 to Sep 2013

[Cost per transaction](#)

£1.03

Jan to Dec 2013

+15.73% ▲ Oct 2012 to Sep 2013

[Live service usage](#)

Users currently on the GOV.UK start page for the service

275

users online at
9pm 17 July 2014

[User satisfaction](#)

Overall satisfaction score includes all ratings weighted from 100% for 'very satisfied' to 0% for 'very dissatisfied'

94% +0.41% ▲

Mar 2014

Feb 2014

[Tell us what you think](#) (opens a 3 minute survey on another website)[Home](#) > [Measurement](#)

User satisfaction

Are users happy with the service you've provided

Contents

[What you will be measuring](#)[How to measure user satisfaction](#)[What happens when a user exits the transaction midway through](#)[When to measure user satisfaction](#)[- Discovery](#)[- Alpha](#)[- Beta](#)[- Production \(live\)](#)[Post-launch measurement](#)

A good service makes it possible for users to successfully complete tasks. User satisfaction helps you to measure the overall quality of the service experience.

Many government transactions are mandatory for users, so they're not naturally enjoyable, and are sometimes referred to as grudge transactions. Still, try to make them as pleasant as possible for users, who may be nervous or stressed when interacting with the government.

Asking users how satisfied they are with a service can provide you with a measure of all the parts that contribute to the overall user experience, like ease of use, navigation and design.

What you will be measuring

Define user satisfaction as the percentage of people who answered either "very satisfied" or "satisfied" on a 5-point scale in response to this

Asking users how satisfied they are with a service can provide you with a measure of all the parts that contribute to the overall user experience, like ease of use, navigation and design.

What you will be measuring

Define user satisfaction as the percentage of people who answered either “very satisfied” or “satisfied” on a 5-point scale in response to this question:

Q: Overall, how satisfied were you with this [eg car tax] service today?

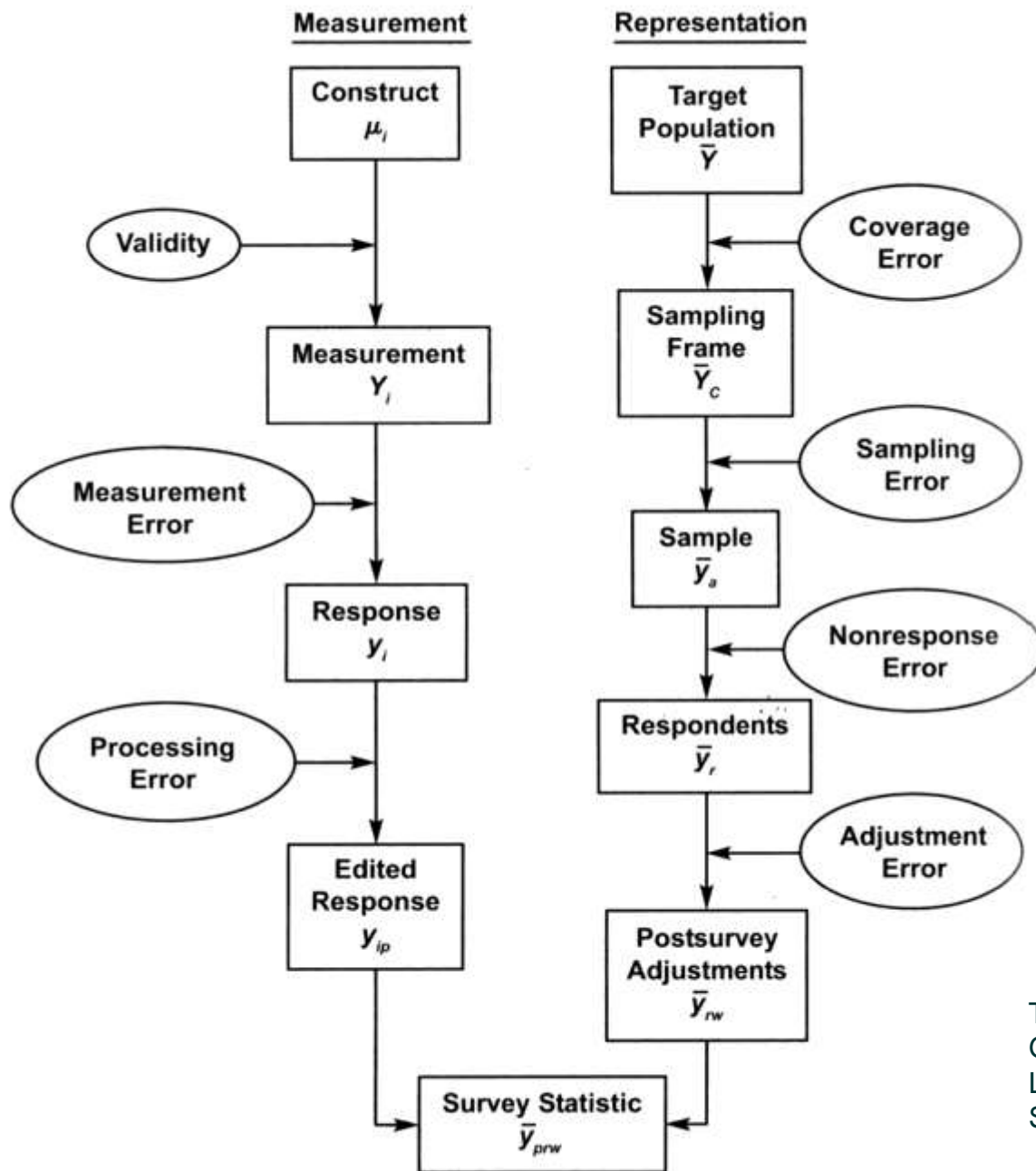
- very satisfied
- satisfied
- neither satisfied or dissatisfied
- dissatisfied
- very dissatisfied

How to measure user satisfaction

GOV.UK will provide a user satisfaction survey at the end of your transactional service and make this data available.

What happens when a user exits the transaction midway through

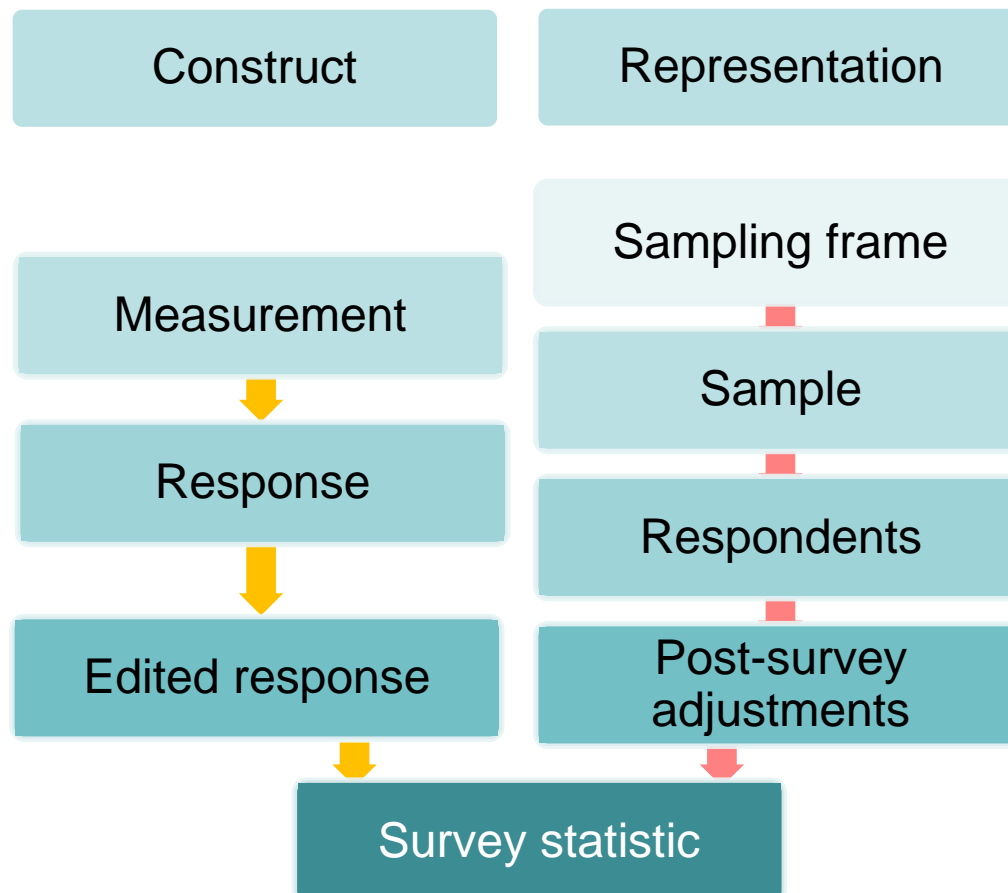
Measure all user journeys through your transaction to better understand



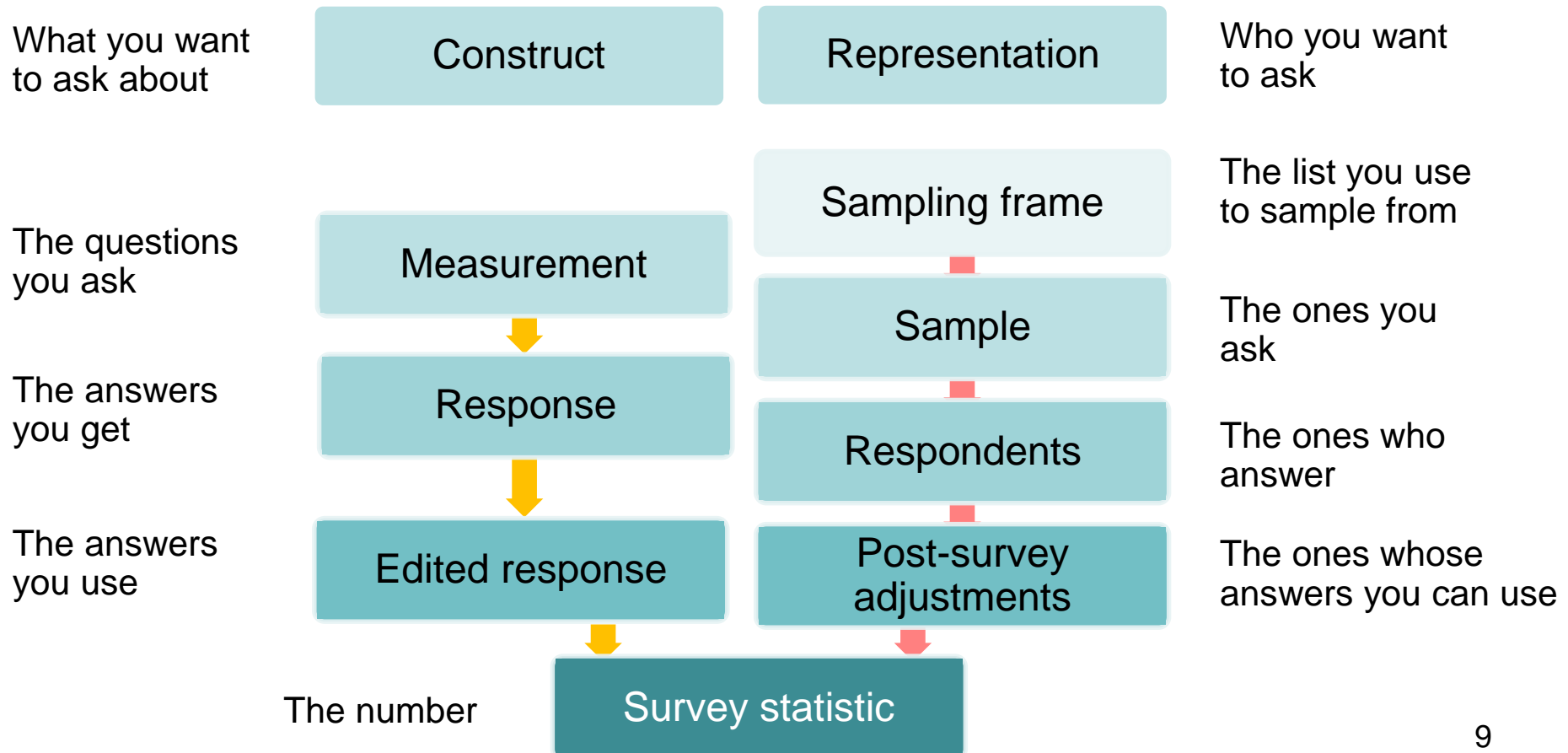
Total Survey Error diagram as presented in Groves, R. M., F. J. Fowler, M. P. Couper, J. M. Lepkowski, E. Singer and R. Tourangeau (2009). Survey methodology. Hoboken, N.J., Wiley.

Figure 2.5 Survey life cycle from a quality perspective.

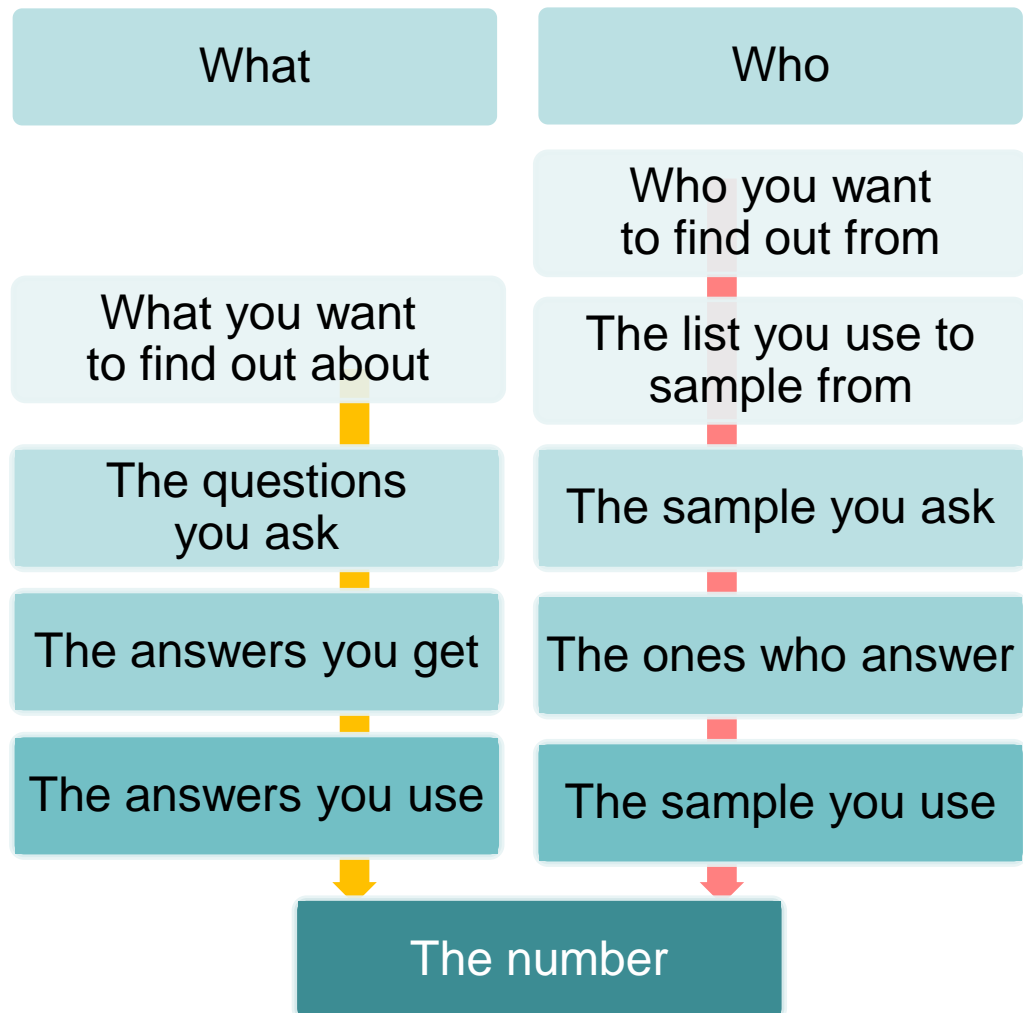
First I tried removing all the errors



Then I tried to approximate the technical terms with plainer ones



I used this diagram to discuss satisfaction with colleagues



Satisfaction with “renew tax disc”

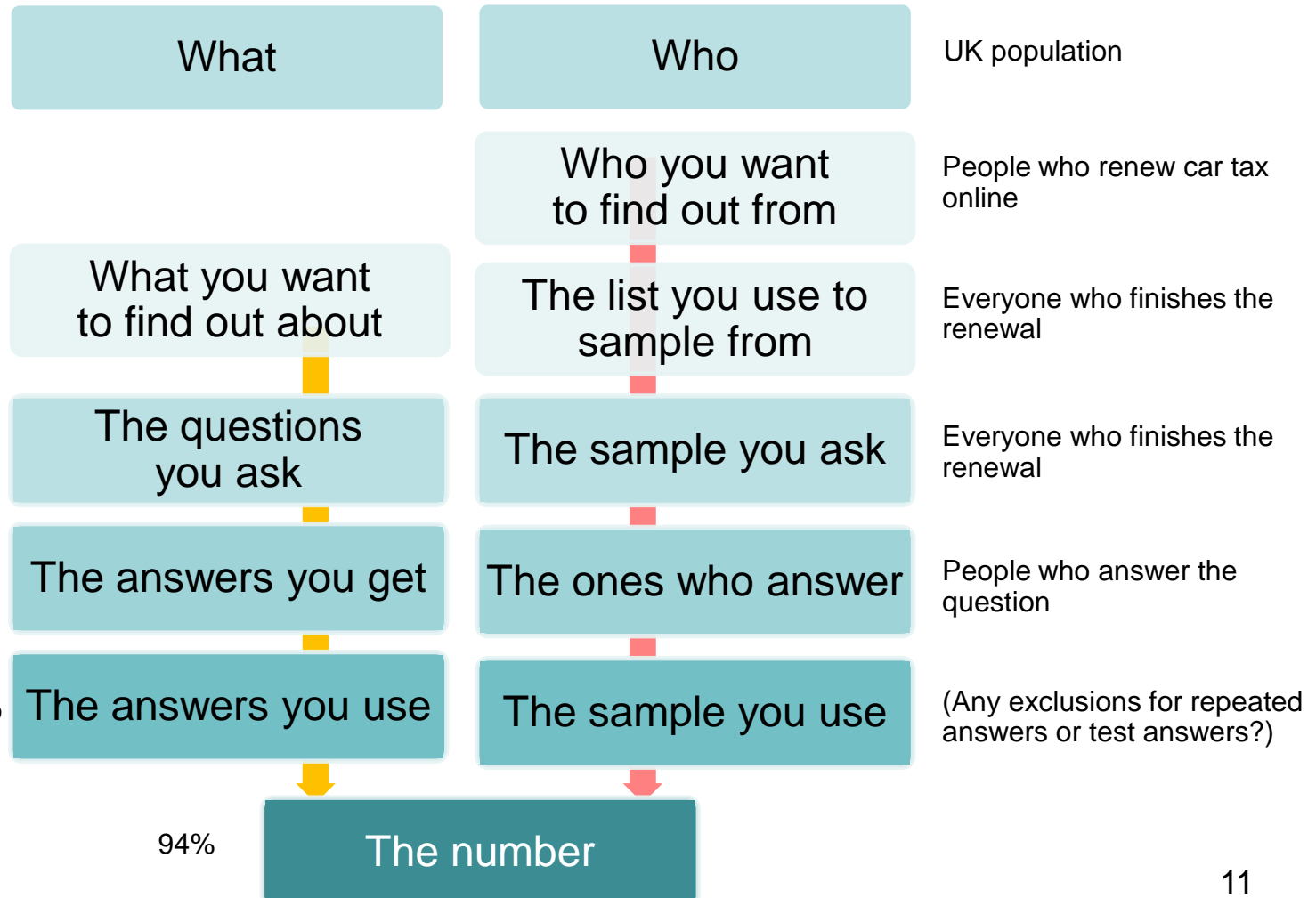
Services so good that people prefer to use them

Satisfaction

Overall, how satisfied were you with renewing your car tax today?

Scale of 5 points from very satisfied to very dissatisfied

Ratings weighted from 100% for 'very satisfied' to 0% for 'very dissatisfied'



94%

The number

Blog

GDS design notes

Organisations: [Government Digital Service](#)

How good is your service? How many users give up?

Henry Hadlow, 13 August 2015 — [Likely to change](#)



GDS design notes

We believe in designing in the open. Most of the ideas on this blog will be iterated on over time, some of them will test badly and never make it onto GOV.UK, a few might end up being patterns that we use everywhere.

Categories



Sign up for updates



Email



Atom

We were only asking successful users if they were satisfied

We were asking users to give feedback from the Done page – a page you could only reach if you completed using the service successfully.

This was a good way to make our services look really good, but a terrible way to get the information needed to improve them.

We were missing out on the most important feedback – from the users who failed to complete the transaction or otherwise got stuck.

We've changed the guidance in the Service Manual. Now we're asking for feedback in many more places.

We're improving the Service Manual. [Help us get it right](#) (opens a short survey on another website.)

[Home](#) > [Measurement](#)

User satisfaction

How satisfied are the people who use your service?

Contents

[How to measure user satisfaction](#)

[Measure satisfaction across the whole service](#)

[Prompt users to give feedback at service endpoints](#)

[What pattern to use](#)

[Allow users to give feedback from anywhere in the service](#)

[Further reading](#)

Measuring user satisfaction helps you to gauge the overall quality of your service.

Tracking user satisfaction can help make sure the changes you make are improving the service for users. If your user satisfaction falls, then by asking for feedback, you can investigate to find out why.

How to measure user satisfaction

1. Get a feedback page on GOV.UK – [request a content change](#)
2. Add links from your service to the feedback page (more details below)
3. Use the [Feedback Explorer](#) to see feedback on your service

Measure satisfaction across the whole service

Measure satisfaction across the whole service

More often than not, the end of the transaction isn't the end of the service. For example, if you claim Carer's Allowance, the end of the transaction means you've finished filling in your claim. You're still waiting for a decision.

You must prompt users to give feedback at service endpoints. In the example above, this means prompting the user to give feedback when they get their benefit decision. This could be some time after they finish their transaction – the prompt could be in an email or a letter.

You must also allow users to give feedback from anywhere in the service, in case anything goes wrong.

And you must be able to show that you're collecting user satisfaction data appropriately at your [Service Assessment](#).

Some other chats about surveys

People ask me about surveys

“I think it’s best to have 5 points in my rating scale, but my boss wants to have 7. Who is right?”

“What’s the best survey tool?”

“How many people do we need to ask for this survey?”

“Please have a look at these questions”

My 'plain language' diagram was OK, but not that different from many others



total survey error



+Caroline



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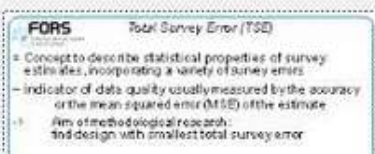
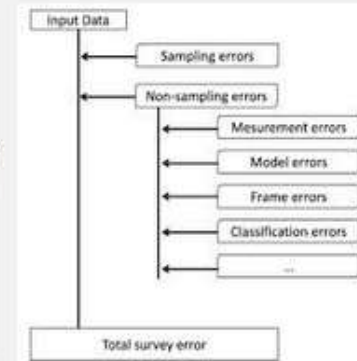
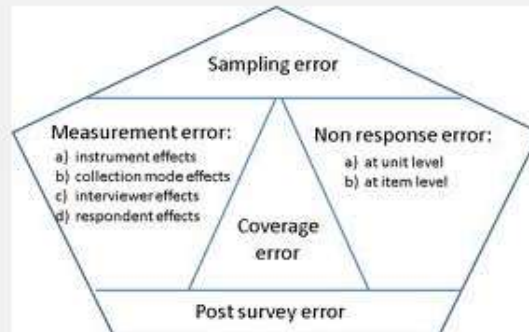
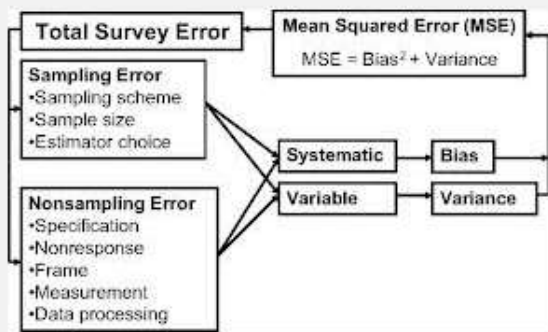
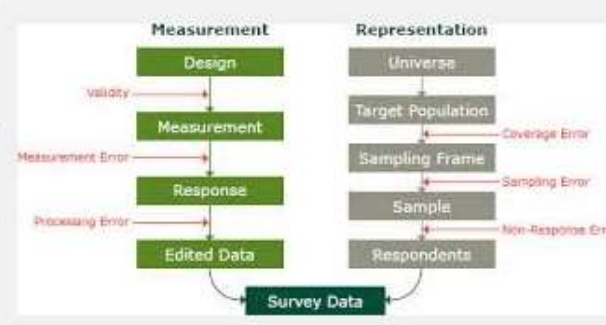
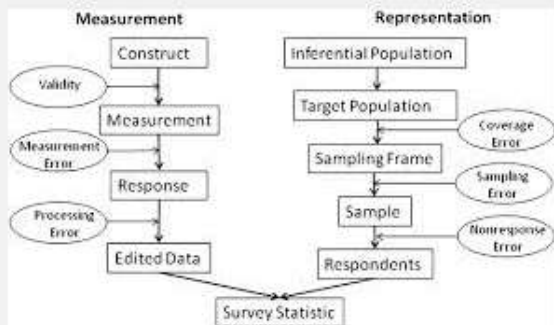
Maps

More

Search tools



Safe Search

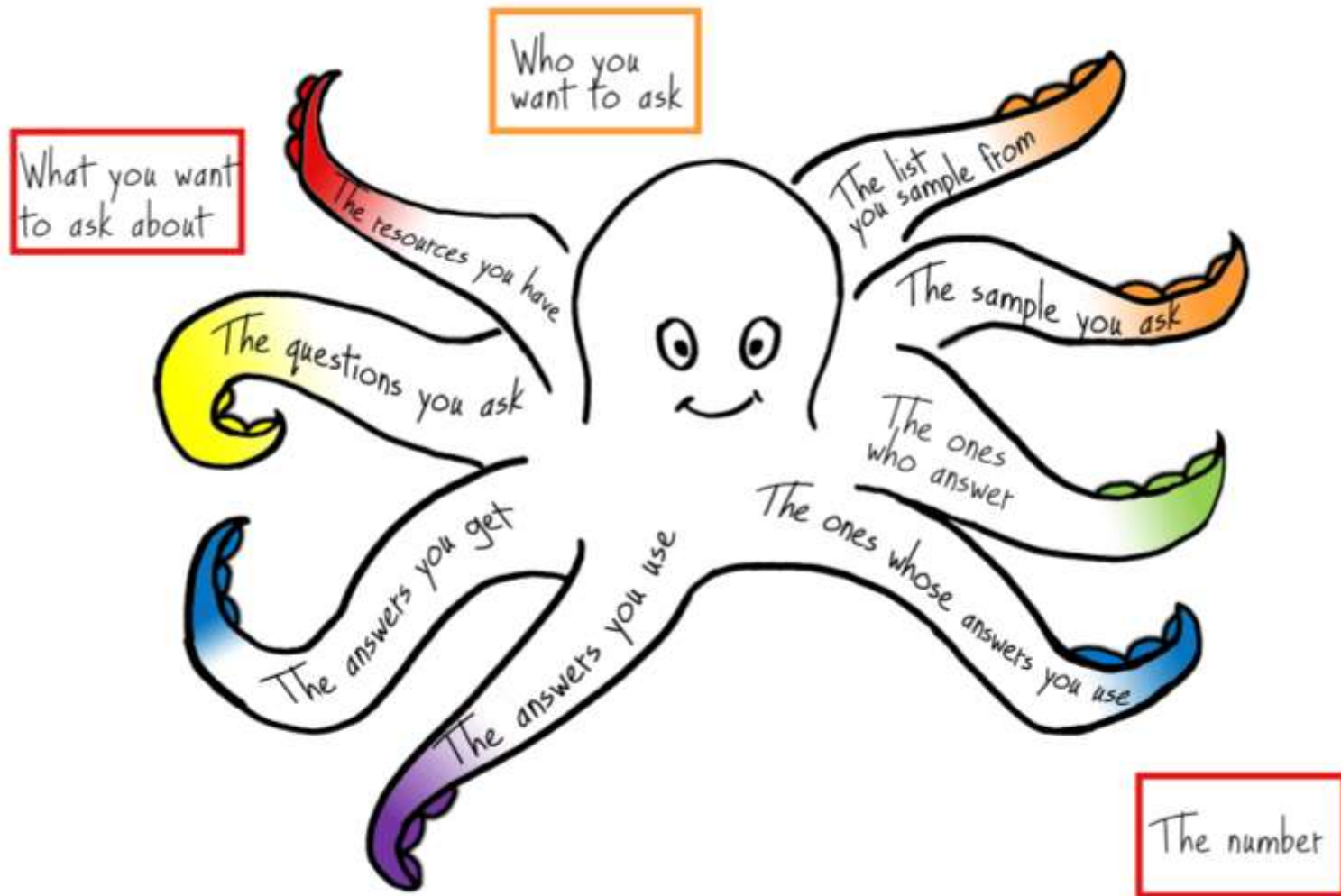


“You need a memory hook”

Christine Elgood

@elgoodgames

To get better results from your survey, think about the Survey Octopus

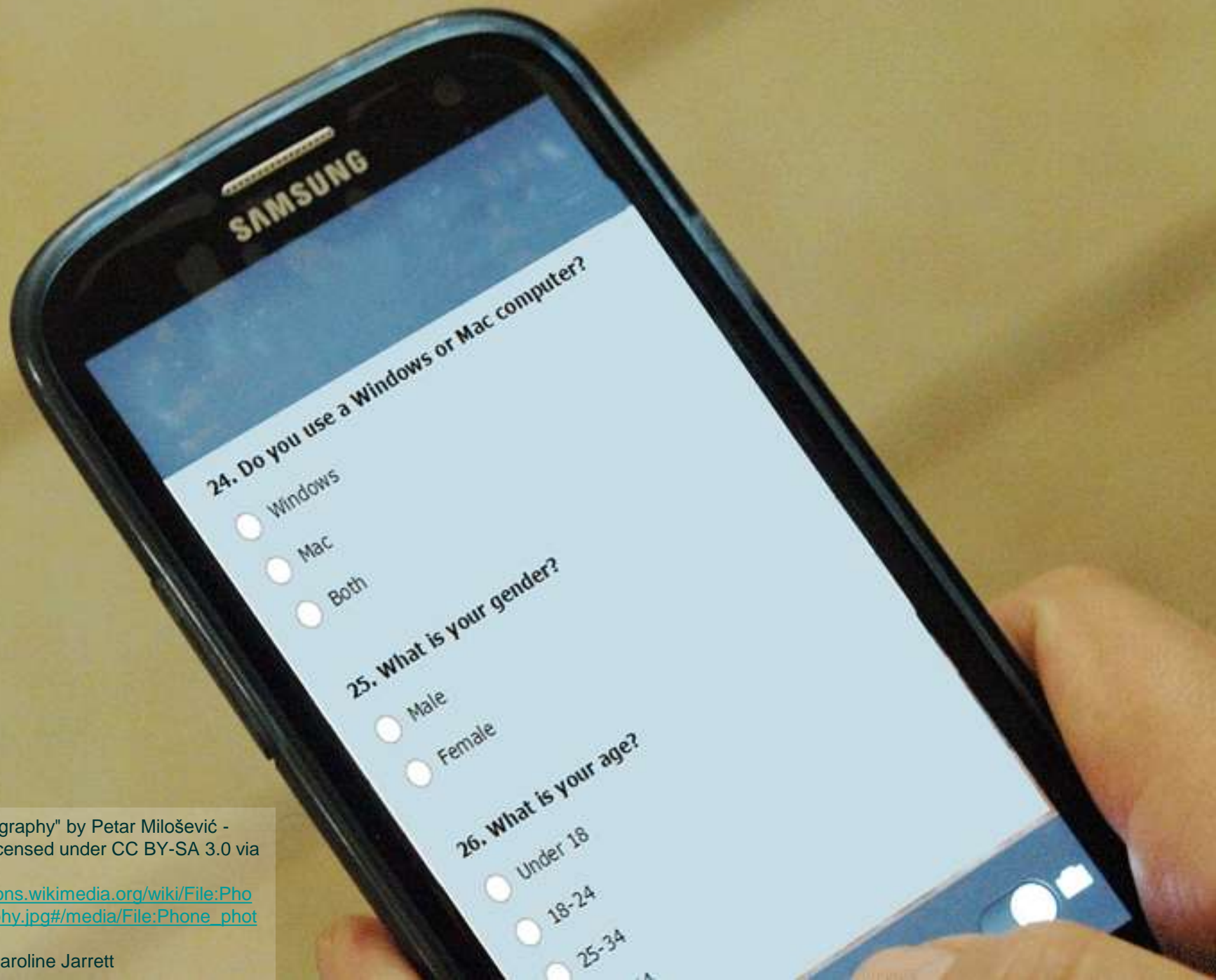


24. Do you use a Windows or Mac computer?

- ☐ Windows
- ☐ Mac
- ☐ Both

25. What is your gender?

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female



24. Do you use a Windows or Mac computer?

- ☐ Windows
- ☐ Mac
- ☐ Both

25. What is your gender?

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female

26. What is your age?

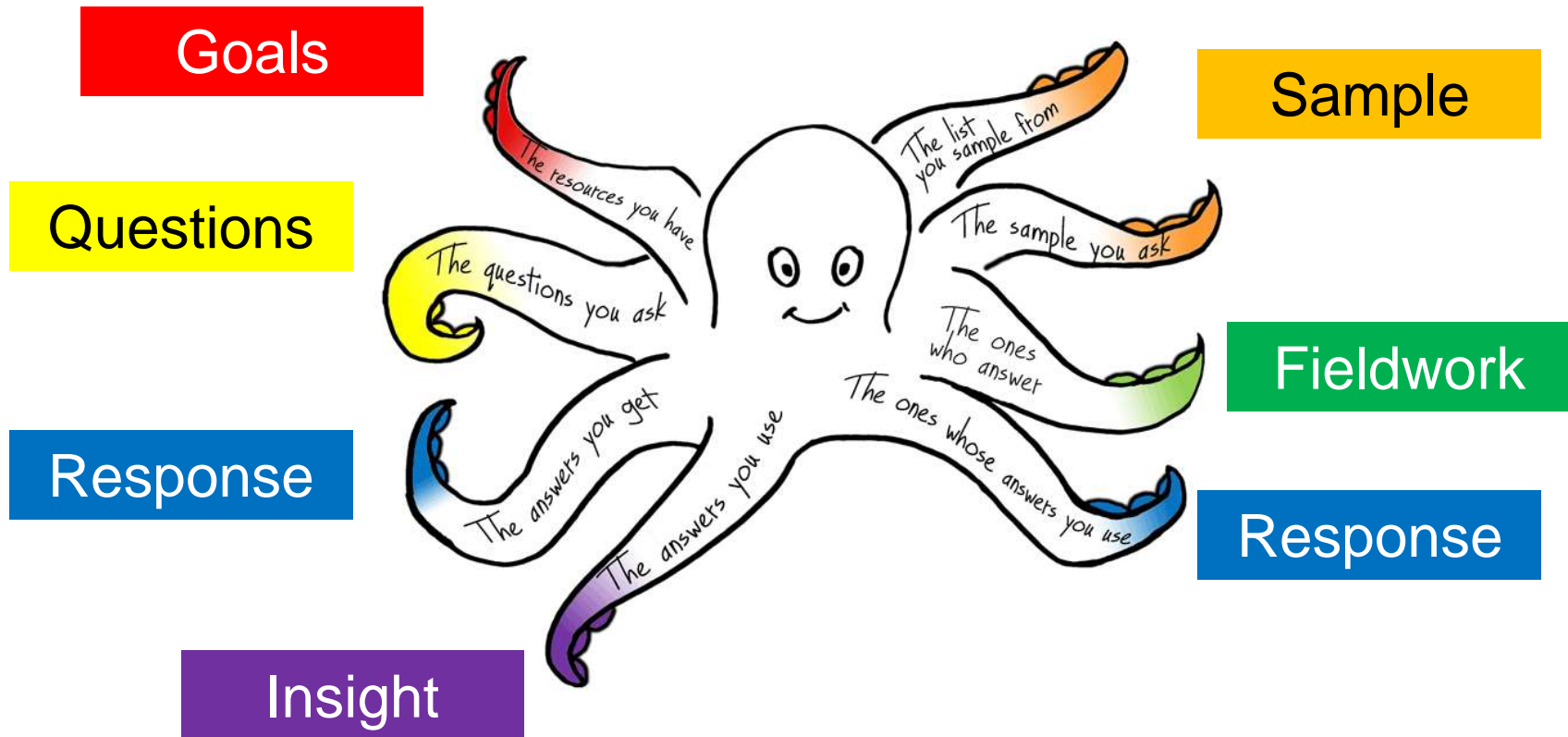
- ☐ Under 18
- ☐ 18-24
- ☐ 25-34

"Phone photography" by Petar Milošević -
Own work. Licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0 via
Commons -

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Phone_photography.jpg#/media/File:Phone_photography.jpg

Modified by Caroline Jarrett

You need questions that your respondents can answer accurately



I tried the Survey Octopus at the
Content Strategy Summit



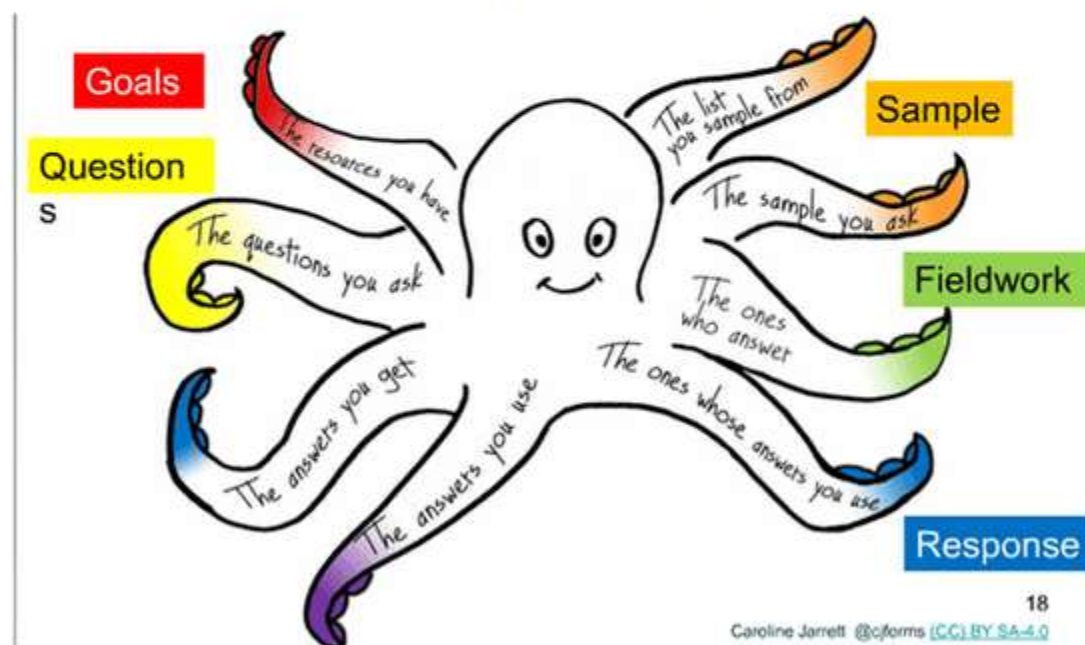
justyna berzowska

@jberzowska



Follow

I'm entirely charmed by with the survey Octopus from [@cjforms](#), a charming checklist for survey planning. [#cssummit](#)



18

Caroline Jarrett [@cjforms](#) (CC) BY-SA-4.0

RETWEETS

7

FAVORITES

10



5:17 PM - 21 Sep 2015

People want a process, too

Goals

Questions

Questionnaires

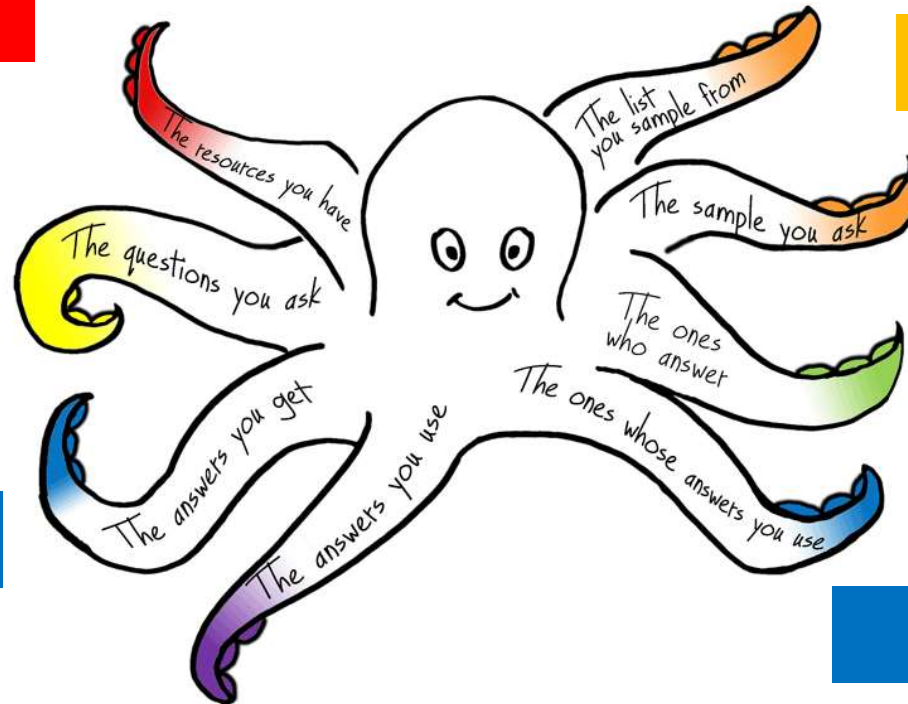
Response

Insight

Sample

Fieldwork

Response



My survey process has 6 steps

Goals

Establish your goals for the survey

Sample

Decide who to ask and how many

Questions

Test the questions and build the questionnaire

Fieldwork

Run the survey from invitation to follow-up

Response

Clean the data

Insight

Analyse and present the results



Questions that you need answers to

People who you will invite to answer

Questionnaire

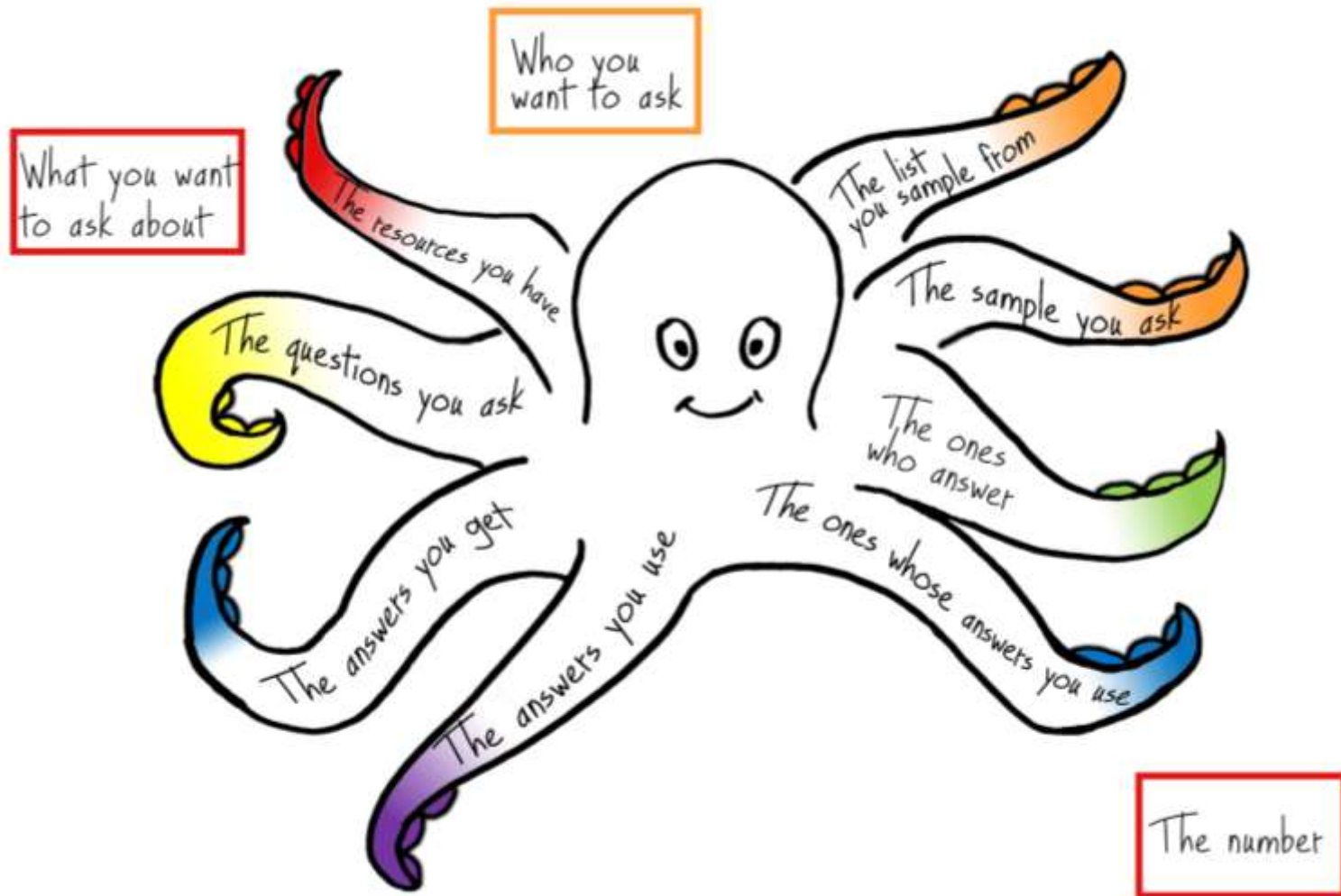
People who actually answer

Answers

Decisions

A survey is a quantitative method

To get better results from your survey, think about the Survey Octopus



The aim of a survey is to get a number that helps you to make a decision

Who you
want to ask

What you want
to ask about

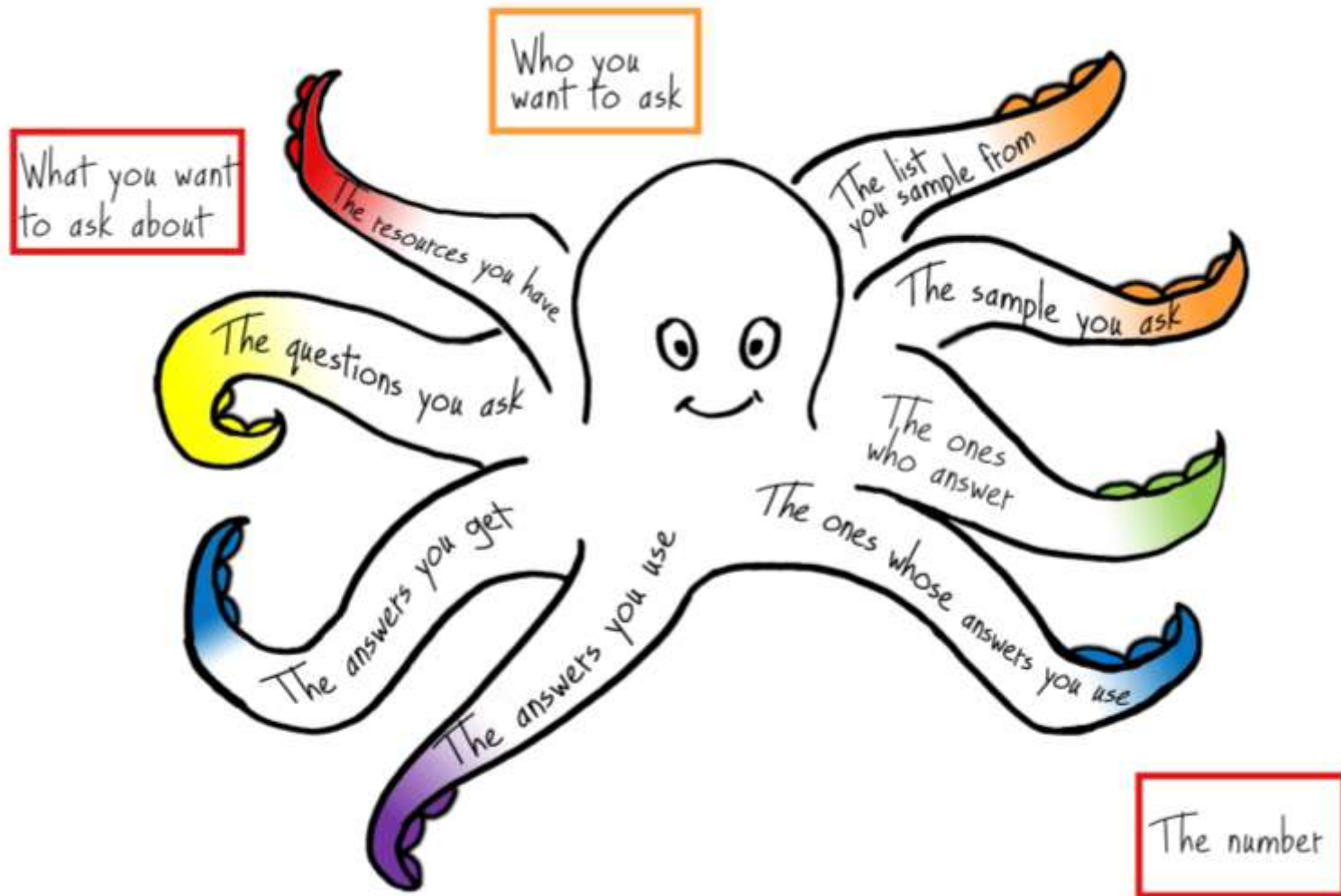
Survey

The number

Some options for talking about Total Survey Error

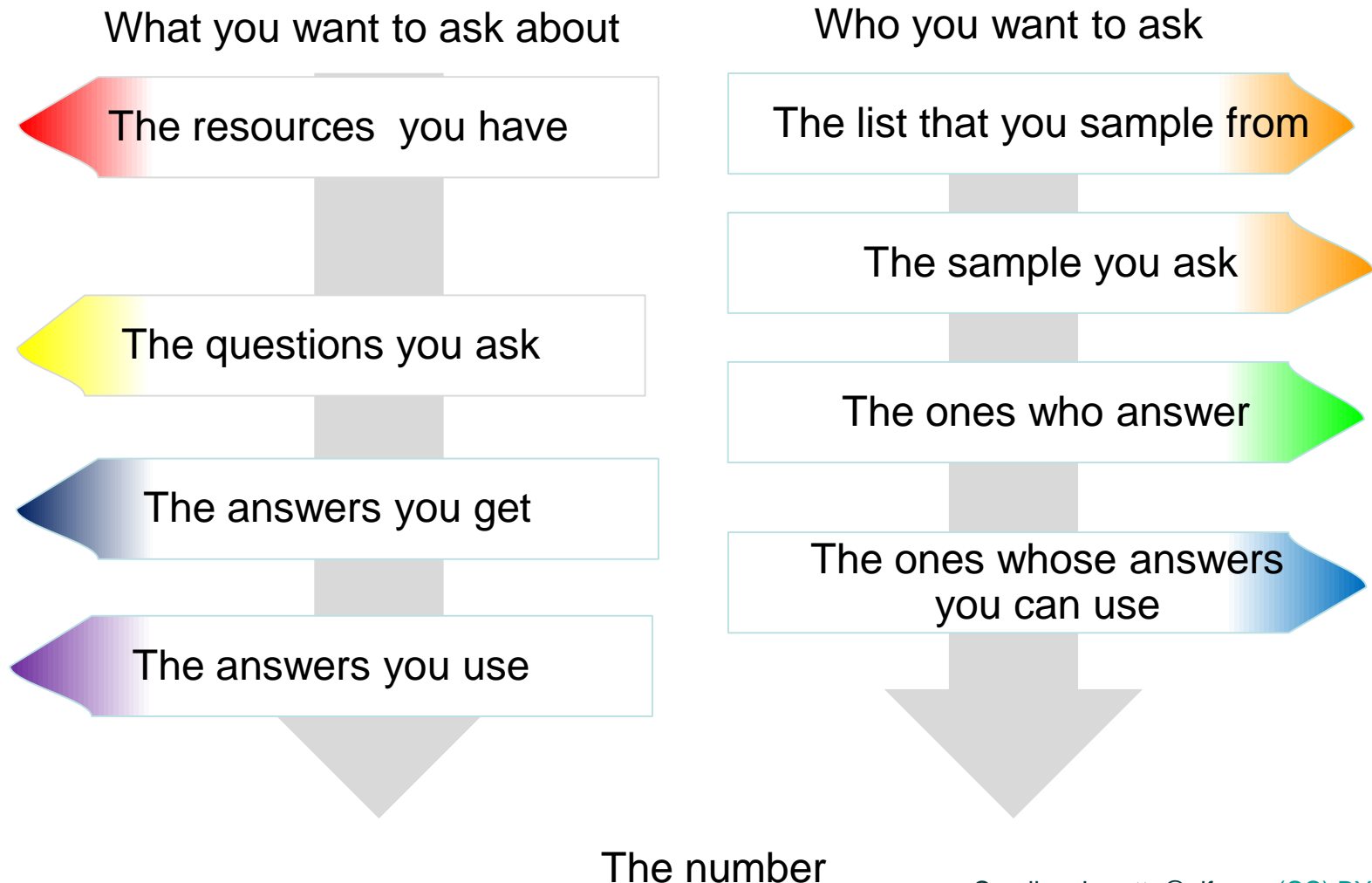
1. As a Survey Octopus.

To get better results from your survey, think about the Survey Octopus



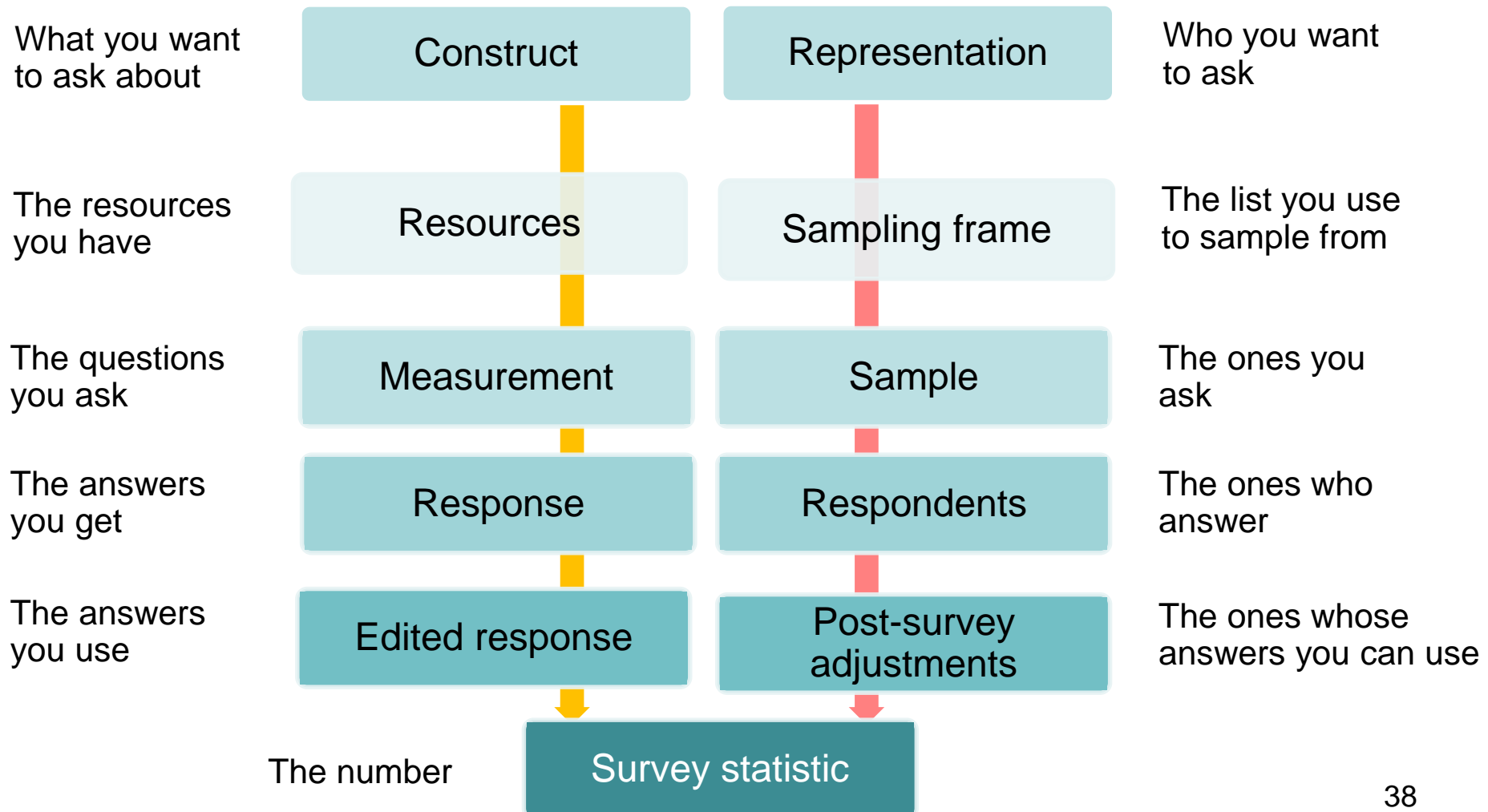
2. As a more conventional diagram

The aim is to get the best number you can, within the resources you have



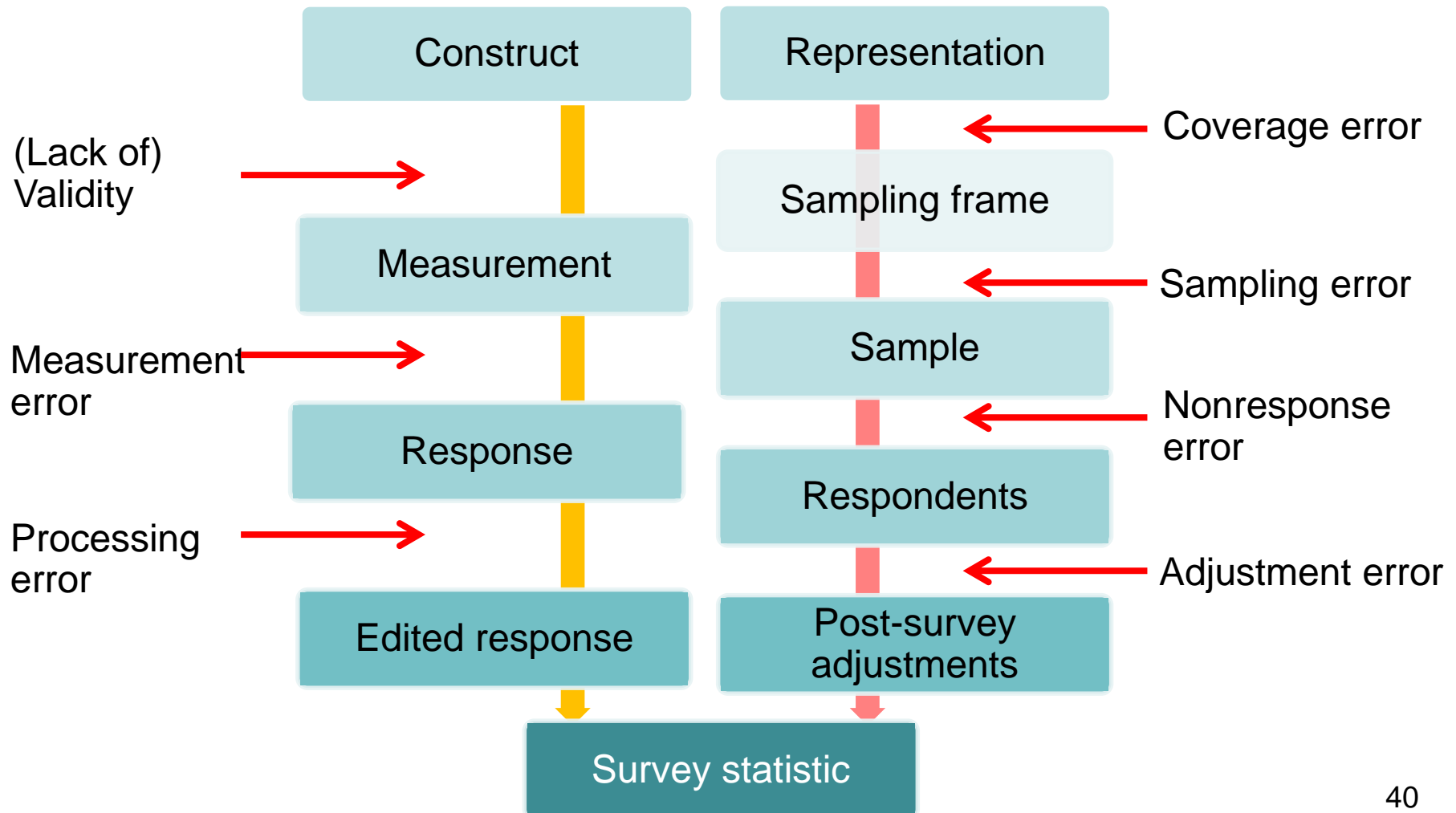
3. As a link to the terms used by
survey methodologists (searchable)

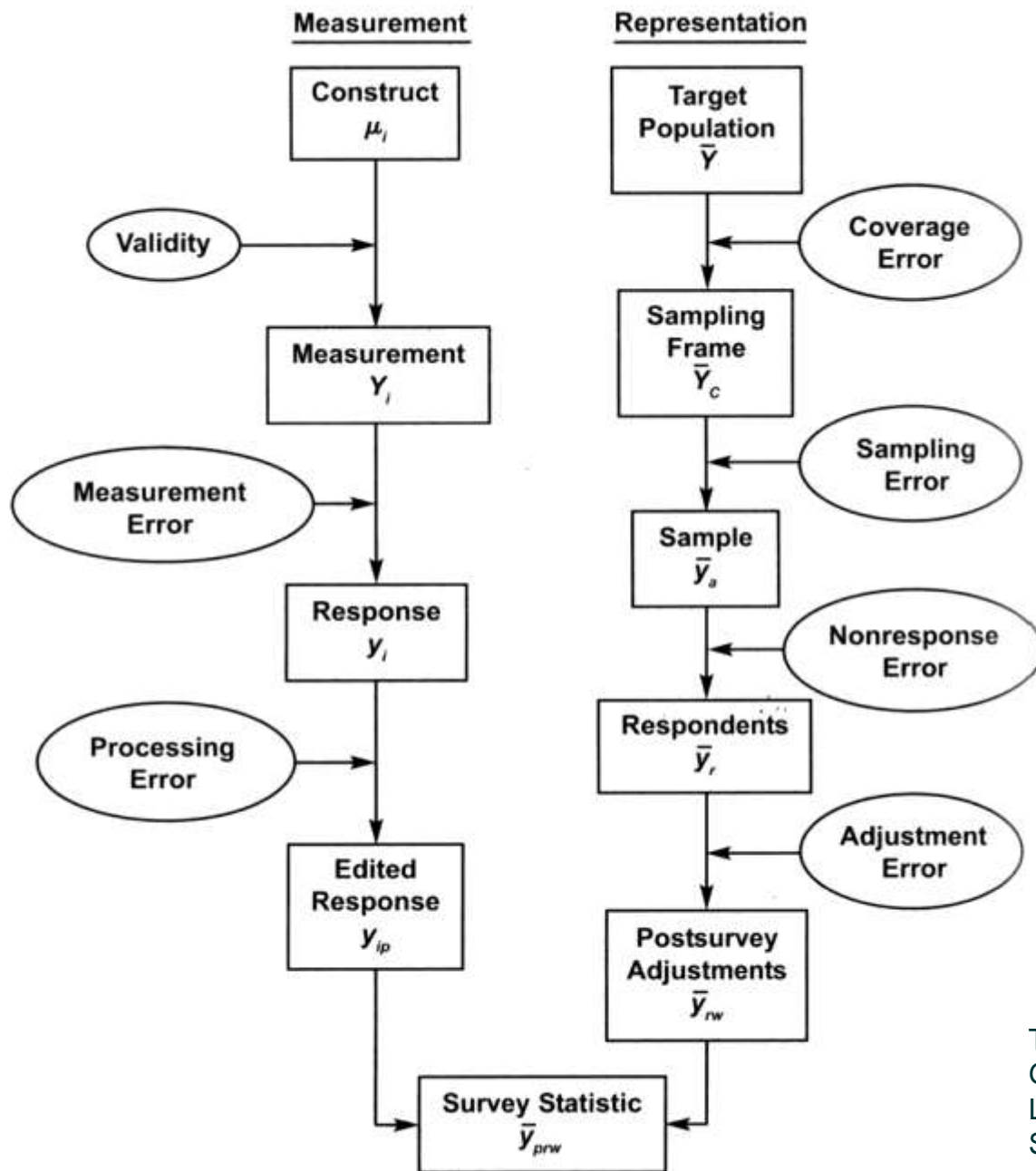
The aim is to get the best number you can, within the resources you have



4. With all the errors in it

The aim is to get the best statistic you can, within the resources you have





Total Survey Error diagram as presented in Groves, R. M., F. J. Fowler, M. P. Couper, J. M. Lepkowski, E. Singer and R. Tourangeau (2009). Survey methodology. Hoboken, N.J., Wiley.

Figure 2.5 Survey life cycle from a quality perspective.

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