A guide on using free on-line surveys

An on-line survey is a great way to collect quantitative and qualitative data for your research

A quick search on the internet will bring up several options of on-line surveys. The free versions of surveys may come with some limitations, particularly in terms of:

- the number of surveys you can create
- the number of questions you can ask on each survey
- the number of responses you can collect
- the way in which you can control how people fill in your survey
- the ability to export the survey results

Please refer to the comparison chart of some options available on-line. Apart from identifying what design features each one offers, think about what your survey will look like and how you will be able to access the data collected. For example:

- the number of questions you want your survey to cover
- the types of questions available
- the ability to download the responses
- the compatibility with the mobile devices

Getting started:

Once you have identified the survey tool you would like to use, simply register for the service. Before you start, however, it can be useful to spend some time mapping out your survey on paper. Some providers offer survey templates which you can adapt to create your own survey. Alternatively, you can create your own survey by selecting a theme, defining your own questions and answer choices.

Question types:

Most online surveys will provide a choice of question types ranging from multiple-choice and scaled questions through to open questions.

An open question - where respondents can write whatever they like, for example:

How has our service helped you over the last year?

ehu.ac.uk/uniskills   **ehu.ac.uk/ls**

Library & Learning Services

A multiple-choice question - where respondents select one or more options from a list that you present to them, for example:

Please tell us which of the following services you have used in the last six months:	
On-line forum	☐
Weekly support group	☐
Information leaflets	☐

A matrix of multiple responses - where respondents can select only one answer in each row, for example:

Did our project help you:	Yes	No	Not sure
Cope better with your situation?	☐	☐	☐
Online Forum	☐	☐	☐

A scaled question - where respondents select one option from a scale, for example:

How helpful were the following services:	Very	Quite	Not very	Not at all	Not sure	Did not use
Weekly Support Group	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Online Forum	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Information Leaflets	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Data Protection:

Remember to comply with Data Protection legislation. Data Protection legislation is concerned with the processing of personal data and applies to anyone involved in the collection, processing and use of the data. Please refer to the Information Commissioner's Office for further information on Data Protection and Cloud computing: online surveys here:
http://ico.org.uk/about_us/research/data_protection

ehu.ac.uk/uniskills   **ehu.ac.uk/ls**