

Dillman's Principles for Web Questionnaire Cheat Sheet by David Pollack (Davidpol) via cheatography.com/2754/cs/5500/

Principles Designing Web Quesitionaires

- 1. Introduce the Web questionnaire with a welcome screen that is motivational, emphasizes the ease of responding, and instructs respondents about how to proceed to the next page.
- 2. Provide a PIN number for limiting access only to those in the sample.
- 3. Begin the Web questionnaire with a question that is fully visible on the first screen of the questionnaire, and will be easily comprehended and answered by all respondents.
- Present each question in a conventional format similar to that normally used on paper self-administered questionnaires.
- 5. Restrain the use of color so that figure/ground consistency and readability are maintained, navigational flow is unimpeded, and measurement properties of questions are maintained.
- 6. Avoid differences in the visual appearance of questions that result from different screen
- configurations, operating systems, browsers, partial screen displays, and wrap around text.
- 7. Provide specific instructions on how to take each necessary computer action for responding to the questionnaire and give other necessary instructions at the point where they are needed.
- 8. Use drop-down boxes sparingly, consider the mode implication, and identify each with a "click here" instruction.
- 9. Do not require respondents to provide an answer to each question before being allowed to answer any subsequent ones.
- 10. Provide skip directions in a way that encourages marking of answers and being able to click to the next applicable question.
- 11. Construct Web questionnaires so they scroll from question to question unless order effects are a concern, or when telephone and Web survey results are being combined.
- 12. When the number of answer choices exceeds the number that can be displayed in a single column on one screen, consider double-banking with an appropriate grouping device to link them together.
- 13. Use graphical symbols or words that convey a sense of where the respondent is in the completion process, but avoid those that require significant increases in computer resources.
- 14. Exercise restraint in the use of question structures that have known measurement problems on paper questionnaires, such as check all that apply and open ended questions.

Derived from: Dillman, D.A. (2007) Mail and Internet Surveys: The Tailored Design Method, New Jersey: Wiley.

Step 1: Define desired navigation path

Define a desired navigation path for reading all information presented on each page of the question.

- ☐ Write each question in a way that minimizes the need to reread portions in order to comprehend the response task.
- ☐ Place the instructions exactly where that information is needed and not at the beginning of the questionnaire.
- ☐ Place items with the same response categories into an item-in-a-series format, but do it carefully.
- ☐ Ask one question at a time.
- ☐ Minimize the use of matrices.

Step 2 Create Visual Navigation Guides

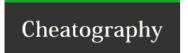
Create visual navigation guides and use them in a consistent way to get respondents to follow the prescribed navigational path and correctly interpret the written information.

- ☐ Increase the size of written elements to attract attention.
- ☐ Increase the brightness or color (shading) of visual elements to attract attention and establish appropriate groupings.
- ☐ Use spacing to identify appropriate groupings of visual elements.
- ☐ Use similarity to identify appropriate groupings of visual elements.
- ☐ Maintain a consistent figure/group format to make the response task
- ☐ Maintain simplicity, regularity, and symmetry to make the response task easier.
- ☐ Begin asking question in the upper left quadrant; place any information not needed by the respondent in the lower right quadrant.
- ☐ Use the largest or brightest symbols to identify the starting point on each page.
- $\hfill \square$ Identify the beginning of each succeeding question in a consistent way.
- $\hfill\square$ Number questions consecutively and simply from beginning to end.
- ☐ Use a consistent figure/background format to encourage the readings of all words.
- ☐ Limit the use of reverse print to section headings or question numbers.
- ☐ Place more blank space between questions than between subcomponents of questions.
- \square Use dark print for questions and light print for answer choices.
- $\hfill \square$ Place special instructions inside of question numbers and not as freestanding entities.
- ☐ Optional or occasionally needed instruction should be separated from the question statement by font or symbol variations.
- \Box Do not place instructions in a separate instruction book or in a separate section of the questionnaire.



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Step 2 Create Visual Navigation Guides (cont)

- ☐ Use of lightly shaded colors as background fields on which to write all questions provides an effective navigational guide to respondents.
- ☐ When shaded background fields are used, identification of all answer spaces in white helps to reduce non-response.
- ☐ List answer categories vertically instead of horizontally.
- ☐ Place answer spaces consistently to either the left or right of category
- ☐ Use numbers or simple answer boxes for recording of answers.
- □ Vertical alignment of question subcomponents among consecutive questions eases the response task.
- ☐ Avoid double or triple banking of answer choices.
- $\hfill \square$ Maintain spaces between answer choices that are consistent with measurement intent.
- \square Maintain consistency throughout a questionnaire in the direction scales are displayed.
- ☐ Use shorter lines to prevent words from being skipped.

Step 3 Develop Visual Navigation Guides

Develop additional visual navigational guides, the aim of which is to interrupt established navigation behavior and redirect respondents.

- \square Major visual changes are essential for gaining compliance with skip patterns.
- ☐ Words and phrases that introduce important, but easy to miss, change is respondent expectation should be visually emphasized consistently, but sparingly.
- \square Major visual changes are essential for gaining compliance with skip patterns.



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