



A Hitchhiker's Guide to Library Surveys

Colleen Eggett
Training Coordinator, Utah State Library

&
Betti Grow
**Assistant Online Trainer, Utah State
Library**



Introductions



Colleen Eggett
Training Coordinator
Utah State Library

ceggett@utah.gov



Betti Grow
Assistant Online Trainer
Utah State Library

bgrow@utah.gov

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Participant guide



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 - Services to Children
 - Services for Teens
 - Services to Immigrants
 - Services to Older Adults
 - Services for Spanish Speakers
 - Services to Rural Communities
 - Rural Library Sustainability Project
 - Rural Technology
 - Rural Outreach
 - Rural Updates
 - Rural Advocacy

Home > Resources > Patron Services > Services to Rural Communities >

Rural In Focus Webinars

[\[What is this?\]](#)

Join us for the *next* free, hour-long webinar: Tuesday September 18, 1 PT/2:00 pm ET

A Hitchhiker's Guide to Library Surveys: Surveys can be rich sources of info about your community's needs and your library's services and resources. When conduct a survey? What are the essential elements of an effective survey? How evaluate your survey results? Colleen Eggett, Training Coordinator from the Uta Library will be presenting and she has developed a [Participant Guide](#) as an of attending this session.

We are pleased to announce that our Learning Webinars are now closed captioned will be available for both the live event and when viewing the recording. For more Joining the Webinar.

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Today's Goals



By the end of today's training you will be able to...

 Understand why and how to conduct a survey

 Describe the elements of an effective library survey

 Evaluate the survey results



Why run a survey?



- Helps you make informed or “good” decisions
- Results might surprise you
- Fast & easy to administer
- Meeting their needs = success

42?

Surveys are good for:



- Ideas from many people
- Evaluations of programs
- Identification of issues
- Short answers to questions
- Support through statistics (numbers)

Focus group instead of a survey?

- Ideas from specific people
- Discussion of issues
- Detailed answers to fewer questions
- Gathering stories or examples



Special guest: Dicki of Kanab City Library, Utah



- Our experience with doing a library survey



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How to conduct a survey



1. Write down the goal of the survey

EX 1: To determine which computer classes patrons want

EX 2: To find out if children have read more books as a result of Story hour

2. Decide whom to survey



How to conduct a survey



- Consider your target audience & how to reach them
 - *Library users & nonusers?
 - *Parents of children in Story hour?
- Assess your survey resources: online survey vs. paper copy



Examples of online survey tools



<http://www.surveymethods.com>



SurveyMonkey.com
because knowledge is everything

<http://www.surveymonkey.com>





<http://www.zoomerang.com>

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Create the survey



An effective survey has questions that are clear & not confusing...

-  1. What computer topics would you like to learn at the library?
-  2. At the library what would be most useful to you?



KISS



- Simple, straightforward questions that are easy for everyone to understand
- No trade talk (EX: library acronyms)
- No highfalutin words

Keep it simple

Find survey examples in a professional database



Use “vetted” questions: already asked & tested by professionals

The screenshot shows the EBSCO Research Databases search interface. At the top, there's a navigation bar with 'Basic Search', 'Advanced Search', 'Visual Search', and 'Choose Databases'. The search bar contains 'library survey' and has 'Search' and 'Clear' buttons. Below the search bar, there are tabs for 'New Search', 'Keyword', 'Publications', 'Subject Terms', 'Cited References', 'Indexes', and 'Images'. The 'Publications' tab is selected. The search results are displayed in 'Academic Search Premier'. A 'Refine Search' section is visible, allowing users to limit their results. The 'Limit your results:' section includes checkboxes for 'Full Text', 'References Available', and 'Scholarly (Peer Reviewed) Journals'. There are also fields for 'Published Date from' (Month and Year) and 'Publication'. The 'Publication Type' dropdown menu is open, showing options: 'All', 'Periodical', 'Newspaper', and 'Book'. The 'Number Of Pages' dropdown menu is set to 'All'. The 'Articles With Images' dropdown menu is open, showing options: 'All', 'PDF', and 'Text with Graphic'. In the bottom right corner, there is a banner for 'PUBLIC PIONEER Utah's Online Library' featuring a compass rose logo.

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Avoid loaded or leading questions



- EX: Do you think it is unfair for training to only be offered when mothers are at home during the day?
- Better: When do you think training should be offered at the library?

Avoid questions with negatives



- EX: Are you against having avatar training for teens?
- Better: would you like avatar training for teens?



Avoid double questions

- EX: Do you think the library should offer computer training and offer follow-up training as requested?



Make sure the questions match your objectives



Objective: Children will read more books as a result of story hour

Ask: How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following:

Story hour helped my child to read more books

Strongly disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree, Strongly agree

An effective survey also has...

Answers that are clear & not confusing



If using multiple choice, list **all** possible responses



Give “other” option and let them write in their answer, if appropriate



Choices need equal weight

Which answers have more even weight?

Poor –Average –Above Average –Excellent –Superior

Poor –Below Avg. –Average –Above Avg. –Excellent

Which answers are better? Why?

Yes — No

OR

Yes — No — Undecided — N/A



Standardize the format of your answers

- If you are using a rating scale of 1-5 on one question, use the same scale on other rating questions
- Likert scales are good- How do you feel about the following:
 - Strongly disagree—Disagree—Neutral or not applicable—Agree—Strongly agree

You get better results when you...

- Name the options
NO: "on a scale of 1-5"
YES: Poor, below average, average, above average, excellent
- Use 5 options rather than 10
- Only ask things you need to know
(short is better)

Use demographics

- Age in roughly equal ranges. EX:
up to age 18, 19-34, 35-49, 50-64, 65-up
- Gender
- Computer experience
- Other things that may impact the results

Male

Female

Add a comments section

- Can write in answers not found elsewhere
- You'll get lots of positive feedback





Pre-test your survey

- Ask 10+ people to take the survey
- Was anything difficult or confusing?
- Look at how people responded—
did the right questions get asked?

Get the survey out to people

Possible sources of help:

Staff members

Library board

City council

Website



Publicize the survey

- Widely publicize the availability of the survey while it is open

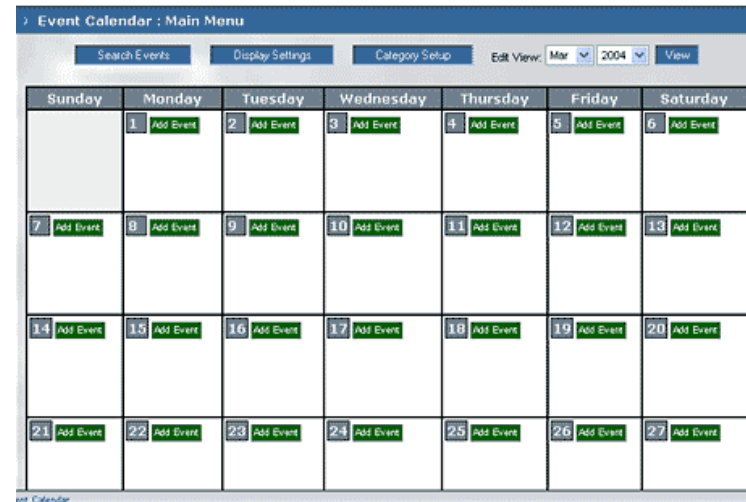


Take our survey!

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How long should your survey be open?

- The same day if you are evaluating a one day event
- For 3-4 weeks if you are surveying many people



The screenshot shows a web interface titled "Event Calendar : Main Menu". It features a navigation bar with buttons for "Search Events", "Display Settings", and "Category Setup". Below this is a date selector showing "Mar" and "2004", and a "View" button. The main content is a calendar grid with columns for each day of the week (Sunday through Saturday) and rows for dates. Each date cell contains a small green button labeled "Add Event".

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| | 1 Add Event | 2 Add Event | 3 Add Event | 4 Add Event | 5 Add Event | 6 Add Event |
| 7 Add Event | 8 Add Event | 9 Add Event | 10 Add Event | 11 Add Event | 12 Add Event | 13 Add Event |
| 14 Add Event | 15 Add Event | 16 Add Event | 17 Add Event | 18 Add Event | 19 Add Event | 20 Add Event |
| 21 Add Event | 22 Add Event | 23 Add Event | 24 Add Event | 25 Add Event | 26 Add Event | 27 Add Event |

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Tally the results (paper only)

| Survey Number | 1 computer class at lib yes | 1 computer class at lib No | 1 computer class not applic | 1 computer undecided | 2 which class blog | 2 which class Avatar | A Age up to 18 yrs |
|----------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------|--------------------|----------------------|--------------------|
| 1 | 1 | | | | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| 2 | 1 | | | | 1 | | 1 |
| 3 | | 1 | | | 1 | | 1 |
| 4 | | | 1 | | | | 1 |
| 5 | | | | 1 | | 1 | 1 |
| 6 | 1 | | | | 1 | | |
| 7 | 1 | | | 1 | | | |
| 8 | | 1 | | | 1 | | |
| 9 | 1 | | | | | | |
| 10 | 1 | | | | 1 | | |
| Total | 6 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 5 | 2 | 5 |
| Percent | 60.00% | 20.00% | 10.00% | 20.00% | 60.00% | 20.00% | 50.00% |

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Evaluating the results

Sort by demographics

- Does age make a difference in what people want? In the day/time you offer it?
- Gender?
- Computer skills?

EX: Among those who are age 18 and under, what classes are wanted?

Summarize the findings

- Percent that responded one way
- Generalize: vast majority: over 75%; most: over 50%; few: under 25%
- Write-in topics: fewer votes → more popular than it looks??
- Comments are important

Make the results available

- Always make the results available to those who took the survey



Decide how to use the results

Improve your program

Evaluate it

Advocate for your library

Save the galaxy



The point:

DON'T PANIC!

You can do it



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Questions? Comments?

Type your question/comments in the chat box

Or

Raise your hand and we'll call on you

ceggett@utah.gov



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WebJunction.org/Rural

- Remember the archives!
- Next Webinar on **10/25/07** 11:00 a.m. PT/ 2:00 p.m. ET
- Topic: **Bringing people together at the library: Rural Libraries as Place**
- Webinar Survey for your feedback and suggestions

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