Initial Report

Last Modified: 11/10/2009

1. 1. What will IRB need to know about my survey? How will IRB impact my survey?

Text Response
Any survey that collects data from human subjects for research or dissemination of information is subject to IRB oversight. An anonymous survey may be judged "exempt" by the IRB, but an application must be submitted for the IRB to make the determination.
age, voluntary or not, technically cannot begin the survey process until approval.
IRB will need to see your questions, and will want to know how you are obtaining informed consent. Usually a description on the first page is sufficient, with a button to "click" if you consent to participate. IRB will also want to know if the info is anonymous or confidential. I think the IRB impact to the survey is pretty minimal. I haven't had too many problems with them.
They will need a copy of the survey or at least proposed items prior to collecting data.
Content. Procedures. That's what the IRB is assigned to do--protect human subjects.
How data will be stored and in what form...especialy, if there is a drawing, how I can collect data and then provide participants an opportunity to give me their contact information without giving me the opportunity to match their identify with their previous survey input.

Statistic	Value
Total Responses	6

2. 3. Within the survey, how should I preface or introduce the survey? Should I talk about estimated time to completion?

Text Response
It depends on the survey. It is usual practice to estimate the completion time based on trials prior to the dissemination of the survey.
there should be something in this survey for the respondent - money, a report, opportunity to help improve something, etc. Time expected to complete is important.
Introduce the survey with a brief description of what the research is about - keep it very simple - and why it is important. Mention risks and benefits, if there is any compensation for participating, how the confidentiality if responses is protected, how long it will take to complete the survey on average, and give your contact info so they can ask questions if they need to.
If my survey has an IRB attached to it I usually use the info from that (no more risks than encountered in everyday life, etc.), explain the purpose, and anticipated completion time. I also inlcude a contact for questions.
Yes--re: time (and make that based on several people taking it as a trial run). At least a paragraph needs to be included--purpose of the study, included.
Yes, we need to provide the estimated time to completion.

Statistic	Value
Total Responses	6

3.

4. How long or short should my survey be? What are the pros and cons? How long is too long?

Text Response
It really depends on what the survey is designed to measure. You should aim for the shortest possible survey that collects the desired information. Some people will refuse to do a survey of more than 5-10 minutes, but if the survey addresses of topic of high interest and is targeted to the right people the respondent may be more willing to invest the time.
depends...
In general, shorter is better. If it takes people longer than about 20 minutes online, I think the completion rate will go down. I think there is some research that indicates that people will fill out paper forms for longer than they will click buttons on a web page. So even if it takes 30 minutes on paper and you have a high completion rate, this may not bear out if it takes 30 minutes online. The internet provides too many distractions, and I think it's harder to read for long periods on a computer screen.
Depends on the audience, if they are required to participate (can be a little longer) or if they are volunteers (10-20 minute limit).
15 min. is the maximum . . .
15 mins length is probably ok; 10 mins is better; but, it's difficult to design a research with so few items.

Statistic	Value
Total Responses	6

4. 5. What are the best question types to use? Likert scale? Multiple choice? Open ended? Others?

Text Response
It depends on the goal of the survey.
depends...will you most likely report descriptive numerical data or are you willing to code qualitative data and report this?
I've only used Likert-type, and that seemed to work ok.
This really depends on the purpose and the type fo data being collected. I will say that if it is data for demogrpahic items than a drop down menu should be used for easier coding--or you could get a whole host of insane responses.
Open-ended take longer to respond to, but I appreciate them because survey items are often vague and confusing. Most that I respond to are Likert. I get very few open-ended survey questions, which probably reflects the lack of interest (and willing to invest) in qualitative research.
Likert is often used in counseling psychology field.

Statistic	Value
Total Responses	6

5. 6. What can I do to obtain the greatest number of responses? Is there a good way to incentivize respondents? Money? Raffle? Etc.? What is not allowed?

Text Response
Incentives can sometime help get responses, but I do not have enough experience to judge whether one way is better than another. Any incentives should be okayed by the IRB.
Send the survey and most responses will be returned within 48 hrs.; remind them a day or two later; then send a final reminder a week or so later. After that, don't expect many responses. This generally works with mail or online surveys. See Dillenbourg for more survey techniques.
I think giving an incentive (like entry into a raffle, even for a small cash prize) is a good way to increase response rate. Also, reminder emails are helpful to get a few more participants. I've heard that "gift cards" that lose value are not allowed, but this might have changed.
Depends on the project, who I'm trying to get involved, and if IRB/project allows for incentives--also a probelm with incentives is that it cannot be anonymous, which may turn some folks away.
Send it out twice--with the second time about 2 weeks after the first one. Then, after that, beware of becoming a pest with additional mailings. Recognize that you can't "make" anyone respond--and that there are multiple reasons why some choose not to.

Statistic	Value
Total Responses	6

6. 7. How do I distribute my survey? Via email? Are there any pitfalls I should avoid?

Text Response
It depends on the audience and what contact information you have. E-mail is quick but easily ignored. An offical letter may get a better response, but it is problematic when respondents must enter long URLs to get to an electronic survey.
Emails from the Registrar via the DSE system seem to work well. However, bear in mind that you will most likely get some cranky responses from students who don't like getting emailed with surveys. Some students even threaten legal action for the "spam" you're sending them - which is of course groundless, because it's university-approved research if you've gone through the IRB. That's been a small minority (maybe 5% or less) in my experience, but it will happen. I usually just tell them to contact the Registrar and ask that all their directory info be kept private, which will keep them from getting any more email surveys. I don't hear anything from them after that.
I usually start with email, depending on my audience, then may follow up with paper-based surveys or reminders.
I am on a national listserve for my specific field, and I receive up to 10 online surveys a week during the academic year, almost entirely from master's or doctoral students--largely asking faculty to respond, but sometimes asking faculty to pass along the survey to our students. Recently there have been some complaints from listserve members about feeling inundated by them, and I can attest to the reality that pressing responsibilities in my work preclude my responding to more than a few of them. I also hesitate to pass on 100% of those asking for student responses, since our students often feel overloaded with assistantships and a heavy course and clinical load, and I'm concerned they feel I am "requiring" or "expecting" them to fill out the survey. After all, they are a sort of captive audience. In addition, many surveys seem to be "just flawed enough" that, midway, I often am so frustrated with the "difficult" items (e.g., lacking in specificity, hard to know which aspect of something is the focus) that I give up, feeling that whatever I'd submit wouldn't contribute to an accurate "read" on the question at hand.

Statistic	Value
Total Responses	4

7. 8. Do any other thoughts come to mind related to conducting a successful online survey? Please enter your name and email address here if you would like the Education IT team to follow up with you.

Text Response

Don't do this unless you know exactly what questions the responses will help you answer. Don't read too much into survey responses since they are often difficult to interpret/easy to misinterpret.

Keep it simple and user-friendly. Use multiple-choice or short-answer format if you can. If it requires a lot of open-response questions, keep those to a minimum. For example, this survey has 8 open-response questions, which is probably about as many as most people would be able to fill out online before losing concentration/interest.

Statistic	Value
Total Responses	3

8. 2. How should I create my initial "draft" survey questions?

Text Response
I don't think there is a "right" way. Most people draft question in a word processor and have them reviewed prior to development of the actual survey.
start with the end in mind. what are you going to report and who are you reporting results to? items are not perfectly written the first time - generally several iterations are required so factor in plenty of review time for this -
I think the simplest way is to cut-and-paste the items from a Word document into the survey site. You may need to double-check the formatting to make sure they look like you want them to.
I always type them into a word document first to check for errors, then cut an dpaste into teh survey system. I also have a second person, one familair with the topic and concepts review for accuracy.
Carefully. With a pilot run, perhaps. They really should be assessed statistically by someone with expertise in that statistical area before sending out broadly--to avoid unnecessary repetition and to be sure that each item is important, clear, etc.
I like to copy and paste from word...however, I need to correct some errors; some symbols will be off during this process.

Statistic	Value
Total Responses	6