3rd GESIS Summer School in Survey Methodology
Cologne, August 2014


Instructors:  Mick P. Couper  Frederik Funke
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Date: August 18-22, 2014
Time: 9:00-13:00

About the instructors:
Prof. Mick P. Couper, PhD, is a research professor at the Survey Research Center, University of Michigan and the Joint Program in Survey Methodology. He has published extensively on Web survey design and implementation issues, including Designing Effective Web Surveys published by Cambridge University Press (2008) and (With Roger Tourangeau and Frederick Conrad), The Science of Web Surveys (Oxford, 2013). His current research interests focus on aspects of technology use in surveys, whether by interviewers or respondents.

Frederik Funke, PhD, is a survey methodologist who works in Germany as a freelance scientist, consultant, and statistics trainer. Furthermore, he is a lecturer at the University of Kassel and senior project manager for online research at the LiNK Institut, Frankfurt. Frederik received a Master’s degree in sociology and a PhD in psychology, both in the area of online research methods. His research focuses on rating scales in Web surveys and he published on the topic in Behavior Research Methods, Field Methods, and Social Science Computer Review.

Short course description:
The primary focus of the course is on helping participants design the best possible instruments for online data collection. The course will review the extensive literature on the effect of design on measurement error in Web surveys, and provide practical examples and advice to maximize the quality of the data collected. Participants are encouraged to bring their own Web survey projects to class. Instructors will be using LimeSurvey (open source software) to demonstrate various design issues, but participants are free to use their own software if they wish.

Course prerequisites:
• familiarity with survey research methods;
• ideally, students will have taken the course “Introduction to Web surveys” in the previous week, but this is not required.

Target group:
Participants will find the course useful if they:
• are designing or conducting online surveys or planning to do so;
• have some experience with (or knowledge of) questionnaire design;
• course will be particularly relevant for those with some prior experience with Web surveys.

Course and learning objectives:
By the end of the course participants will:
• be able to design a Web survey to maximize the quality of the survey responses collected;
• be familiar with the research literature and relevant theories on measurement error in Web surveys;
• understand the role that design plays in the quality of data obtained from Web surveys.
Organizational structure of the course:
The classroom time will consist of about 3 hours of lecture and demonstration on various aspects of Web survey design, followed by about 1 hour of structured time working with the LimeSurvey software to implement these ideas. In addition:
- participants are expected to work on their own design projects during “free study time.” If they do not have a project, the instructors will provide an example survey to work on;
- the instructors will be available for individual and group consultations on participants’ projects, and provide support on using LimeSurvey to develop and deploy a Web survey.

Software and hardware requirements:
Course participants will need to bring a laptop computer for performing practical exercises for this course. The laptop should have a web browser installed.

Long course description:
The course will focus on the design of Web survey instruments and procedures, based on theories of human-computer interaction, interface design, cognitive and social psychological theories, and research on the effect of Web survey design on measurement error. The course will cover all aspects of instrument design for Web surveys, including the appropriate use of widgets (e.g., radio buttons, check boxes) for Web surveys, general formatting and layout issues (including typeface, color, layout and alignment), movement through the instrument (action buttons, navigation, error messages), and so on. The course will draw on empirical results from experiments on alternative design approaches as well as practical experience in the design and implementation of Web surveys. Issues related to the increased use of mobile devices (smart phones and tablets) for competing surveys will be addressed. Issues of representation (i.e., sampling, coverage and nonresponse) will not be addressed in this course, but will be the focus of the companion course the previous week (Lozar Manfreda and Berzelak).

The course is designed for students and researchers new to this topic (but with prior survey experience) as well as for those who already have some knowledge or experience in Web survey design and deployment. While some universities offer courses on questionnaire design and on general survey design, there are no courses focusing on specific issues related to Web survey design. As is clear from the large and growing literature on the topic, Web survey design brings special challenges and opportunities, but the knowledge and skills gained will apply in other design settings too. In addition to learning about how to design surveys, participants will also learn how to conduct methodological studies on Web survey design, and identify gaps in the literature to which they may contribute.

Day-to-day schedule and literature used in the course:

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<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Topic(s)</th>
<th>Compulsory reading</th>
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| 1   | Why design is important, and how Web surveys differ from other modes. Types of Web surveys and implications for design. | **Compulsory reading:**  
| 2   | Basic HTML tools and design elements for creating survey questions; radio buttons, check boxes, drop boxes, text fields, text areas, etc. Focus on choice of the input tool and appropriate design given the choice. | **Compulsory reading:**  
Suggested reading:

### 3 Going beyond HTML: multimedia, graphics, client-side and server-side scripts, etc. Dealing with special situations (such as mobile Web and tablets)

Compulsory reading:

Suggested reading:

### 4 General layout and design: typography, font size and style; background design; layout and screen design; use of grids or matrices.

Compulsory reading:

Suggested reading:

### 5 Putting the questions together to create a questionnaire: instructions; skips, edit checks and routing; progress and movement through the instrument; error messages. Implementing the Web survey: the e-mail invitation; access control and login; the welcome screen; follow-up reminders and repeat access; use of paradata.

Compulsory reading:

Suggested reading: