

What Are The Pros and Cons of Data Collection Methods?

Contributed by DJS Research Ltd.
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The Pros and Cons of Data Collection, as explained by DJS Research Ltd.

What are the advantages and disadvantages of mail surveys?

The advantages of mail surveys are:

- No interviewer bias
- Cheap
- Repeatable
- Often gains thoughtful answers

The disadvantages are:

- Doesn't ensure qualified respondent
- Low response rate
- Inability to gain further detail / probe
- Poor turnaround time

What are the advantages and disadvantages of telephone surveys?

The advantages of telephone surveys are:

- Ensure qualified respondent
- Ability to probe / Gain further detail
- Fast turnaround time
- Good response rate

The disadvantages are:

- Distribution bias (difficult to reach certain segments)
- Use of phone mail and answering machines
- No absolute assurance of confidentiality
- Interviewer bias

What are the advantages and disadvantages of in-person or face-to-face surveys?

The advantages of in-person surveys are:

- Ensure qualified respondent
- Ability to probe and can show objects etc
- Good response rate
- Respondent involvement

The disadvantages are:

- Potential exists for interviewer bias
- Expensive due to travel and other costs
- Interviewer bias can be extreme
- Poor turnaround time

What are the advantages and disadvantages of Internet surveys?

The advantages of Internet surveys are:

- Low cost
- No interviewer bias

The disadvantages of Internet surveys are:

- Doesn't ensure qualified respondent
- Biased respondent demographics (not projectable)
- Inability to probe (can ask only a couple of questions)
- Poor response rates - facility exists for survey to be terminated

What are the major advantages and disadvantages of focus groups?

The advantages of focus groups are:

- Can include product demo's, visuals, and food service
- Good idea generator (brain storming)

The disadvantages are:

- Can be very expensive (recruiting, incentives, etc.)
- One focus group session represents only a single data point (not statistically valid)
- A group leader may appear and adversely affect overall results
- Participants may not attend (risk of failure)
- Recruiting is limited - participants must be able to attend and therefore limited to those who work or live nearby.
- Client personnel may coach participants or edit transcripts.

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