

C2. WEB DATA COLLECTION METHODS I: WEB SURVEYS AND FORMS

Course title and code: C2. Web data collection methods I: web surveys and forms

Teacher and contact details: Katja Lozar Manfreda

University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Social Sciences

Kardeljeva pl. 5, 1000 Ljubljana, Slovenia

Tel: +386 1 5805 313

Email: katja.lozar@fdv.uni-lj.si

Number of ECTS: 5

■ Objectives

The objectives of the course are to:

- offer knowledge on the methodology of collecting data using web surveys and other online forms,
- provide training on the practical implementation of web surveys and forms in order to collect data of desired quality for own research projects,
- provide knowledge to understand possible deficiencies and mistakes in conducting web surveys,
- provide knowledge to adequately evaluate quality of data obtained by web surveys and forms,
- teach to use at least one software tool for web surveys,
- provide knowledge to understand the principles of selecting the most appropriate web survey tools for specific purposes.

■ Competences (basics, general, transversals, specifics)

Basic competences: practical and methodological knowledge to conduct high-quality web surveys.

General competences: knowledge on software tools for web surveys.

Transversals: knowledge on the methodology of survey research in any discipline.

Specifics: ability to conduct all stages of a web survey project, to evaluate quality of data obtained with a web survey, understand possible deficiencies and mistakes in conducting web surveys.

■ Programme (brief description)

The course deals with the challenge of using the World Wide Web (WWW) for survey data collection as one of the main data collection methods using the WWW. Although Web surveys are sometimes perceived as a questionable survey mode, the experiences over the 15 years of their usage show that they can be used in a valid and reliable way for many research purposes. They offer not only fast and cost-effective survey data collection, but also a wide range of possibilities for designing advanced dynamic questionnaires, reaching diverse populations and ensuring high quality of collected data. While Web surveys are technically easy to implement, the understanding of underlying methodological principles is crucial for successful application in practice. The teacher will provide students with the basic principles of implementing Web surveys in order to collect high-quality survey data in any discipline.

In the introduction the students will obtain knowledge necessary to make informed decisions on choosing a web survey among alternative survey modes for specific research purposes. They will be presented with the history of computer-assisted survey data collection and its varieties, the typology of Web surveys as one of the recently developed computer-assisted modes, and the advantages and disadvantages of Web surveys in the context of their usage. In addition, cost and organizational aspects of implementing web surveys will be evaluated. Then, principles of implementing Web surveys will be presented through the steps of the Internet survey process: defining research objectives, mode choices, sampling, questionnaire design and testing, recruiting, measuring the sample and quality monitoring, editing and coding data, weighting and imputation, data analysis. The presented material will be illustrated with results from experiments and practical experience.

Students will be also introduced to the variety of survey packages for implementing Web surveys and will have the opportunity to conduct their own survey project using one of these packages.

■ **Expected learning outcomes**

By the end of the course students will:

- have obtained the practical and methodological knowledge to conduct high-quality web surveys;
- have learnt the basics of software tools of web surveys and understand the principles of selecting the most appropriate tools for specific purposes;
- understand possible deficiencies and mistakes in conducting web surveys;
- be able to conduct all stages of their own web survey projects;
- be able to evaluate quality of data obtained with a web survey.

■ **Methodology**

The course will consist of the mixture of face-to-face and online lessons, readings and assignments.

■ **Evaluation system**

A written exam and short assignments will be graded.

■ **Remarks** (previous requirements, coordination, others, if any)

Participants are expected to be familiar with the basics of survey methodology (key terminology and basic principles of writing survey questions).

This course is one of the basic courses, offering introduction and most general knowledge on web surveys as one of the data collection methods in the online environment. It is followed by several elective courses which will cover specific themes in the field of web survey methodology more in detail. These courses are:

ES2. Questionnaire design for web surveys

ES3. Web surveys sampling and online panels

ES5. Data quality in web surveys

ES9. Representative issues in web surveys

■ **Online resources** (optional)

www.websm.org

■ **Bibliography** (optional)

To be added later.

■ **Employment opportunities** (optional)

To be added later.