

**Tips & Tools #14:** A Comparison of Survey Platforms for

Data Collection with Smart Phones

Capitalize on existing resources by recruiting and training data collectors on how to use their own smart phones for field data collection. As smart phones become more common among local tobacco control project staff and volunteers, the phones may present a new way to collect data.

TCEC tested the Feasibility and Cost of Using Smart Phones for Data Collection found that that using the smart phones for data collection used very little of the volunteers’ data plans. Therefore, no costs were incurred to volunteers while using their smart phones for this project.

TCEC also tested several free and payable survey platforms: SurveyMonkey, LimeSurvey, GoogleSurvey, Survey Pocket, and iSURVEY/droidSURVEY.

* [**SurveyMonkey**](http://www.surveymonkey.com) = electronic survey program used by many state and local agencies.
* [**LimeSurvey**](http://www.limesurvey.org/) = open source electronic survey program with the most potential if you have programming abilities and resources.
* [**Google Survey**](http://www.google.com/drive/start/apps.html#forms) =a free feature of Google Drive Forms available with any Google account.
* [**SurveyPocket**](http://www.surveypocket.com/) = mobile application of QuestionPro, a program used for electronic surveys. SurveyPocket allows for Offline data collection with Apple and Android devices.
* [**iSURVEY**](https://www.isurveysoft.com/) and [**droidSURVEY**](https://www.droidsurvey.com/) = mobile applications specifically created for offline data collection using handheld devices. iSURVEY and droidSURVEY are essentially the same, but specific to its device type. iSURVEY is downloaded from the Apple App store onto Apple devices. droidSURVEY is downloaded from the Google Play store onto android devices. Both apps, iSURVEY and droidSURVEY, can be used on multiple handheld devices to collect data offline, and your data will be loaded into a single iSURVEY account.

These survey platforms vary considerably in their features, usability, cost, and report-generating capabilities. See the attached table of our findings for specifics. We favored iSURVEY because of its flexibility, ease in creating surveys and generating reports, and ability to collect data even without an Internet connection.

However, there are benefits to using free options such as GoogleSurvey or paper. With paper, the survey order can be flexible. You can write notes in the margins. It’s cheap and well known. Also, there are other available electronic survey platforms that TCEC was not able to test.

If you are thinking of using smart phones for data collection, our comparison table can help you decide which survey platform might be best for your needs. Along with smart phones, you could also use iTouches, iPads, and tablets to collect data.

For details about TCEC’s iTouch & iPad Lending Program for Prop. 99-funded evaluation activities, check out these resources or contact us directly at tobaccoeval@ucdavis.edu or (530) 752-9951.

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| **A Comparison of Survey Platforms for Data Collection With Smart Phones** |
| Ratings Overview |
|  | **SurveyMonkey** | **LimeSurvey** | **Google Survey**  | **SurveyPocket**  | **iSURVEY/****droidSURVEY** |
| **Advantages** | * Familiar to a lot of people
* Colorful Themes
* Looks appealing
* Free service available, but with limited capabilities
 | * Free
* Open source
* Huge potential to customize (with computer programming knowledge and time for programming)
 | * Free
* Simple and easy to use
* Familiar to many people
* Allows for multiple users on multiple devices
* Can use on smart phone or computer
 | * Offline capabilities
* Allows for multiple users on multiple devices
* Visually appealing format; displays each question individually
* Can collect data on smart phone, tablet, or computer
 | * Offline capabilities
* Allows for multiple users on multiple devices
* Visually appealing format; displays each question individually
* Can display and collect pictures
* Has a screen preview of what the survey will look like on a device
 |
| **Disadvantages** | * No offline capabilities
* Does not allow sharing individual surveys; must share password so others will access all surveys in your account
 | * Requires programming capabilities
* Not user friendly
* Can be tricky when working within “layers”
* Takes a long time to load when administering survey
 | * No offline capabilities
* All questions appear on the same page which can be difficult to view on Smartphones
* Can't customize appearance: no color, no italics, no underline, no bold, no other fonts
 | * Price: very expensive
* Need to purchase annual license plus a fee for each device
 | * Price: moderately expensive
* Pay per each survey for 1, 6, or 12 month time periods
* Can only collect data on smart phone or tablet; cannot collect data on a computer
 |
| **Offline Capabilities** | * None. Must print out blank surveys for capturing data and manually enter responses later
 | * None. Must print out blank surveys for capturing data and manually enter responses later
 | * None. Must print out blank surveys for capturing data and manually enter responses later
 | * Designed for offline use
* Easy to collect as much data as you need and upload data later
 | * Designed for offline use
* Easy to collect as much data as you need and upload data later
 |
| **User Satisfaction Ratings\*** |  |  | * Obtained medium rating (same as SurveyPocket) on ability to enter data
* Overall Average = 3.75/5
 | * Obtained the **lowest rating on readability, ease of use, and ability to correct mistakes**
* Overall Average = 3.75/5
 | * Obtained the **highest rating in all categories** (readability, ease of use, ability to enter data and correct mistakes)
* Overall average = 4.75/5
 |
| **Data Plan Consumption** | * Negligible.
* Average 0 MB per six surveys
 | * Negligible.
* Average 0 MB per six surveys
 | * Negligible.
* Average 0 MB per six surveys
 | * Negligible.
* Average 3.16 MB per six surveys
 | * Negligible.
* Average 1.1 MB per six surveys
 |
|  \*User Satisfaction Ratings based on student volunteers trained to collect tobacco retailer observation data |

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| Features Comparisons |
|  | **SurveyMonkey** | **LimeSurvey** | **GoogleSurvey**  | **SurveyPocket**  | **iSURVEY/droidSURVEY** |
| **Adapted for Mobile Devices** | * No. Need to constantly scroll and enlarge the screen because all the questions appear at once
 | * No. Need to constantly scroll and enlarge the screen because all the questions appear at once
 | * No. Need to constantly scroll and enlarge the screen because all the questions appear at once
 | * Yes. Questions appear on the screen one at a time
 | * Yes. Questions appear on the screen one at a time
 |
| **Cost Factors** | * Free up to 10 questions and 100 responses OR $240/year license covers unlimited number of surveys, questions per survey, and survey completions
* Can conduct different surveys within same timeframe
* Requires access to continuous Internet connection via Wi-Fi or cellular data plan as low as $15/month for 250MB
 | * Free
* Covers unlimited number of surveys, questions per survey, and survey completions
* Can conduct different surveys within same timeframe
* Requires access to continuous Internet connection via Wi-Fi or cellular data plan as low as $15/month for 250MB
 | * Free with a Google account
* Covers unlimited number of surveys, questions per survey, and survey completions
* Can conduct different surveys within same timeframe
* Requires access to continuous Internet connection via Wi-Fi or cellular data plan as low as $15/month for 250MB
* <http://www.google.com/google-d-s/forms/>
 | * Requires **pre-paid license** to QuestionPro **+ per device** fee
* Negotiated rates for non-profits and academic institutions
* Covers unlimited number of surveys and completions
* Can conduct different surveys within same timeframe
* Requires downloading the SurveyPocket app to each device
* <http://www.surveypocket.com/>
 | * Requires free iSURVEY/ droidSURVEY account + $89 **per survey** per month; $400 for 6 months; $587 for 12 months
* Can "test" the survey with up to 10 completions for free
* Covers unlimited number of users, devices, and completions
* Can conduct different surveys within same timeframe
* Requires downloading free iSURVEY/droidSURVEY app to each device
* <https://www.isurveysoft.com/>
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| **Customer Service Support** | * Support via online form and answer via email
* May call 877-787-6965
 | * Forums available
* Support via online form with a donation
 | * Online help center: <http://wwwgooglecom/intl/encontact/>
 | * Prompt, patient, and helpful 24/7 customer service via phone or chat
 | * Very thorough chat help
 |
| **Multiple Users** | * To grant others access to your surveys, you must share your account password; others will have access to all of your surveys in your account
* Devices access each survey through a unique web link
* Surveys can be administered on unlimited number of devices simultaneously
 | * You can create unique logons for others to access each survey without sharing your password
* Devices access each survey through a unique web link
* Surveys can be administered on unlimited number of devices simultaneously
 | * You can grant access to each survey to anyone with a Google account without sharing your password
* Devices access each survey through a unique web link
* Surveys can be administered on unlimited number of devices simultaneously
 | * You can create unique logons for others to access each survey without sharing your password
* Devices access each survey through password protected logon/authentication
* Surveys can be administered on unlimited number of devices simultaneously
 | * To grant others access to your surveys, you must share your account password
* But each survey can have its own account
* Devices access each survey through password protected logon/authentication
* Surveys can be administered on unlimited number of devices simultaneously
 |
| **User-friendliness** | * Very easy because it is familiar to many people
* Very easy to use attractive themes.
 | * Tricky without some programming knowledge/practice
* Must be careful with “layers”
 | * Very easy
* All you can do is choose question type and enter question text
 | * Very easy
* You can quickly learn features with tutorials or live chat assistance
 | * Very easy
* It’s basically a drag and drop process
* Online tutorials and FAQ available
 |
| Survey Creation, Administration, and Reporting |
|  | **SurveyMonkey** | **LimeSurvey** | **GoogleSurvey** | **SurveyPocket** | **iSURVEY/droidSURVEY** |
| **Ability to Create or Modify Questions** | * Easy
* Can’t paste text; must enter each question manually
 | * Tricky
* Difficult to get started
* Many different buttons
* With practice or a programming background it may be easier
 | * Easy
* Choose from 6 question types
* Can’t paste text; must enter each question manually
 | * Easy
* Variety of question types available
* Sample questions available to use
* Can’t paste text; must enter each question manually
 | * Easy
* Variety of question types available
* Shows an example of what the device display will look like
* Can’t paste text; must enter each question manually
 |
| **Question Types** | * Multiple choice single response
* Multiple choice multiple response
* Drop down menu
* Attitude/interval scale
* Matrix
* Comment/text box
* Date and time
* Image
* Other open-ended formats
 | * Multiple choice single response
* Multiple choice multiple response
* Drop down menu
* Attitude/interval scale
* Comment/text box
* Date and time
* File upload (answer with an electronic file)
* Other open-ended formats
 | * Multiple choice single response
* Multiple choice multiple response
* Drop down menu
* Attitude/interval scale
* Matrix
* Comment/text box
 | * Multiple choice single response
* Multiple choice multiple response
* Drop down menu
* Attitude/interval scale
* Matrix
* Comment/text box
* Ranking
* Date and time
* Other open-ended formats
 | * Multiple choice single response
* Multiple choice multiple response
* Attitude/interval scale
* Matrix
* Comment/text box
* Ranking
* Date and time
* Other open-ended formats
* Signature
* Photo capture (answer with a picture)
 |
| **Survey Administration** | * Devices access each survey through a unique web link
 | * Devices access each survey through a unique web link
* May take a long time to load
 | * Devices access each survey through a unique web link
* Can allow users to revise responses before submitting
* Can add directions/clarifying text with question
 | * Visually appealing format
* Only one question appears on the screen at a time (or multiple questions with a tablet)
* Has "back" and "next" buttons
 | * Visually appealing format
* Only one question appears on the screen at a time (or multiple questions with a tablet)
* Has "back" and "next" buttons
 |
| **Accessing Data** | * Data are password protected
* Data are automatically loaded into your SurveyMonkey account
* Data can be exported to Excel or SPSS
 | * Data are password protected
* Data are automatically loaded into your LimeSurvey account
* Data can be exported to as a .csv file
 | * Data are password protected
* Data are automatically loaded into your GoogleDocs/Google account as a GoogleSpreadsheet and can be downloaded to Excel
 | * Data are password protected
* Data are automatically stored on devices until Internet connection is available to upload responses to your password protected account
* Data can be exported to Excel or SPSS
 | * Data are password protected
* Data are automatically stored on devices until Internet connection is available to upload responses to your password protected account
* Data can be exported to Excel or SPSS
 |
| **Graphing Abilities** | * Can create bar graphs, pie charts, and colorful, professional reports
 | * Can create bar graphs, pie charts, and colorful, professional reports
 | * Automatically summarizes responses into bar or pie charts
 | * Statistical analysis functions are available for additional price
* Can create bar graphs and pie charts
* Reporting is easy to learn with FAQs and videos on website
 | * Can create bar graphs, pie charts, and colorful, professional reports
* Reporting is easy to learn with FAQs on website
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