

USING OPEN SOURCE AND/OR LOW-COST SOFTWARE FOR STUDENT PROJECTS: COMPARING ALTERNATIVE SURVEY PACKAGES

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ABSTRACT

This workshop is dedicated to identifying software and services that enable online surveys; discussing the advantages and disadvantages to specific packages; and outlining how surveys have been integrated in multiple courses in the marketing curriculum. Participants will learn how marketing professors at a small University in the Pacific Northwest have used publicly available survey software (SurveyMonkey, Zoomerang, and Google Docs) in service learning situations for client-based projects in the undergraduate marketing curriculum including the courses Marketing Research, e-Marketing, Marketing of the Arts, and Sustainable Marketing. This workshop should appeal particularly to professors who include survey projects in their teaching as well as those interested in lower-cost approaches for their own research.

AACSB accreditation standards are shifting from input quality to learning outcome measures (Judge and Elenkov, 2007). New AACSB standards promote active learning, and encourage continuously monitoring and improvement of learning outcomes (Miles, Hazeldine, and Munilla, 2004). Analytical skills, use of information technology, reflective thinking skills and statistical data analysis and management science to support the decision-making process are formulated as learning experiences (AACSB, 2006; Samson and Betters-Reed, 2008). Exercises or assignments

allow students to apply particular statistical techniques (Pirog III, 2010); however, a better understanding of the application and implication of statistics often requires integration of multiple areas of study (Corner 2002). Survey projects allow students to take a project from problem identification through data collection and analysis applying marketing theory to real-world situations. Using statistical packages to analyze survey data allows students to demonstrate not only their knowledge of the software, but also their understanding of statistics in an applied situation. Responsibility for survey design and data collection allows students a very real understanding of some of the complexities of online surveys. Service learning research projects are often undertaken on behalf of non-profit organizations or small businesses—neither of which typically has a budget for research efforts. Therefore, free or low-cost survey options are essential.

In the workshop the panelists share their experiences and examples of guiding students through the process of conducting online marketing research studies. Assuming availability of the Internet in the conference facility, the panelists will demonstrate building the survey online and accessing data for analysis.

References available on request