

Specialist Research

Auditing of Local Government

Project Outline

A State Government Auditing Department was engaged in an audit of Local Government Authorities (Councils), to ascertain the range of support services provided to their communities. This was potentially a long questionnaire that posed problems over the web.

Survey Manager Capabilities

Survey Manager has a special feature called qualified responses that enabled the design of the web form to be streamlined in such a way that responding Councils were only presented with questions that were specific to the services they actually provided. There were 31 possible services that could be provided but in reality no Council provided more than four of these services.

Using this feature of Survey Manager, the Council's were first presented with the list of 31 possible services, and were asked to select the ones they provided. Subsequently they were dynamically presented with only those sections of the overall questionnaire that were relevant to their selections.

This feature is different from a normal skip or jump function often found in web surveys in that it determined the structure of the whole questionnaire in one step.

Research Strategy

Once the questionnaire was designed, the Audit Department supplied a list of Council's to survey. Some of the questions could not be answered by one person and required collaborative effort within each Council. Because the survey was an invitational survey, multiple respondents were able to log into the same questionnaire, and complete their section only.

Outcomes

The result was an efficient survey process that minimised the number of pages a respondent was required to complete. It achieved a high response rate in excess of 90%.

The survey was not a standard employee type survey, but rather it collected a large amount of financial data. Survey Manager provided data validation at the point of collection. This resulted in a clean dataset at the completion of the survey process.

ASR performed statistical analysis of the data and imported the series of tables and graphs into a Word document, which the Audit Department was then able to edit. In addition, we created a custom database with various report templates which enabled the Audit Department to conduct further analysis over time as required.

“Auditing on the web”