

[adjective][species] Survey Instructions

So! You'd like to help out with the [a][s] Census and Survey? Excellent! The survey is designed to be a fully anonymous questionnaire with opt-in personal information section. There's a few things you need to know before you can continue with administering the survey.

Basics

As an anonymous questionnaire, the survey is structured in a very specific way. The survey consists of two parts: the survey itself and a user information sheet. The user information sheet is designed to collect additional information about the respondent, including names (real and pseudonyms), email address, and the possibility of tying this information to the survey responses proper. The survey, on the other hand, contains only questions, with no way to tie that information back to any one person.

This is accomplished via two codes, a "survey code" and a "pass code". These are generated on the survey site on demand singly or in batches. The survey code and pass code come as a pair, both of which are required to key in the survey (more on that later). In order to maintain anonymity, survey responses are known only by their survey code and pass code pair, but if the respondent wishes, they may tie their name and such to the survey by associating their survey code with their personal information by simply writing it in the space provided. While having the information tied to the survey is useful in many respects, it's not required in any way. In fact, no questions, on either the survey or the user info sheet are required.

This is the basics of how the survey works: the respondent will be handed the full packet of survey and user info sheet. They will be given a simplified rundown of the survey, followed by an explanation of the user info sheet. They will fill the user info sheet out to whatever extent they desire, then hand it to you so that you may put it in the user info envelope. Then they may fill out the survey to whatever extent they desire, then hand it to you so that you may put it in the survey response envelope. In this way, you have the information separated until a later time, when you may (depending on the respondent) re-associate the data by finding a user info sheet with a survey code, then placing that with the corresponding survey response. Once you're done collecting as many responses as you would like, you may stop and, at a later date, key in the responses.

It's recommended that you only give out the survey during the daytime after breakfast and before dinner time. This allows you access to most con attendees, and still allows you free time, but if you only wish to work for an hour or so, that's fine! Any surveys collected will be useful.

Interaction

In order to administer the survey to respondents, there are a few guidelines that you must follow when it comes to interacting with those around you in order for this to be taken as a relatively serious sociological study. These can be broken down into interacting with the respondents and interacting with authority.

Respondents

Interacting with respondents can be summed up as “neutral” and “reassuring”. You should be neutral in your affect and your responses, and you should reassure at any point of contact. For example, if the respondent says, “What about this question? I don’t want to fill it out!” you may respond with a neutral, reassuring answer, “None of the questions are required, you do not need to fill it out.” If the respondent asks, “How do I know that the survey is anonymous?” you may explain the process by which information is kept separate and inform them that they may simply not fill in any information on the user info sheet. The goal is to not influence their answers.

As part of giving the survey, you will have to hook respondents in somehow, and we suggest simply asking the potential respondent if they’d like to take part in a survey about the fandom, though there’s no harm in using a bit of gentle humor. *However*, once you have the respondent showing any interest in the survey, you must not badger them in any way. If they take a look at it and say, “Nah, nevermind,” that’s okay, let it go. There will be responses enough. Once they are taking the survey, keep your neutral and reassuring attitude toward them, even if you are also trying to hook others into the survey. When they are finished, thank them for their time and answer any remaining questions that they have for you.

Authority

In most cases, these surveys will be administered in this fashion at conventions. In these instances, the authority is any member of the con staff, hotel staff, or any public authority figure. You must respect the con staff and do exactly as they say and do it with a smile and as politely as possible. If an authority figure tells you to move, you thank them and move. If they tell you to be a little quieter with your hook, acknowledge kindly and be a little quieter.

If an authority figure tells you to stop the survey, however, you will need to do a few more things. If anyone is currently taking the survey, you will have to ask politely if they may finish the survey. If not, then collect those surveys and keep them separate, as they will not be valid. You will then need to get some information from the authority figure. First of all, make note of where they’re from (con staff, hotel staff, etc.). Secondly, ask them if you might be able to continue the survey in another location. If not, then that is okay - if we’re done with the survey, we’re done and there’s no more to it. Contact the administrative lead if you are asked to stop administering the survey. Do not start up the survey again without contacting the administrative lead before hand. It is their job to decide whether or not the survey may still be administered.

If the person is a member of con staff, ask to go speak with them in the con-ops room. There, explain who you are and offer to get in touch with the administrative lead of the survey (likely Makyo), who will have the contacts of all of those involved in administering the survey in order to help straighten things out. If you are the administrative lead, your goal is to make sure that everyone involved in administering the survey may continue on at the convention without the survey. The reason for these steps is that we are seen as a collective entity, and any issue with authority figures risks not only your own attendance, but that of every other person administering the survey.

This all boils down to remembering that, if you are at a convention, the attendees are there to *have a good time*. Your interaction with them should not impose on this, and your interaction with authority figures should not impose on your own fun. Enjoy giving out the survey during your shift and have a ton of fun when not on duty!

Other notes

- Do not administer the survey to someone who is visibly drunk, stoned, or otherwise impaired to where you think that their responses may be compromised.
- Do not administer the survey in any locations specifically disallowed; this is partly common sense - not on the stairs, not by a fire exit, not in the bathrooms - and partly up to con staff. The administrative lead will have more information for you on this, but will mean, basically, stick to the lobbies and hallways (no panel rooms, no dealers den, etc.).
- Do not administer the survey to someone who is not a part of the fandom - i.e.: other hotel guests. Basically, look for a badge.

Keying

Great! You got a bunch of surveys! Now what?

Now comes the neat part - you get to key them in! Sounds boring - sitting in front of a computer typing someone else's bad handwriting into a web form, right? Wrong! Well, yeah, it's half right. You will have to pay close attention to detail and make sure that you enter in the surveys as accurately as possible. Doing two or three at a time would be a good effort, then get up and get a drink, walk around, look at things other than your computer. If you have a lot of surveys and want to key them in long stretches, getting a program such as WorkRave is recommended. These programs will interrupt you every few minutes with a suggestion to look away from the screen and perhaps offer some small exercise to keep you from straining your eyes or hands.

At the top of each survey response will be a sticker with the survey code and pass code on it. First, you will need to find if there is a corresponding user info sheet, and then you may begin keying. On the first screen, enter the survey code and pass code as they appear on the sticker. Next you will be prompted to enter the user info (do not check the "Collect usage information" check box), and then the survey starts. Enter the information as faithfully as possible, including spelling errors and lack of punctuation. If there is an image, describe it very briefly in [brackets]. If a word or section is illegible, note that as [illegible]. When you are done keying your surveys, collect all sheets (even if they are blank user info sheets) to return them to your administrative lead if you are able. If you are not able to return the surveys to your admin lead, destroy them (if you have a shredder, great; if not, tear each in half the long way across text and throw it away).

The neat part about this, though, is that you get to act as amanuensis: you are performing data entry, yes, but that data is passing through your mind as you type it in. If you come across a particularly neat comment, or you start noticing a unique trend, note it down! When you're done keying your surveys in, send these notes to your administrative lead. Not everyone will view responses in the same light, even if a lot of the responses are similar. Having several different sets of eyes working through the data helps to interpret it all the better. Just make sure to take these notes in a text editor or somewhere separate; *do not* modify the data on the survey at all.

Additional notes

If you need to generate additional code pairs for surveys that you have printed you, you must have a staff user on the survey site. If you do not have a staff user, then your admin lead likely does. Staff users may generate code pairs by going to the following URL (for the 2012 survey):

<http://survey.adjectivespecies.com/2012/generateCodePair> - note the capital letters!

On this screen, you may generate either a single code pair or a range of codes. It accepts a prefix, and either a suffix or a range. The suffix should be a number, as should the lower and upper bounds of the range. The convention (hah) is to use a few letters from the event name, the last two digits of the year, and potentially any other information, for instance an identifier number for who is administering the survey, separated by a dash. For example, the code prefix for the administrative lead at Further Confusion 2012 might be FC12-1; or if not using the identifier, just FC12 (a dash will automatically be inserted between the prefix and suffix or range). Using a range will generate a list of codes, such as FC12-1-1, FC12-1-2, FC12-1-3, and so on.

When you enter in the information, you will be shown the code pairs *only once*, so do not navigate away or refresh the page. Have your surveys ready to write them down in the provided spots on the stickers. You will see the survey code in **bold** and the pass code in *italics* - **TEST-CODE** - *ABCD-B2FA*. Note the survey code in the survey code space, and the pass code (which will always be two groups of four letters and numbers separated by a dash) in the pass code space. Make this as legible as possible, or you will not be able to key in the survey!

Remember that you are being trusted with this data by the respondents and [adjective][species]. There may be personal information contained in the surveys that is intended to be anonymous, and there may be contact information on the user info sheet. Enter in everything exactly as it appears on the page, take any notes you need for providing feedback from the responses, and then it passes out of your mind and into...nowhere. You are a representative of a survey designed to gain more information about the furry fandom, and you have the responsibility to be cool about it, yeah? Have fun, get some good data, and don't piss anyone off! :o)

Matthew Scott/Makyo
[adjective][species] guy