

<b>Title:</b>	<b>How to Conduct Behavioural Research over the Internet: A Beginner's Guide to HTML and CGI/Perl</b>
<b>Author:</b>	R Chris Farley
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## Overview

*How to Conduct Behavioural Research Over the Internet* provides a step-by-step guide to creating web-based surveys, as the basis for conducting behavioural research. A website <<http://www.web-research-design.net>> developed in conjunction with the book, contains all the CGI/Perl and HTML files used in the book that can be downloaded from this site. The website is an excellent companion to use alongside the book and there is a brief online quiz for each chapter, as well as a discussion forum, frequently asked questions, links to other relevant sites and an overview of the book including a synopsis of individual chapters.

## Summary of chapters

Chapter 1, 'Introduction' outlines the aims of the book and what the reader will be able to accomplish by reading the book and completing the suggested activities. It provides a basic introduction to the Internet and definitions of key terms and concepts.

Chapter 2, 'Getting Started: A Step-by-Step Guide to Using a Web Server' outlines two ways to obtain access to a web server, either using a professional Web-hosting service or by building a Web server (and explaining how to do this).

Chapter 3, 'HTML Basics: How to Make a Web Page from Scratch' steps the reader through the creation of a web page in hypertext markup language (HTML).

Chapter 4, 'HTML Forms: Collecting Research Data from Participants via the Internet' discusses the use of HTML forms and how these can be used to obtain input/data from Internet users. It provides an overview of

common Web-based input forms such as text boxes, radio buttons, checkboxes and pull-down menus.

Chapter 5, 'An Introduction to CGI Scripting: Using Perl to Automatically Save Response Data to a File' provides an introduction to CGI programming in Perl, the processing and storage of participant data, and the exporting of data to statistical packages. (CGI standards for common gateway interface, a standard for exchanging information between the user computer and the server.)

Chapter 6, 'Providing Customized Feedback to Research Participants' highlights the utility, of using Web-based research methods to provide feedback to participants. It outlines how to create CGI script to analyse and summarise individual participant responses and provide feedback to participants based solely on their own responses or in relation to the response of others.

Chapter 7, 'Randomizing the Order of Stimuli', explains how to use CGI script to randomise the order in which questions/items are presented while still maintaining the ability to process or store data in an organised manner.

Chapter 8, 'Random Assignment of Participants to Conditions', outlines how to assign people randomly to conditions by building on the randomisation techniques discussed in the previous chapter.

Chapter 9, 'Using Multiple Web Pages in Research: Carrying Responses Forward from One Page to the Next' discusses how to transfer/carry forward data collected on one web page to the next web page, through the use of 'hidden' HTML tags. This allows for questions, stimuli or

sets of stimuli to be presented on separate web pages, while retaining the link to data collected on previous pages.

Chapter 10, 'Using Conditional Branching Structures: An Example of "Skip Patterns" in Survey Research', explains how to create conditional branching structures, using CGI script, where questions are presented to participants who meet a condition or set of conditions (e.g. if they are female, if they have children, if they have income over a certain level). Typically referred to as skips or skip patterns, these can be automated through the use of CGI script.

Chapter 11, 'Advanced Feedback: Summarizing Data with Bar Graphs and Two-Dimensional Plots' outlines how to summarise and present research results graphically using a combination of simple, preset images formatted in HTML.

Chapter 12, 'Tracking Participants over Multiple Sessions: PINs, Passwords, and Menus' explains how to store data from different surveys or data collections sessions for later use (e.g. comparisons at different points-in-time) by using personal identification numbers (PINs) and passwords to track respondent data over time.

Chapter 13, 'Measuring Response Times' discusses the contexts in which response times can and cannot be measured effectively over the Internet and provides examples to illustrate ways to assess response times online.

Chapter 14, 'Additional Applications of Perl: Discussion Forums and Scored Tests', discusses the application and use of CGI techniques for use in teaching contexts. It outlines

how to create online discussion forums and online multiple-choice tests that the server automatically grades and track completions and test scores.

Chapter 15, 'Wrapping it Up' concludes with a discussion of a range of miscellaneous but relevant Internet research topics including ethics, server maintenance, security, sampling issues, participant drop out, data quality control, and Web design.

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### **Concluding summary**

This text is a user-friendly, step-by-step guide to creating Web-based surveys and a range of excellent examples and resources are provided in the book as well as on the website.

At the time of being asked to review this book, I had just completed, with two other colleagues, a review of three online survey software packages. We were looking for an online software option that was cost-effective, was relatively straightforward in terms of setting up a survey instrument with an extensive and flexible range of question formats/response forms and most importantly, had excellent 'back-room' capability in terms of its utility and robustness for analysis and reporting.

Despite the clarity of this text I would not recommend that my colleagues build an online survey system to conduct research on

the Internet, as outlined in this book. From the perspective of an evaluation practitioner, there are simpler and less time-consuming solutions, given the range of free or fee-based online survey products and services available.

The real value for practitioners lies not so much in the 'how-to' knowledge the book conveys, but the insight the book provides into understanding the issues that underpin undertaking online surveys (compared with other research methods). The book highlights the relative strengths and limitations of online survey and research methods and the factors to be aware of when designing or undertaking Internet-based research.

The clarity of writing, the format and layout of the chapters and the step-by-step instructional nature also make this an excellent reference text for students, or for use in teaching settings.

that you first read Fraley's (2004) outstanding book *How to Conduct Behavioral Research Over the Internet: A Beginner's Guide to HTML and CGI/Perl*. Our book is aimed one level above Fraley's book, at researchers who want more information on more specific topics and on the numerous new methods (e.g., text analysis) that are constantly being developed to take advantage of emerging research opportunities. The goal of this volume is to present the varied methods in short, practically oriented chapters that will allow investigators to integrate the methods into their own behavioral r... The writer involving *How to Conduct Behavioral Research over the Internet: A Beginner's Guide to HTML and CGI/Perl (Methodology in the Social Sciences)* content conveys the thought easily to understand by lots of people. The printed and e-book are not different in the written content but it just different in the form of it. So , do you even now thinking *How to Conduct Behavioral Research over the Internet: A Beginner's Guide to HTML and CGI/Perl (Methodology in the Social Sciences)* is not loveable to be your top record reading book? Vikki Maynard: Reading a book can be one of a lot of

Designed for researchers with no prior knowledge of programming or web site design, this is an easy-to-follow, step-by-step guide to creating interactive behavioral research instruments online. With this volume, anyone can learn to write programs in HTML and CGI/Perl that will enable them to take full advantage of all the benefits of Internet-based data collection: the abi

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