

## **An Overview of OSR's Survey System**

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**David Radwin  
Office of Student Research, UC Berkeley  
(510) 642-2097  
radwin@berkeley.edu**

OSR's survey system was programmed from scratch in early 2000 in order to create and administer custom web-based surveys. Services like Zoomerang and Survey Monkey did not exist at the time, and alternatives like Cold Fusion required substantial programming expertise and effort for each survey. The system consists of an integrated questionnaire development application and a survey management application, and the programming relies on Perl scripts on a Unix platform.

This system may soon be available to other IR offices in the UC system for a reasonable cost.

### **Advantages of OSR's system**

1. Can be used by non-programmers with modest learning curve
2. The emailing system can be used for other purposes
3. Marginal cost to produce additional survey is small
4. Automatic graphical analysis of unit response patterns (see PDF demonstration)
5. Linkage with institutional data on Oracle server
6. Real-time online reporting of basic results (optionally accessible to non-IR staff with password protection)
7. Frequencies (basic results) automatically formatted nicely in HTML
8. Customizable with additional programming
9. Survey stays on campus server
  - a. Possibly better data security
  - b. Campus emails and links may enhance response rate
10. Creates SPSS, SAS, and Stata data dictionaries (syntax) for variable and value labels
11. Single-screen format makes for quick loading

### **Disadvantages of OSR's system**

1. Significant initial investment of time to program system (start-up cost)
2. Not perfectly reliable—outages and data loss have occurred
3. Does not allow randomization of question order or response options
4. Does not allow questions with required responses
5. Single-screen format makes question branching (logic) a little awkward
6. Email system does not handle HTML perfectly