

READEX REVIEW

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Which Data Collection Method is Best?

Each data collection method has unique advantages and disadvantages that may make one more suitable than another given a certain situation. It's important to look at your specific project and determine which method provides an appropriate balance of your research objectives, available budget, timing requirements, reliability of the data, etc. For example, if you have e-mail addresses for only 50% of your sample, the e-mail method will not provide you with complete or reliable results no matter how economical it is.

The chart below lists considerations when weighing the pros and cons of three data collection methods. Each method is rated as follows for its ability to meet the different study requirements:

★★★★ **very good**
 ★★★ **good**
 ★★ **fair**
 ★ **poor**

	<i>Phone</i>	<i>Mail</i>	<i>e-mail</i>	<i>Personal Interview</i>
<i>If your project requires ...</i>				
quick turnaround	★★★★	★★	★★★★	★
qualification of respondents	★★★★	★	★★★	★★★★
probing of open-ended questions	★★★★	★	★	★★★★
low data collection costs	★★	★★★★	★★★★	★
a lengthy questionnaire	★★	★★★★	★★	★★★★
covering sensitive subject matter	★★	★★★★	★★	★
a large sample size	★	★★★★	★★★★	★
no interviewer bias	★	★★★★	★★★★	★
use of props/visual examples	★	★★★★	★★	★★★★
ease of attaining a representative response rate	★	★★★	★	★
contacting hard to reach people	★	★★★★	★★★	★
less intrusive means of contact	★	★★★★	★★	★



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2251 Tower Drive West
 Stillwater, MN 55082
 tel 651.439.1554
 fax 651.439.1564

www.readexresearch.com