

The Impact of Screen Design on Breakoffs

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Background

- Most Census Bureau web surveys use the following login procedures:
 - URL and Login ID provided in a letter
 - After logging in, arrive at a PIN screen
 - Provides a randomized 4-digit number they can use to log back in
 - Are asked to select a security question in case they forget their PIN
 - Select “Next” to continue to main survey content/questions
- While screens generally have the same content, the layout is not consistent
- Noticed breakoff rates vary on PIN screen across surveys

Measuring Breakoffs

- Breakoff – a case that has a successful login but does not either submit the survey or select ‘Next’ on the last survey question
- Two breakoff metrics
 - Percent of breakoffs =
Total number of breakoffs on screen X/Total number of breakoffs in the survey
 - Breakoffs as a percent of screen visits =
Total number of breakoffs on screen X/Total number of visits to screen X
- Allows us to know where breakoffs are occurring and their relative importance

Pin Screen Breakoffs

- Across nine surveys, the highest percent of breakoffs was on the PIN screen for four surveys
 - Four household surveys
 - 2 general population
 - 2 households with a child
 - Five school surveys
 - 1 teachers
 - 4 principals and/or school coordinator
- One survey had the PIN Screen having the highest percent of breakoffs and as a percent of screen visits
 - Percent of breakoffs - 39.7% compared to 1.7% - 22.3% (most around 13%)
 - Percent of visits - 7.7% compared to 0.1% - 1.7%

Example PIN Screen

Information provided on all PIN Screens:

- Note PIN
- PIN
- Session Expiration
- Security question/answer

The screenshot shows a PIN screen with the following content:

- A green arrow icon followed by the text: "Please make note of the PIN below."
- A green arrow icon followed by the text: "It will allow you to log back into the survey if the session times out or you need to stop and come back later. The session will time out if left idle for more than 15 minutes. This survey will take approximately 40 minutes to complete."
- The PIN "8814" displayed in red text.
- A green arrow icon followed by the text: "Please select a security question to answer. If you forget your PIN, you will be asked to provide this answer to re-enter the survey."
- A label "Security Question:" above a dropdown menu containing the text "Please select a verification question." and a downward arrow icon.
- A label "Answer:" above a large, empty text input field.
- A green button with the text "Next" and a right-pointing arrow.

Information inconsistently displayed:

- Survey duration
- Inability to reset PIN if forgotten
- Responses saved and returning where left off
- Data won't be lost
- Alignment and color of PIN

Additional Examples of PIN Screens

- Please make note of the 4-digit PIN below.
- It will allow you to log back into the survey if the session times out or you need to stop and come back later. The session will time out if left idle for more than 15 minutes. This survey will take approximately 22 minutes to complete.

PIN: 8958

- For your security, we will not be able to reset the PIN if lost or forgotten.
- Please select a survey question to answer. If you forget your PIN, you will be asked to provide this answer to re-enter the survey.

Security Question: 

Answer:

Next

Please make note of the PIN below.

It will allow you to log back into the  if the session times out or you wish to access the  at a later date. This survey will take approximately 20 minutes to complete.

PIN: 6989

Please select a security question to answer. If you forget your PIN, you will be asked to provide this answer to re-enter the survey. Please note: Sessions will expire (requiring you to log back in) after 15 minutes of inactivity. No data will be lost.

Security Question: 

Answer:

Next >

Please make note of the PIN below.

It will allow you to log back into the survey where you left off if the session times out or you need to stop and come back later. The session will time out if left idle for more than 15 minutes. Your answers are saved after each screen.

PIN: 6507

Please select a security question to answer. If you forgot your PIN, you will be asked to provide this answer to re-enter the survey.

Security Question: 

Answer:

Next

PIN Screen with High Breakoffs (Survey of Schools)

Please make note of the 4-digit PIN below.

This PIN is required to log back into the [REDACTED] after the session times out or you wish to access the [REDACTED] at a later date.

PIN: 1268

Please select a security question to answer. If you forget your PIN, you will be asked to provide this answer to re-enter the survey.

Please note: Sessions will expire (requiring you to log back in) after 15 minutes of inactivity. No data entered on completed pages will be lost.

Security Question:

Response:

PIN not bolded, does not stand out

Unnecessary blank space

Font size inconsistent

Conclusions

- Respondents seem to notice formatting and make decisions based on the look of survey screens
 - Content the same across PIN screens
- Ensure screens look clean and polished
- Keep consistent spacing and font size
- Use bolding and color to call out important information

Thank you!

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