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Topic: - Questionnaires

A Questionnaire is a research instrument consisting of a series of questions for the purpose of gathering information from respondents. The questionnaire was invented by the statistical society of London in 1838.

Although questionnaires are often designed for statistical analysis of the responses, this is not always the case.

Questionnaires have advantages over some other types of surveys in that they are cheap, do not require as much effort from the questioner as verbal or telephone surveys, and often have standardized answers that make it seem simple to compile data. However, such standardized answers may frustrate users as the possible answers may not accurately represent their desired responses. Questionnaires are also sharply limited by the fact that respondents must be able to read the questions and respond to them. Thus, for some demographic groups conducting a survey by questionnaire may not be concrete.

Types of questionnaires

There are two main types of questionnaires and the one you'll use depends on what kind of information you want and purpose of that information.

1) Exploratory Questionnaire (Qualitative)

They are also known as unstructured questionnaires. They're used to collect qualitative data which is information that can be observed and recorded but isn't numerical in nature. It's used to approximate and characterize.

An example of qualitative data would be someone giving you feedback about your writing. They may mention things about the tone, clarity, word choice etc. it helps you categorize your writing but you can't attach a number to the feedback.

Exploratory questionnaires are ideal when you're in the early stages and want to learn more about a topic before designing a solution or hypothesis. For example, if you're in the early stages of product development and

don't know enough about the market then exploratory questionnaires are ideal.

2) Formal standardized questionnaire (quantitative) — They're also known as structured questionnaires. These ones are used to collect quantitative data which is information recorded as a count or numerical value.

The data is quantifiable which means it can be used for mathematical calculations or statistical analysis. In essence, it answers the question of how much, how many, or how often.

An example of quantitative data would be the answer to the following question "how old are you?" which requires a numerical reply.

Standardized questionnaires are best used when you've already formed an initial hypothesis or built out a prototype for a product. You'll use it to stress test your assumptions, designs, use cases, etc. before going further with product development, because of its clear focus the questions you ask are narrow in scope and solicit specific information
