



Gathering Data: Tools, Tips & Best Practices

Welcome to Week 5 of our course, where we'll explore effective data collection techniques. This presentation will guide you through selecting appropriate methods, designing instruments, utilizing digital tools, and ensuring ethical practices in your research process.

Primary vs Secondary Data

Primary Data

Information collected first hand specifically for your research purpose

- Surveys and questionnaires
- Interviews and focus groups
- Observations and experiments
- Field notes and recordings

Secondary Data

Pre-existing information collected for other purposes

- Published research papers
- Government reports and statistics
- Organizational records
- Archived datasets

A woman with red hair is sitting at a desk, working on a laptop. She is wearing a white blazer. On the desk, there are several colorful sticky notes (pink, yellow, green, purple) and a glass mug of tea. A small potted plant is also on the desk. The background is a soft, out-of-focus interior with a lamp and curtains.

Designing Effective Questionnaires

1 Structure & Flow

Begin with simple questions and progress to complex ones. Group related questions together and create a logical flow from start to finish.

2 Question Types

Balance closed-ended (multiple choice, Likert scales) with open-ended questions. Each serves different analytical purposes.

3 Clear Language

Avoid jargon, double-barreled questions, and leading language. Questions should be unambiguous and easily understood by participants.

Creating Effective Interview Guides

Define Research Objectives

Clearly identify what information you need to gather and how it relates to your research questions.

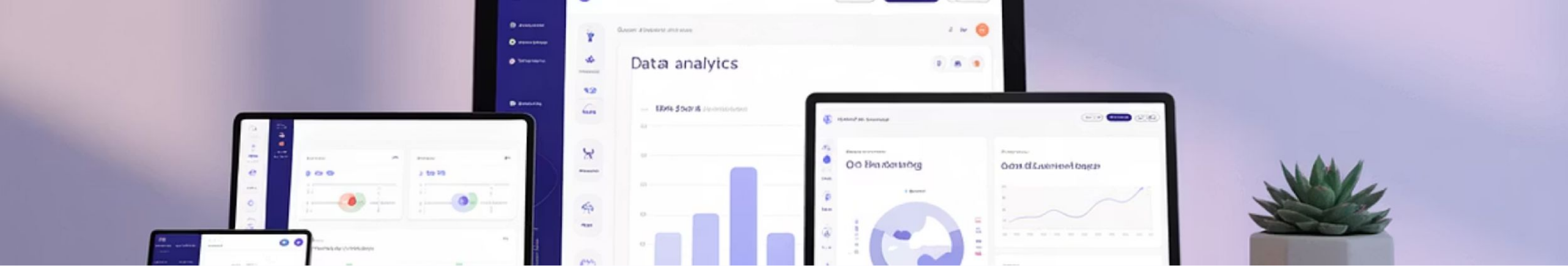
Develop Question Framework

Create a semi-structured outline with core questions and potential follow-ups to guide the conversation.

Consider Participant Experience

Design a comfortable flow from rapport-building to more in-depth questions, ending with space for additional comments.





Digital Tools for Data Collection

H Google Forms

Free, user-friendly platform for creating surveys with automatic data compilation in spreadsheets. Best for simple surveys with basic branching logic.

o SurveyMonkey

Robust survey platform with advanced features like skip logic, randomization, and built-in analytics. Offers both free and premium options.

Q NVivo

Specialized software for qualitative data analysis, helping organize, analyze and find insights in unstructured data like interviews and open-ended responses.

Excel

Versatile tool for data organization, basic analysis, and visualization. Useful for managing structured data and performing statistical calculations.

Pilot Testing Your Instruments

Why Pilot Test?

- Identify ambiguous or confusing questions
- Test technical functionality of digital tools
- Estimate completion time
- Assess if data collected meets research needs

Improvement Process

1. Select small sample similar to target population
2. Collect feedback on instrument clarity and usability
3. Analyze preliminary data for patterns
4. Revise and retest if necessary

Ethical Data Storage & Management

Security

Use password protection, encryption, and secure servers to protect sensitive information from unauthorized access.



Retention

Follow institutional guidelines for how long to keep data and proper procedures for eventual disposal.



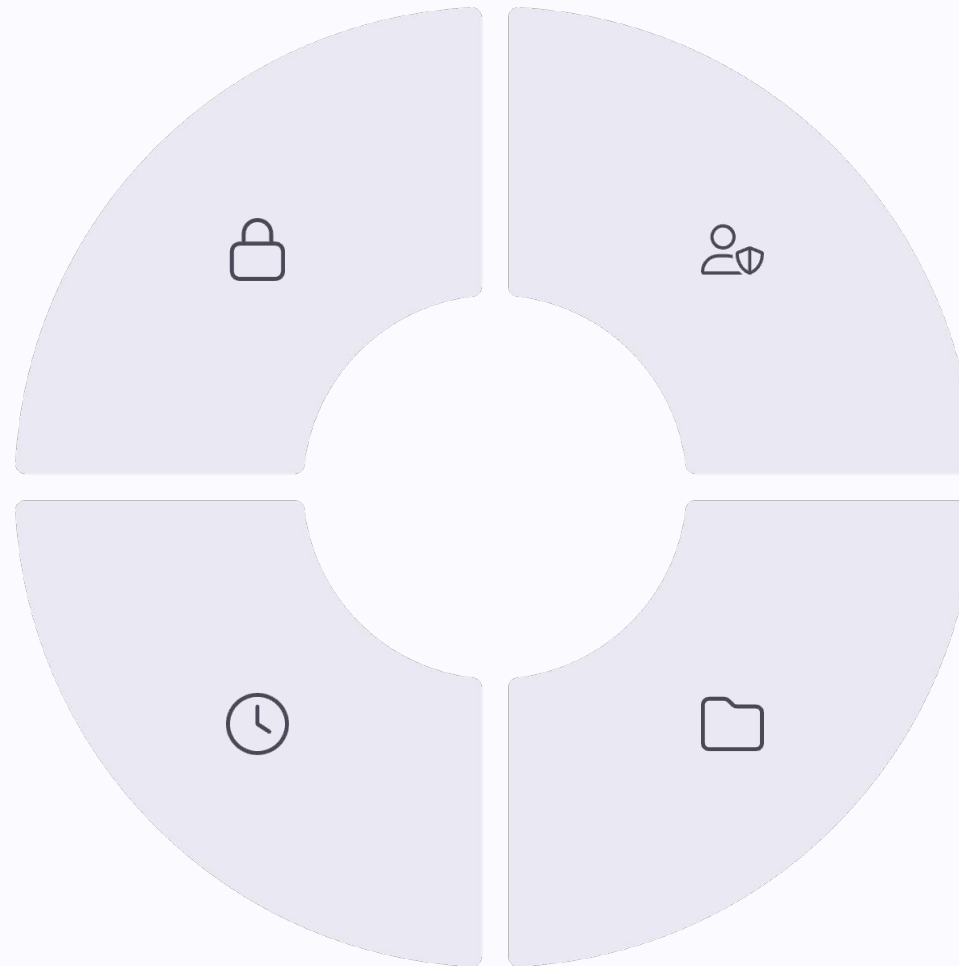
Confidentiality

Remove identifying information when possible and use coding systems to protect participant identities.



Organization

Maintain consistent file naming conventions and clear documentation of collection procedures.





Supervisor Checkpoint #1: Progress Expectations

1

Completed

- Research question formulation
- Literature review draft
- Methodology selection

2

Current Stage

- Data collection instrument design
- Pilot testing preparation
- Ethics application submission

3

Next Steps

- Finalize instruments based on feedback
- Begin participant recruitment
- Schedule data collection timeline