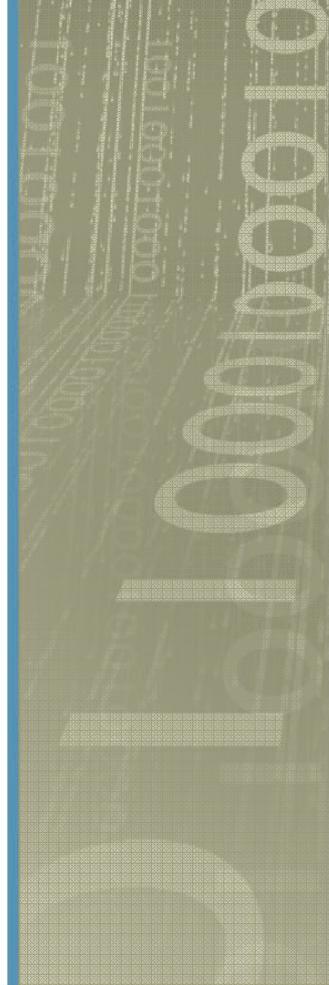


# Survey Data Collection for Impact Evaluation

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# Assumptions of this presentation

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- We're planning a prospective analysis
- Survey data from beneficiaries and control group(s) will be at least one of our methods for gathering information about program impact\*

\* Process/implementation data should be gathered throughout the intervention

# Before we begin...

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- Survey data collection can be expensive
- BUT it isn't as expensive as carrying on programs that are not effective. The long term savings of conducting a thorough impact evaluation with a well-thought out and properly conducted data collection are immeasurable in social terms.
- High quality data is vital to conducting an effective impact evaluation

# Survey Data Collection for Impact Evaluation

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- Begin evaluation plan at earliest stage of the funded project
- Know your population: craft a sensible sample plan (are you interested in subpopulations? Plan to oversample)
- Design a data collection strategy that considers your environment
- Save time, money and pain: test your questionnaire
- Interviewer training is directly related to data quality

# Sample Plan

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- Often, sample frame is all eligible applicants to the program
- Assignment to treatment or control is random given scarcity of the intervention
- Sample size based on precision estimates and power calculations (Lead Evaluator determines)
- Oversample subpopulations of interest

# Data Collection Plan

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- Plan is determined by:
  - Type and timing of intervention
  - Sample size
  - Geographic distribution of sample
  - Budget
  - Feasibility of survey mode (e.g. Paper and Pencil vs. Computer-Assisted)

# Asking Questions

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- What do you want to know?
  - Tailor your survey to capture outcomes of interest
- Use reliable and valid instruments
  - Be careful: what's reliable and valid in one cultural and linguistic context may not be so in another
- Questionnaire/instrument is key

# Best Practices for Questionnaires

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- Define your topics and concepts
- Question order matters
- Keep it short and make it user-friendly
- Phrase questions clearly
- Use established techniques to minimize respondent mistakes (e.g. calendars for event histories)

# Best Practices for Questions I

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- A good question is understood consistently by all respondents
- A good question is administered consistently to all respondents
- A good question elicits the kind of answers the researcher wants:
  - badQ: When did you move to Cairo?
    - A: In 1964
    - A: When I was 20 years old
    - A: After I finished college
  - betterQ: In what YEAR did you move to Cairo?

# Best Practices for Questions II

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- A good question is one for which respondents have the necessary knowledge to answer (asking a good question of the wrong person is a source of error in your data)
- A good question is one for which the respondent is willing to provide the 'true' answer (we'll talk about sensitive questions later)

# Best Practices for Questions III

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- Ask about first hand experience
- Ask one question at a time
  - badQ: Are you physically able to do things like walk or carry a full water bucket without difficulty?
  - betterQ: Are you physically able to carry a full water bucket without difficulty?

# Best Practices for Sensitive Questions

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- Use open questions for frequencies of undesirable behavior
- Design long questions but short instrument
- Use familiar words (know local terms)
- Ask 'have you ever done x' before asking 'are you currently doing x' for socially undesirable behavior
- Embed threatening questions in a list of more or less threatening topics

# Questionnaire Development

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- The survey researchers' axiom:
  - Everyone thinks they can design a questionnaire
- Plan the questionnaire development to include your evaluation research team and an experienced survey research organization

# Finalizing the questionnaire

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- Evaluate your questions
  - Conduct focus groups
  - Conduct cognitive testing
- Evaluate your questionnaire and procedures
  - Conduct full field pretest
- Revise questionnaire and procedures

# From Questionnaire to Data Collection

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- Recruit interviewers carefully
- Train interviewers thoroughly
  - Initial contact
  - Gaining cooperation
  - Avoiding bias
  - Question by question training and testing
- Build in quality checks such as frequency reviews and validations

# High Quality Data Collection

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- Monitor your sample carefully
- Maximize response rates:
  - Send advance letters
  - Schedule visits or calls sensibly
  - Follow up with non-respondents
  - Consider incentives
  - Gather locating data for follow up
- Document your procedures

# Who Are Your Respondents?

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- Different respondents require different techniques, e.g. youth are a tough crowd:
  - Often mobile
  - Not always well informed
  - Require special consent procedures
  - Cagery about socially undesirable behavior
  - Can have low literacy levels

# The Nuts and Bolts of Data Collection: Where Are You Administering Survey?

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- Household
- School
- Workplace
- Other central location
- Point of contact

# The Nuts and Bolts of Data Collection: How Will You Capture the Data?

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- Self Administered Questionnaire (SAQ)
- Telephone (CATI, RDD)
- Paper and pencil (PAPI)
  - Data entry
  - Scannable forms
- Computer Assisted Personal Interview (CAPI)
- Audio Computer Assisted Self Interview (ACASI)

# Audio Computer Assisted Self Interview

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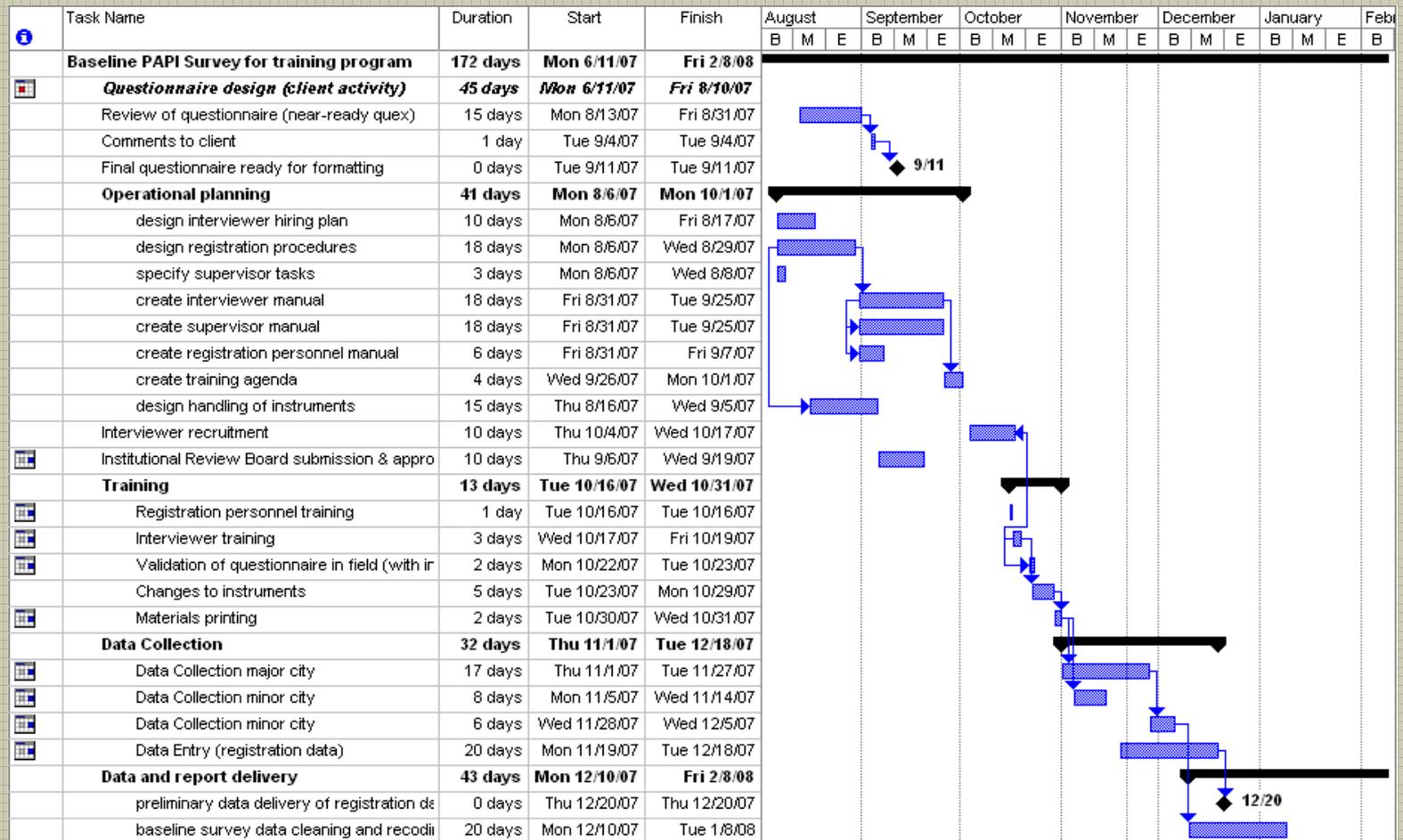
- Maximizes respondent confidentiality
- Improves response rates
- Can be multi-lingual
- Eliminates data entry time and error
- Useful with low-literacy populations
- [FPS Demo Quex.Ink](#)

# How Will You Ensure Confidentiality?

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- Research design should include human subjects protections
- Design research protocols to mask identifiable data
- Create respondent consent procedures
- Emphasize confidentiality while:
  - Training interviewers
  - Capturing the data
  - Transmitting and storing the data

# Sample Project Plan: 30 minute PAPI



# High Quality Data: Key Considerations

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1. Data collection is expensive: choose your mode wisely
  - PAPI may be preferable to CAPI
2. Build a realistic schedule with time for questionnaire development, testing, training and adjustments

# High Quality Data: Key Considerations

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3. Train interviewers in general survey methods first, project-specific methods second, then test them
4. Pretest entire data collection plan and leave time for adjustments
5. Use automated and manual data quality checks throughout data collection period

# Questions?

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## NORC at the University of Chicago

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