

 <p>RHODE ISLAND COLLEGE</p> <p>OFFICIAL PRACTICE</p>	<p><i>Institutional Research & Planning Assistance with Administering Electronic Surveys</i></p>	<p>EFFECTIVE DATE: 2014/03/11</p> <p>REVISION HISTORY: <i>new practice</i></p>
<p>RESPONSIBLE OFFICE: <u>Institutional Research & Planning</u></p>	<p>POLICY OWNER: <u>Institutional Research & Planning</u></p>	<p>SUPERSEDES: N/A</p>

Institutional Research & Planning (IRP) offers assistance to Rhode Island College faculty and staff conducting electronic surveys that have been approved via the [Survey Research Policy](#). Clients should bear in mind the following when seeking such assistance:

- A. IRP will only assist with surveys that have been approved via RIC’s Survey Research Policy.
- B. IRP has a professional account with [Survey Monkey](#), a software package used to develop and deploy electronic surveys to large numbers of people.
- C. In order to ensure the confidentiality of all results of past surveys undertaken through the IRP Survey Monkey account, IRP will not give out its account access information to clients . Instead, IRP will manage the survey for the client. Consequently, clients must understand and accept that IRP will have access to the results of their survey. These results will be maintained under strict rules of confidentiality.
- D. Clients are responsible for providing IRP with an electronic copy of the survey that IRP will convert to the conventions and requirements of Survey Monkey.
- E. Clients must decide on the method of survey administration. Surveys conducted through Survey Monkey can be administered in a number of ways, including:
 1. A weblink can be developed, copied, and pasted into an e-mail that the client sends through an Outlook account. With this method, all survey recipients receive the same link, and it is not possible to determine who has responded to the survey, unless identifying information is asked for within the survey itself.
 2. Survey Monkey can create a customized link for every survey recipient. IRP will enter e-mail and other identifying information into Survey Monkey for each survey recipient and insert the survey “cover letter” into Survey Monkey’s e-mail generator. The e-mail is then sent directly from Survey Monkey. The advantage of this approach is that it is possible to track who has responded to the survey without having to ask for identifying information on the survey itself. In addition, any problems that might come with sending many e-mails out through Outlook are avoided. The main disadvantage of this approach is that it is difficult to customize the appearance of the cover letter that is sent with the survey, as it appears as a .txt file. This format may not be as effective in encouraging responses from survey recipients.

3. A third approach that allows tracking of survey respondents and customization of the appearance of the e-mail is to create unique links for each student and “mail merge” these into individual e-mails through Outlook. This approach requires IRP to assign each survey recipient a passcode that is appended to their survey link. This process can be accomplished relatively easily in Microsoft Excel. The main disadvantages of this third approach are 1.) it is slightly more labor intensive than the other two approaches; 2.) the weblinks tend to be long; and 3.) savvy survey recipients can remove the passcode at the end of a weblink and still respond to the survey. In this case, it would not be possible to identify the respondent. Note, however, that responding to a survey after removing a passcode is extremely rare.
- F. If approach “2” or “3” is chosen, clients must provide IRP with the following information:
1. Names and contact information for the individuals or groups to which the survey will be administered.
 2. A timeline for administering the survey. What will be the cutoff date for responding? Will there be follow ups? If so, how many and when will they occur?
 3. Content of any correspondence that is to be sent to the survey target group (e.g., the initial invitation e-mails, follow-ups).
- G. Once a survey has been administered, IRP will “close” it and send a file of the survey’s raw data back to the client for analysis. These data can be in Excel, SPSS, or comma delimited formats.
- H. When time and resources allow, IRP is willing to provide assistance in analyzing results of the survey.