Australian Library and Information Association

ALIA Survey Protocols

Background
It is important to consider the ethical implications of conducting a survey. Much of the research conducted in library and information science would be classed as 'low risk'*. However, it is the responsibility of the researcher and ALIA to ensure that any research undertaken by or on behalf of ALIA meets national ethical guidelines. See also the ALIA Privacy Policy. https://www.alia.org.au/privacy

Participants
Recruitment of survey participants must not involve coercion. When appropriate, consent may need to be sought at both an individual and at an organisational level. Participation must be voluntary. If contact details are needed, the researcher must have authorised access to the contact details of participants. See the references section to access a copy of the NHMRC *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research*.

Participants must be given a Survey information sheet, (see example below) unless they are, for example, young school children, or if it is culturally inappropriate. A consent form (see information below) may not be required if participation is completely anonymous (no personal details recorded) and information is not sensitive (eg unlikely to cause embarrassment, pain, distress, emotional or spiritual discomfort). A template for an introductory email is also provided below.
All surveys, internal and external undertaken by or on behalf of ALIA must have approval from the ALIA CEO. enquiry@alia.org.au

Introductory email template

Introductory paragraph: Describe who you are eg I am the convenor of [ ] ALIA Group.

Who is the survey for? I am looking for responses from the person responsible for [ ] in your library. The survey is anonymous but there is a separate form to leave contact details if you would like a copy of the results.

How long will it take? The survey should only take you around **15 to 20 minutes** to complete.

When do I need to do it by? The survey closes on **30 May 2020**

How do I do it? Just click on the text below which will take you to the survey: Link to survey

Many thanks in advance for your participation.

Survey participant information sheet template

Survey Title [ ]

Survey organiser or researcher [ ]

Permission is sought to gather and use the data from the responses

Who is the survey for?[Description]

What is the purpose of the survey?[Description including: ALIA has approved this survey and it complies with the ALIA Survey protocols and Privacy policy]

What will participation involve?[Anticipated time to complete]

Will the information provided be confidential?[Describe how anonymity guaranteed]

What if I do not wish to complete the survey?[Completing the survey is voluntary. If at any time you do not wish to complete the survey you may close the browser window]

What will happen with the information I provide?[eg The data will be written up as part of a report and will go to the ALIA Board of Directors]

Who do I talk to if I have questions about the survey?[If you have any questions or would like to receive further information about the project, please contact [email address and phone number]

Consent form

A consent form would normally include the details listed below:

Title of project

Statements of confirmation, such as:

- 'I have been informed of and understand the purposes of the study.'
- 'I have been given an opportunity to ask questions.'
- 'I understand I can withdraw at any time without prejudice.'
- 'Any information which might potentially identify me will not be used in published material.'
- 'I agree to participate in the study as outlined to me.'

Name of participant, signature and date

Notes for researchers
Research that involves low or negligible risk is research where participants have the potential to suffer no harm, but where there is potential to suffer only inconvenience or discomfort. (See National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research link above).

There is no objective measure of risk that covers all situations. Different people interpret harm and risk in different ways. When considering the harm that may result from your research (for participants, researchers, the public, etc) take into account the following types of harm: psychological, physical, privacy infringement, labelling (reputation), economic.

Confidentiality: The applicant must indicate in detail how confidentiality and privacy will be maintained. For example, what procedures and safeguards will be employed. A simple statement of intent to maintain confidentiality is not sufficient.

Anonymous/identifiable: Researchers have a responsibility to take all reasonable steps to protect participants' privacy and to inform participants fully, prior to participation, of any possible risks regarding identification in published material. Researchers should give participants the opportunity to review draft material before it is published, including interview transcripts, to further ensure that the rights and privacy of participants are protected.

Recruitment: The applicant must demonstrate that there is no possibility of undue influence on potential participants (eg power relations such as that between librarian and client).

Risks/benefits: The proposed benefits of the study must outweigh any potential risk, and any such risks to participants must be minimised and fully communicated to participants before consent is obtained.

Invasive surveys: Any proposals involving invasive surveys (eg cause discomfort, embarrassment, etc) should automatically be referred to ALIA in order to be vetted by a suitably qualified expert.

External institutional approval: Proposals that require external institutional approval (eg approval from institutions associated with the research) must attach confirmation of that institution's ethics approval.

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