



Online Forms/Surveys...

How to Create an Online Survey using Google Documents ... for FREE

Many of us have completed online surveys or feedback questionnaires. Often these sorts of surveys are created by research marketing organizations on behalf of retail or service companies. Other times they may be custom developed using dynamic HTML or scripting languages. But you don't need to contract with a research firm or understand HTML in order to create a professional online survey. In fact, you can build your own survey without spending any money, and with very little effort and time. In this article, we'll explore creating an online survey using Google Documents, a feature rich environment for creating documents, spreadsheets, presentations, and now... survey forms! Google Documents is completely FREE and the new survey/forms feature is a wonderful tool that allows anyone to easily reach out for online feedback without spending a dime. If you require more complex formatting or more sophisticated reporting of survey results, have a look at my eHow article on creating Online Surveys using Survey Monkey (see Related eHow Articles, or see My Other Articles). SurveyMonkey offers a basic service plan for free, and offers very affordable plans if your needs extend beyond their basic plan.

Difficulty: Moderately Easy

Instructions

Things You'll Need:

Computer with Internet connection

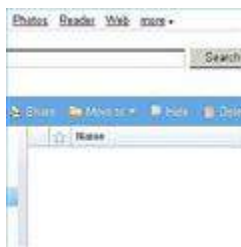
Draft/idea of your survey questions and responses



Login to Google

Google Documents is part of the Google family of products, including Gmail. If you already have setup a Google account for any other purpose (even to customize the Google search page), you have all you need. Otherwise, you'll need to create a new Google account. This is free, of course. You may create an account from many places, but since this article is going to focus on Google Documents, point your browser to <http://documents.google.com> (or just click the "Documents" link from any Google search page).

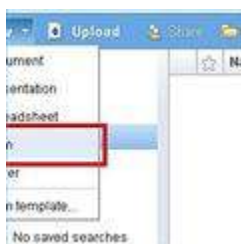
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Documents Home

Once you've created a Google account and have pointed your browser to Google Documents, the Documents home page will be displayed. While this article will focus just on the Forms feature (for online surveys), note that Google Documents provides a feature rich suite of applications for creating documents (compatible with MS-Word), spreadsheets (compatible with MS-Excel), and presentations (compatible with PowerPoint).

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New Form...

To begin a new online survey, click "Form" from the "New" menu. Note that you may choose from a predefined template by selecting "From Template...".

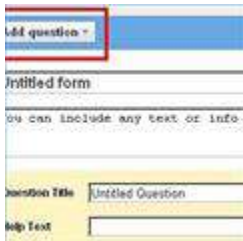
4



Form Title

Enter a Title or name for the form (or survey). Also, provide a Description. This is optional, but will appear above all questions. This is useful for providing instructions to users on completing your survey.

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Add Question...

Your new survey form will have one question block already in place, ready for you to customize. You may add as many questions as needed by clicking "Add Question" at the upper left of the window.

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Question and Answers

For each question, enter the question Title. Optionally, enter help text that may be helpful to users completing your survey. Finally, select the Type of question (Text, Multiple Choice, etc.), and indicate whether the question is required (forces users to enter a response).

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When you hover over a question with the mouse pointer, you'll see small icons appear to the right that allow you to either Edit, Copy, or Delete the question.

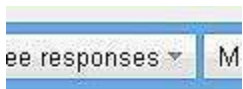
8



Move and Re-order...

You may move questions to reorder your survey by simply dragging the question and dropping to the desired location.

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Save Survey

As you enter questions, and once you complete your work, click "Save" at the upper right of the window to save the form.

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Survey Confirmation

To edit the confirmation window that is offered to users after completing your survey, click "Edit Confirmation" from the "More Actions" menu.

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Survey Link

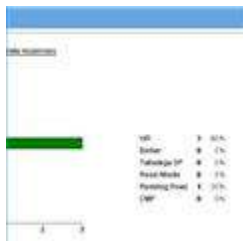
To distribute your survey, you may either click "Email this Form" on the menu bar (this generates an e-mail with the link to your survey form), or click "Embed" from the "More Actions" menu. Google displays a URL that you may copy/paste into your e-mail or to use on your web page.

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While editing a survey form, you may view responses by clicking "See Responses" on the menu bar. Click "Summary" to view statistics for each of your questions.

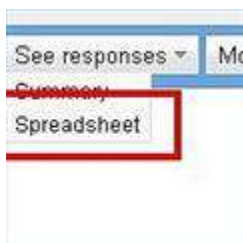
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Responses Summary

The Summary display offers statistics and charts for all responses.

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Google Documents collects all responses and stores them in a Google Documents Spreadsheet. You may toggle the view to this raw spreadsheet data by clicking "Spreadsheet" from the "See Responses" tab.

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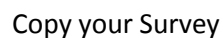


Survey data

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That's it! Google Documents provides a very easy way to create a basic online form or survey. If you require a more sophisticated solution with more types of questions, more formatting control, and more sophisticated collection and reporting of results, have a look at SurveyMonkey (see link to my eHow article in Related eHow Articles, or see My Other Articles).