

Using the internet for psychological testing

November 2006

Aims

- Highlight the advantages and disadvantages of using web-based methods for data collection
- To encourage you to consider ways in which the internet could be used to help your research

Assessment

- 2 page report describing a study that could be conducted online
- Should demonstrate awareness of pros and cons of web-based testing
- Should focus on the practical aspects of the study rather than the scientific rationale behind the hypotheses etc

Reading

- Hewson (2003) Conducting research on the internet
- Kraut et al (2004) Psychological research online
- <http://facelab.org/bcjones/Teaching/>
- username + password are both the word **faces**

Outline

- Advantages of web-based testing
- Disadvantages of web-based testing
- Consent & data cleaning
- Discussion of case study

Advantages of web-based testing

- Low cost
- Saves time
- Can recruit subjects it can be hard to get into the lab
- Can get very large samples easily
- Can recruit wider range of subjects

Advantages of web-based testing

- Can incorporate aspects of dissemination
- Can form basis of interactive exhibits
- Can undertake cross-cultural comparisons
- Can add data directly into a database (i.e. easy data processing and archiving)
- Can ensure that lab studies target successful projects

Disadvantages of web-based testing

- Not suitable for all testing
- Data *may* be noisier
- 'Frivolous responses' (but can be more of a problem in the lab)
- Knee-jerk suspicion by other scientists
- Can be time consuming to set up initially
- Lack of control over some variables (e.g. viewing distance)

Consent and data cleaning

- Hewson discusses some of the issues surrounding consent in online tests
- Kraut et al discuss appropriate methods for data cleaning (e.g. removal of duplicate ip addresses)