Survey Management Systems

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Overview

- Purpose of Survey Management Systems

- Core Management Capabilities

- COTS vs. Custom Solutions

- Security

- Summary

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Purpose

Provides centralized management and operation support capabilities to study managers; enabling them to conduct, monitor, track and report on the status of survey participants and other survey related activities

Core Management Capabilities

- Sample Management

- User Management

- Task and Workflow Management

- Respondent Notification

- Survey Management Reports

- Data Management

Sample Management

- Loads sample and other administrative data from external sources

- Supports various survey sample sizes and types

- Manages the assignment of unique identifiers

- Supports relationships within and between study participants (hierarchical or relational)

- Supports the assignment and management of study participants to cohorts, waves or release groups

Sample Management - Continued

- Provides user interfaces that support:

  - Simple and advanced searches

  - Drill down functionality to view detail information on study participants

  - Supports updates to study participant information (e.g. address, phone, email addresses)

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User Management

- Securely stores and manages login credentials (e.g. user IDs and passwords) for all system users

- Supports the assignment of roles to system users and authorizes user access to management functionality based on role

- Authenticates users (e.g. survey respondents, project staff or clients staff)

- Launches appropriate survey instrument to the respondent

- Tracks and logs all user login activity within the system

Task / Workflow Management

- Defines and assigns tasks to study participants that need to be tracked (e.g. pre-note, opt-out post cards, web surveys)

- Records and interprets status codes for each defined task

- Controls the execution of subsequent tasks based on status code values (e.g. when administering multiple surveys to a respondent)

- Exchanges status codes and respondent information with other data collection modes (e.g. CATI, Paper)

Respondent Notification

- Provides mail-merge capability for sending personalized email invitations and follow-up reminders

- Sends notifications in batch groups and can send email in timed intervals (e.g. 10,000 email /hr)

- Supports document attachments to email (e.g. forms, hardcopy surveys)

- Tracks and stores all sent emails, number of contact attempts within the system

Survey Management Reports

- Provides real-time survey status reports or near real-time depending on other modes of collection

- Provides survey item level reports (e.g. one and two-way frequencies by item, charts)

- Report data can be exported into other software (e.g. Excel, CSV, PDF, HTML) for distribution to clients

Data Management

- Utilizes scheduled jobs, stored procedures, other automation to import or export data to support integration with

    - Other modes of data collection (e.g. CATI or Paper)

    - Other survey administrative tasks (e.g. incentive payments)

    - Backend support systems

        - (e.g. data reconciliation, data cleaning, data analysis and data delivery)

Other Functional Capabilities

- Receipt control
  - Allows operations staff to receipt hardcopy materials or surveys returned by mail

  - Assigns disposition codes to hardcopy materials (e.g. PNDs, blank, deceased, ineligible etc.)

- Help Desk

  - Respond to email inquiries

  - Troubleshoot technical issues / problems

  - Track and record issues / comments

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COTS vs. Custom

- COTS
  - Excellent choice for simple survey administrations
  - Provides out-of-the-box functionality
  - Integrated management capabilities
  - Vendor supported

- Custom
  - Used to support large complex survey administrations
  - Customize and enhance functionality/capabilities to meet specific project requirements
  - Integrates with different survey software, other support systems and backend processes

Security

- Role based authorization
  - To control access to management functionality, user interfaces, PII information /data, application and database
  - Several different types of users accessing the system –want to make sure the right people see the right stuff

- Strong User Credential Management
  - Require strong passwords
  - Expire passwords, Limit # login attempts – does not apply to survey respondents
  - Periodically review system user roles and access privileges

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Security

- User Training
  - Train users on proper use of information/data, data management procedures

- Application
  - Use SSL/TLS to encrypt connection between browser and application
  - Deploy SMS as a Intranet application instead of Internet application
  - Limit PII / sensitive information available in the system

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Security

- Test and Monitor
  - Perform functional tests, vulnerability tests before deploying system into production

  - Monitor the availability of the web site

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Summary

- Centralized management and operational support for survey managers

- Enables survey managers to monitor, track and report on all survey related activities

- Provide management capabilities such as Sample, User, Task, Reporting and Data management

- COTS products are an excellent choice for surveys with simple operational requirements

- Custom SMS applications provide more flexibility and can be extended to support more complex operational requirements

- Security is very important - SMS's often manage and store confidential and PII information