


# A Litany of Pet Peeves

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**Human  
Computer  
Interaction**

# Make answers mutually exclusive

How many days per week do you wear socks?

- 0-1
- 1-2
- 2-3
- 3-4
- 4-5

BAD

How many days per week do you wear socks?

- 0-1
- 2-3
- 4-5
- 6-7

GOOD



# Don't make them reach for their calculators

How many hours a year do you use the Internet?

BAD

How many hours a day do you use the Internet?

GOOD

How many hours a week do you use the Internet?



# Provide a neutral option on the Likert scale

Cold pizza is good for breakfast.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

BAD

Cold pizza is good for breakfast.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

GOOD



# Make it clear when the respondent can provide multiple answers

Which flavor of ice cream do you like?

- Vanilla
- Chocolate
- Strawberry

Which pizza toppings do you like?

- Pepperoni
- Cheese
- Sausage
- Anchovies

Which flavor of ice cream do you like? *(Choose one.)*

- Vanilla
- Chocolate
- Strawberry

Which pizza toppings do you like? *(Choose all that apply.)*

- Pepperoni
- Cheese
- Sausage
- Anchovies

BAD

GOOD



# Don't provide so many options that it's difficult to choose

What is your favorite color?

- |                                |                                |                                    |                                |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> Amaranth | <input type="radio"/> Blue     | <input type="radio"/> Cyan         | <input type="radio"/> Green    |
| <input type="radio"/> Amber    | <input type="radio"/> Brown    | <input type="radio"/> Emerald      | <input type="radio"/> Indigo   |
| <input type="radio"/> Amethyst | <input type="radio"/> Cerulean | <input type="radio"/> Eggplant     | <input type="radio"/> Ivory    |
| <input type="radio"/> Apricot  | <input type="radio"/> Cinnamon | <input type="radio"/> Forest green | <input type="radio"/> Jade     |
| <input type="radio"/> Aqua     | <input type="radio"/> Copper   | <input type="radio"/> Fuchsia      | <input type="radio"/> Lavender |
| <input type="radio"/> Azure    | <input type="radio"/> Coral    | <input type="radio"/> Gold         | <input type="radio"/> Lemon    |
| <input type="radio"/> Beige    | <input type="radio"/> Cream    | <input type="radio"/> Goldenrod    | <input type="radio"/> Lilac    |
| <input type="radio"/> Black    | <input type="radio"/> Crimson  | <input type="radio"/> Grey         | <input type="radio"/> Lime     |



# Don't exclude possible responses

How many hours a week do you spend watching television?

- 1-5
- 6-10
- 11-15
- 15-20

BAD

How many hours a week do you spend watching television?

- none
- 1-5
- 6-10
- 11-15
- 15-20
- over 20

GOOD



# Random tips

- ▶ Placing the demographic questions at the end may result in more complete responses since the respondent has already invested time in the survey.
- ▶ Instead of asking “How old are you?”, ask “In what year were you born?”
- ▶ If you’re asking an open-ended question and provide lines on which to write the answer, double-space the lines (so that my hand doesn’t cramp up).
- ▶ Clearly indicate which questions are required and which are optional.





Questions?

Pet Peeves?

Tips?

