

# POSTER ABSTRACTS

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## Information Technology 44

### Just Add Content: Instant Success with a Proprietary Web Survey Tool

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**Background:** In a busy workplace there are many times when one may want to gather information systematically but without investing effort in developing a customized system or seeking out the help of staff with specialized skills. For example, managers may want to collect feedback on employees' performance for annual reviews. Or lecturers may want to solicit comments on their presentations. While such needs could be satisfactorily addressed with a group email, even better would be a tool that were as easy to use as email but that would organize the responses.

**Methods:** SurveyMonkey, a proprietary online survey resource, is just such a tool. Staff members are experimenting with a variety of uses for this versatile product. Strengths and limitations will be discussed.

**Results:** A staff member with no prior experience was able to produce a survey in less than two hours using SurveyMonkey's free version. The free version of the product meets some needs, and the subscription version, which offers additional features, is very affordable. Survey results are presented in a usable format. This automatic organization of information is a great time-saver for users, who might otherwise rely on more cumbersome methods of gathering and compiling results. And the ease of use offers immediate gratification even for staff members who are not comfortable with computers, thereby raising the level of computer literacy in the workplace.

**Conclusions:** Proprietary online survey software such as SurveyMonkey is fabulous for some purposes. Research often requires sophisticated solutions for gathering and managing data due to demands of analysis, data preservation, human protections and security; and SurveyMonkey may not be appropriate for such work. But proprietary web survey software offers a user-friendly solution for business needs such as evaluations of events, collection of performance feedback, and piloting of questionnaires.