A Guide to Best Practice Data Collection

Introduction

Congratulations on your successful Hub supported project! We wish you the best of luck.

As you know from the scheme criteria, we need to collect evidence on our activities to assess whether they are diversifying audiences and enhancing the quality and cultural depth of their experience; and to report to the National Lottery that their funds are being used in the best possible way.

To do this we need to collect data from your audiences.

Your data will be used by the BFI to evaluate the impact of the entire Film Audience Network and by us to evaluate our work and improve future programmes. We also hope collecting the data will help you learn more about your audiences – who they are and how they behave.

What data to collect

We've designed a standard audience survey for you to use to collect data on your audiences and their experience at your event/film screening. You will receive a survey for both online (required) and in-venue activity (optional) from Film Hub Midlands. Please see the Evaluation and Monitoring Guidelines for more details. If you would like to collect audience responses in-venue, we can also send you a QR code so that audience members can access and fill in the survey directly on their phones.

If you are delivering **online** activity, the surveying of your audiences will be a requirement of funding as normal. The collection of audiences responses for **in-venue** events is **not** a requirement this financial year and solely optional.

A note on data & marketing

You **MUST NOT** use data collected for marketing purposes. This has always been good practice but with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) having come into force in May 2018, it is now illegal. You **CAN** use the opportunity of your research to ask people if they want to go on your email list, but you **MUST**:

- Do so separately to your research.
- Clearly request an 'opt in' rather than 'opt out' of communications.
- Clearly explain how personal details will be used and who (if anyone) they will be shared with.
- Store any data captured for marketing purposes securely and separately from your research data.

For full details on GDPR and its implications, click HERE.

For info on its implications for the cultural sector click HERE.

How to collect it

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Identify the events at which you will collect data

You should select different events, places and times of day (if applicable) to choose for your surveying. This is called a 'sample frame'.

If your project is relatively small, you could try to survey every single person who attended each of your events, but if it involves a number of different events across different times and locations, it's more realistic to select a 'representative sample' covering all event variations.

Examples:

- Screening at libraries and village halls? Ensure you survey audiences at both types of venue.
- Screening the same film on Friday, Saturday and Sunday? Ensure you survey audiences on each different day.

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Choose your method

ONLINE SURVEYS

- **PROS**: low cost, requires fewer resources, surveys can be longer, avoids physical contact.
- **CONS**: timing is crucial.

Tips for avoiding audience bias:

- **DO**: Ensure you only email people who actually attended the event (not just people on your general email list).
- **DO**: Be aware you may miss out on audience members who aren't online and consider in advance if this will inaccurately skew your results.
- **DO**: Send your survey within 24 hours of the event to ensure the highest possible response rate.

Online survey/form providers include: **Survey Monkey**, **KwikSurveys**, **Poll Daddy**, **Survey Gizmo** and **Google Forms** (all of which offer free basic options).

IN-VENUE SURVEYS

- **PROS**: A QR code made available on the walls in the public areas will help ensure everyone has an equal chance of being included.
- **CONS**: Requires people to stay in the venue longer, so not ideal under social distancing rules.

Tips for avoiding audience bias and following social distancing rules:

- **DO**: Send out the survey link by email to audience members who actually attended the event.
- **DO**: Make a QR code available in the public areas of your venue so people can access the survey online and fill it in later when they have left the venue.
- **DON'T**: Avoid placing the QR code near doors as this might cause people to slow down the influx and exit of other visitors.

How to collect it

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Collecting your data

Try to engage your audience in your research. Most people are happy to complete surveys if they think the information they provide will be genuinely useful, so how you introduce your survey is key to maximising your response rate.

Ensure You

- Clearly present why you need the information and how it will be used, perhaps in your pre- and post-event mailouts or - if you choose to do an in-venue survey - via a poster at box office or a slide before films.
- Fully brief ALL staff (but especially front of house if you choose to conduct and in-venue survey) so they can clearly explain why you're collecting the data.
- Consider offering incentives to increase your response rate – particularly if you don't have an established relationship with your audience. Remember they must NOT be allied to your organisation (e.g. free tickets) – cash/shopping vouchers are best.
- If you're tasking particular staff members/ volunteers with data collection, choose confident, friendly, accurate and reliable people who are keen to interact with customers and who are mindful of the social distancing rules in your venue.
- Consider feeding back to your audience to build engagement – for example, sharing '5 things we discovered about our audience' or 'How your feedback helped us get support for xxx' demonstrates gratitude and that their contributions were worthwhile.

FURTHER RESOURCES

The Market Research Society offers practical tips including a detailed **Code of Conduct**.

The **CultureHive database** contains toolkits and guides for the cultural sector.

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Choose your method

Collecting enough surveys is vital for meaningful results. The table below shows the suggested number of surveys you should be aiming to collect. For the best results you should be aiming to have only a 5% margin of error.

Anticipated audience size (population)	No. surveys completed		
	5% margin	8% margin	10% margin
50	45	38	34
75	63	51	43
100	80	60	50
250	152	95	70
500	218	116	81

Example:

If you have a programme of 5 screenings and estimate 100 people will attend each, your total population is 500 and you'll need to collect approx. 218 surveys to achieve a 5% margin of error.

If you're anticipating having a larger total audience size (population) than 500 across all of your events, there are lots of free online tools available to calculate how many people need to take your survey – for example Survey Monkey's **Sample Size Calculator** and **Margin of Error Calculator**.

KEY TERMS

- **Population** – the total number of people attending the events you are surveying (your total audience).
- **Margin of error** – how accurate you want your results to be. The lower the margin of error, the more accurate your results. A 5% margin of error means that for any results from your survey, the 'real' answer could be 5% higher or lower. For example, if your results say 30% of the audience attended your venue for the first time, the 'real' answer could be between 25% and 35%. You should aim to keep this at around 5%.
- **Confidence level** – your confidence in your ability to collect accurate data. When using an online calculator, keep the confidence at 95%.