



SmartTrack™ (www.thesmarttrack.com) is the leading provider of internet data collection and dissemination services for school-based prevention needs-assessment surveys. Since 2001, approximately 1.5 million middle school and high school students have completed an online survey using the SmartTrack system. SmartTrack has supported statewide internet survey projects in Pennsylvania, Mississippi, Illinois, and Missouri. In addition, numerous school districts and counties in more than 15 states have used SmartTrack. Major online survey projects that have been conducted using SmartTrack include:

- 2005 & 2007 Pennsylvania Youth Survey – Data collected and/or disseminated for more than 100,000 students per year across nearly 200 school districts.
- 2009 Pennsylvania Youth Survey: primary contractor for all online and paper survey administration for an estimated 800 schools and more than 150k students.
- 2001-2010 Mississippi SmartTrack Survey – Data collected from an average of 125,000 students per year, from more than 125 school districts.
- 2003 - 2010 Illinois Youth Survey – Data collected from an average of 15,000 students per year across 60+ schools.
- 2007 - 2010 West Virginia Health Education Assessment (HEAP) – assessments conducted for more than 50,000 WV students to grade their health education progress.

SmartTrack™ is not a generic internet survey system. It has been developed from the ground up to meet the needs of middle school and high school data collection projects. Toward that end, we have identified five areas to be particularly important for ensuring a successful computer-based survey administration in a secondary school environment:

Survey Preparation and Monitoring

The SmartTrack™ system provides a powerful set of features that help schools prepare for and monitor survey administration. A questionnaire can be selected from a menu of public domain surveys, such as the Youth Risk Behavior Survey or the Communities That Care Youth Survey. Custom questionnaires can be created by selecting individual items or items grouped by subject area. Coordinators also have the ability to create

and assign multiple surveys—for example, different versions of the questionnaire by grade level—to an individual site. The content and format of each questionnaire is fully editable until data collection begins. Survey launch and completion times/dates can be specified. Once administration begins, coordinators can track participation levels across schools, grade levels, or other key sampling variables.

Survey Administration

SmartTrack™ is specifically designed to meet the technical and logistical challenges associated with computer-based surveying within the secondary school environment. A state-of-the-art computer network is not required. SmartTrack will run on almost any PC or Mac with an active internet connection and a web browser. With minimal setup, SmartTrack can be configured to work with firewalls and other internet security systems that are common in schools. SmartTrack presents survey items in an easy-to-read format with simple controls so that even younger students with limited computer experience can respond to the survey with little or no help. *In addition, paper surveying is available for those schools that do not possess even the limited technological infrastructure necessary to survey.*

Data Dissemination

SmartTrack's data browsing and report generation features have also been specifically developed to help policy makers and prevention planners make maximum use of the survey results. SmartTrack's internet-based reporting tools allow for instant presentation of frequency distributions and crosstabs. Data can be viewed in both table and graph formats (via Excel), and users may review results for any appropriate aggregation or subsample. If desired, results can be compared to peer data from a national, statewide, or countywide survey and listing of available programs can be matched with critical need areas (where appropriate).

Training

It's not enough to simply make data available, even using SmartTrack's powerful, yet simple data tools. Educators benefit tremendously by being immersed in their results, especially while their interest level is still high. That's why all survey administrations conducted using SmartTrack™ include live training sessions as soon as possible following the completion of the survey. Trainings, conducted by SmartTrack staff typically in a computer lab setting, cover data access via SmartTrack. Then educators explore their own results with guidance and technical assistance from SmartTrack staff. The result almost without exceptions is increased engagement in and use of data by educators, community organizations, etc.

IT Infrastructure

SmartTrack™ is housed in a multi-server environment using state-of-the-art hardware, software, and network security to ensure industry-leading data protection. The SQL Servers are set up with a mirrored (RAID 1) system container and data container utilizing striping with parity (RAID 5). The database is automatically backed up nightly to two remote servers located in two distinct geographic and internet topography locations. Data restorations can be implemented in 20 minutes or less. The website front-end communicates with the SQL server via a private network that is inaccessible from the outside. The network is secured from the internet using multiple firewall products. This robust system architecture protects client data and ensures that thousands of surveys across multiple schools may be taken simultaneously without any interruption of survey administration or data access.

Data Security

SmartTrack™ has strict application-level controls in place to ensure that student survey data remain anonymous and confidential. Access to the raw data is strictly controlled and only accessible via the private network mentioned above. Survey reports can only be viewed by authorized personnel. Every individual using the SmartTrack application for reporting is required to log on with a secure user ID and password. Each user ID is restricted at the time of its creation to only being able to view a specific subset of schools. Thus, school administrators are only able to view the results they are authorized to see. Survey reports generated by the SmartTrack system present data at an aggregate level. No results are reported for individual student respondents. When a crosstab report is created, results are suppressed for any cell with a response frequency below an acceptable demographic threshold. The application will also be modified so that datasets generated to meet open records requests do not contain information that could lead to the identification of student respondents.

Research/Evaluation Partnerships

SmartTrack works extremely well with your research partner. Data is collected, converted into a format that will download directly into your instrument's data dictionary for easy use by SPSS, SASS, and other statistical software applications. While SmartTrack does contain validity filters (lie question, excessive skips, manual "Quit" selections), some researchers prefer to include additional filters for validity (conflicting response analysis, excessive prevalence rates, etc.) If desired, SmartTrack will replace your collected data with the validated results of your research partner (may result in additional charges).

Summary

SmartTrack™ is the best, simplest, and most productive way to survey students and, more importantly disseminate information to your schools and districts. It is extremely flexible in that it can offer almost any survey item you are currently using, accepts online or pencil/paper inputs, allows for multiple surveys at the local level, and provides for multi-lingual surveying. SmartTrack is well-established, both in the field and at the institutional level. While SmartTrack can be used alone to meet the grant requirements we've discussed herein, it will also easily work as a single piece of the data puzzle. Finally, SmartTrack is extremely affordable and in many instances costs one half to two thirds less than traditional survey methods.

For more information, please contact us at 866.714.8080 or e-mail us at info@thesmarttrack.com.