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Client Technology Access and Barriers Survey

Information and communication technology (ICT) refers to all devices, software, services, and applications that communicate, process, or manage information. Appropriate ICT is essential for virtual services to newcomers. To develop virtual services and select appropriate ICT, providers need to understand newcomers' access levels, skills, and preferences. Key areas to survey include language needs, general literacy, technology access, and digital literacy. This survey tool can help you gather this information as part of the design phase before any program or technology is built.

Defining a Sample Population

You can use the survey questions below in individual or group contexts. To ensure a wide representation of potential users, choose a survey population whose age, sex, and education levels reflect the target group of users. Approaching surveys by family can help reach clients who might otherwise be excluded. You can include the oldest or youngest adult in the family, at least one adult woman, and/or the adult with the least education. A minimum sample size of 30 people is typically acceptable in this context. For more, see Planning Effective Surveys with Newcomers.

Obtaining Informed Consent

As with any survey, it is important to gain informed consent from participants before proceeding. Achieving informed consent for individuals with low literacy requires thoughtful communication strategies that prioritize clarity, accessibility, and respect. Participants should understand the:

- ***Purpose for collecting the information***. In this context, the purpose will likely be to help design and build new technology that meets newcomers' needs.
- ***Voluntary nature of participation***. Let participants know they can choose whether or not to participate in the survey; they can end their participation at any point; and participation has no impact on their ability to receive services.
- ***Anonymous nature of the survey***. Explain to participants that their personally identifiable information (PII) is not connected to the survey nor collected as part of the survey.
- ***Length of time the survey will take***. Participants should understand how much of their time is required to participate.
- ***Risks related to their participation, if any***. Inform participants that the survey only asks about their technology use, language preferences, digital literacy, and general literacy. There is likely "less than minimal" risk associated with this type of survey.

It is best practice to record participants' consent on a form with the signature of the participant, the interpreter (if used), and the staff member who explained the consent terms to the participant. Store this information separately from survey results. For more on informed consent, see Obtaining Meaningful Informed Consent from Newcomers.

Sample Survey Questions

Demographics	
Sex	☐ Female ☐ Male ☐ Prefer not to answer
Age	___ years old
Education Level	☐ No formal education ☐ Some basic education ☐ Finished primary school ☐ Finished secondary school ☐ College or university graduate ☐ Trade school
Language(s) Spoken	☐ English ☐ [Spoken language option 1] ☐ [Spoken language option 2] ☐ _____
Literacy Level - Reading (select all that apply)	☐ Comfortable reading in English ☐ No/low reading ability in native language ☐ Basic reading ability in native language (i.e., can read name, address, etc.) ☐ Functional reading ability in native language (i.e., can read short paragraphs, understand basic forms, read emails, etc.) ☐ Fluent in reading native language
Literacy Level - Writing (select all that apply)	☐ Comfortable writing in English ☐ No/low writing ability in native language ☐ Basic writing ability in native language (i.e., can write name, address, etc.) ☐ Functional writing in native language (i.e., can write short paragraphs, text messages, emails, etc.) ☐ Fluent in writing native language
General ICT Use	
1. Do **women** in your community use mobile phones?	☐ Yes ☐ No – why not? ○ Cannot afford phones ○ No mobile reception ○ Not permitted by family ○ Other _____
2. Do **girls** in your community use mobile phones?	☐ Yes ☐ No – why not? ○ Cannot afford phones ○ No mobile reception

	○ Not permitted by family ○ Other _____
3. What do people in your community think about women/girls having and using phones and the Internet?	☐ Approve ☐ Disapprove ☐ Doesn't matter ☐ Other _____
Personal ICT Use	
4. Do you use a mobile phone?	☐ Yes ☐ No – why not? (go to question 10) ○ Not interested ☐ Not familiar/comfortable (including if you do not have the literacy needed to use) ○ No need ○ Cost is too high ○ Not appropriate for me to use ○ Family/friends would disapprove ○ Other _____
5. Do you share a mobile phone within your household?	☐ No ☐ Yes, but I can keep the phone with me most of the time ☐ Yes, but someone else keeps the phone with them, and I must borrow the mobile phone
6. Are there times when you are without mobile phone access? (select all)	☐ Yes, when the person I share the phone with leaves the home ☐ Yes, when I cannot afford to add minutes to the phone ☐ Yes, when a person I share the phone with is using the phone ☐ No
7. What functions do you use most on your mobile phone? (select all)	☐ Calls ☐ SMS/Text ☐ Email ☐ Facebook ☐ WhatsApp/Viber/Telegram ☐ FaceTime/Skype ☐ Games ☐ YouTube ☐ Web browsing ☐ News sites/apps ☐ Other _____

8. How often do you use your mobile phone?	☐ Daily or almost every day ☐ At least once a week ☐ At least once a month ☐ Less than once a month ☐ Only in emergencies
9. Do you use a smartphone?	☐ Yes ☐ No
10. What device do you use to access the Internet? (select all)	☐ Smartphone ☐ Computer ☐ Tablet ☐ Other _____
11. Where do you usually access the Internet? (select all)	☐ With data on my phone ☐ Using my home Internet connection/Wi-Fi ☐ At a store that has Wi-Fi ☐ At the library ☐ At a community space with Wi-Fi ☐ From a hot spot ☐ Other _____
Digital Literacy[1]	
12. I know how to use a computer.	☐ Yes ☐ No
13. I know how to use a tablet.	☐ Yes ☐ No
14. I know how to use a smartphone.	☐ Yes ☐ No
15. I know how to connect to Wi-Fi.	☐ Yes ☐ No
16. I have an email address.	☐ Yes ☐ No
17. I know how to create a secure password for logging into websites.	☐ Yes ☐ No
18. I know the difference between a URL address and an email address.	☐ Yes ☐ No
19. I know how to search for information on the Internet.	☐ Yes ☐ No

[1] Adapted from CORE's Digital Awareness for Refugees Supplemental Lesson Plan: https://www.coresourceexchange.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Digital-Awareness-for-Refugees-LP_HiRes-Color.pdf

20. I have completed and submitted a form on the Internet.	☐ Yes ☐ No
21. I know how to download and open files from the Internet.	☐ Yes ☐ No
22. I know how to protect my security while using the Internet.	☐ Yes ☐ No
ICT Preferences [Sample questions – these should be adjusted to fit your survey's purpose.]	
23. How would you prefer to find out information about community resources (e.g., ESL classes, food pantries)? (select all that apply)	☐ Two-way text ☐ Call ☐ Chatbot ☐ Website
24. How would you prefer to learn about integration topics (e.g., how to pay taxes, how to get involved in your child's education)? (select all that apply)	☐ Two-way text ☐ Video ☐ Live discussion on social media ☐ Chatbot ☐ Website ☐ Checklist
25. Would you feel comfortable receiving information about public benefits via text message?	☐ Yes ☐ No

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