

Using images and multimedia in online surveys

Ten top tips for more effective use of images, hotspots, audio and video.

Using images and multimedia in online surveys gives you the opportunity to increase response rates, by making surveys more interesting to participate in. They also allow you to focus on specific items of interest or sales and marketing collateral — such as an illustration, a print or broadcast advert, an audio clip, or hotspots on a diagram.

- 1. Image sizes affect survey download times:** Before you upload an image into Demographix, have a think about how BIG the image is, and the consequences of that. It's not just the dimensions of the image in pixels, which can break the survey's borders if too big (see 2), it's also the size of the image file (see 4), which can affect how long it takes for a survey to load. So, if you're using lots of big, uncompressed image files, your respondents will find they're waiting for the survey to load — and they might get impatient and close it down. Well-compressed images mean more responses and better data.
- 2. How do I check an image file size?** To check the file size of an image, open it in your browser and right-click on it (or right-click on the name/icon in your file folder). View the image Info or Properties, and look for the Size — this will be shown in Bytes, kilobytes (Kb) or megabytes (Mb). Anything under 100Kb (or 100,000 bytes) should be OK. Anything above that, or in the megabytes range, is likely to be uncompressed and bloated — some browsers will even struggle to display such images.
- 3. What's the difference between image file formats?** Some image formats are better at creating smaller footprint file sizes — generally GIF (eg "imagename.gif") and PNG ("imagename.png") files will produce smaller footprints than BMP ("imagename.bmp") or JPG ("imagename.jpg") files. But GIF files can only handle 256 colours and are not good for photographs, though they are great for such things as logos and clipart, while JPG files handle unlimited colours and complex imagery much better. JPG aren't good with transparency, however, though GIF and PNG are OK. We generally recommend PNG or GIF files for logos, as the colours stay solid.
- 4. Use the thumbnail options for very large images:** You should consider the physical dimensions of every image — how many pixels wide and deep is it? These can be specified by right-clicking on an image in a browser or in your file folder. A standard Demographix survey, designed for laptop or computer screens, is 700 pixels (700px) wide. Therefore, any image to be included in such a survey should not be wider than around 650 pixels (allowing for margin space). If it is a large image that you want respondents to see the detail in, then tick the thumbnail option, and our system will automatically generate a clickable thumbnail image in the survey.
- 5. What options do I have for resizing an image?** Demographix offers its own in-built resizing tool, which you'll find in the Media toolset under the Image tab. Locate the image, click on the Edit option, and use the slider control to resize the image to its desired new dimensions. For most logos, gifs and jpgs, you will get a high-quality resized image. But some photos will need to be resized using a graphics editing package such as Adobe Photoshop or Corel PaintShop Pro.

6. **Using multiple images as answer options:** Demographix allows you to upload a series of images individually to be included as answer options in a question. For example, you could upload a group of brand logos and include them in a single choice question ("Click on the brand you like the most from this list") or in a multi-choice question ("Click on the three brands you like best from this list"). The key thing to watch out for here is to give the brands equal visual weight and space — for example, by making all your image files the same dimensions. Better still, use Hotspots to combine image options (see 7 below).



7. **How to combine all your answers in one hotspot image:** Our newly-introduced image hotspots allow you to create streamlined questions with much less work involved than manipulating individual images. For example, create an image with 4 images in it, and use the hotspot grid creation tool to specify the areas taken up by these hotspots. Then use the hotspot question type to create a range of questions based on the image: single-choice, multi-choice, ranking, and note attachments can all be applied to hotspot images. *In the image above, there are 4 different hotspot questions based on the same grid: (from top) single area choice, multiple choice, ranking, and note appending.*
8. **Using audio files, such as testing ad creatives for radio:** Adding an audio file to a survey has never been easier. We've also done a lot of work recently to make audio files compatible with any environment in which a survey may be viewed (from desktop Macs and PCs to Android smartphones, tablets, iPhones and iPads). Different operating systems and browsers support different audio formats (though primarily MP3 and OGG) and Demographix surveys automatically use the version of the file needed. But we do the conversion for you — simply upload your audio file in one of the formats we support (MP3, OGG, WAV or AAC), wait for email confirmation, and then add it to your survey. We'll do all the behind-the-scenes work on the file.
9. **Using video files, such as testing ad creatives for broadcast:** As with audio files (8 above), Demographix users can upload a video in a wide range of formats — FLV, MP4, WMV, MOV, AVI, MPG, MPEG, OGV, OGG, WEBM or M4V. We convert the file into the formats needed for different devices and browsers. Flash files, for instance, are not supported on Apple devices; so we substitute a version automatically that is compatible. Once uploaded through the Media toolset, you'll receive email notification that it has been converted into all formats. Then, simply add the video to your survey, using the multimedia option under question types.
10. **Be careful with video format sizes:** There are optimal widths and aspect ratios for all videos, so take care before you upload your video to check out that it is not too large for the width of your survey. There are tools available on the internet for resizing your videos, while preserving aspect ratio. Subscribers are asked to contact the Helpdesk when logged into Demographix, if they need further advice on video resizing and conversion.