



THE TIMES 100

Monitoring Content Quality and Readership

Time 100 (often written in all-caps as TIME 100) is an annual list of the 100 most influential people in the world assembled by the American news magazine Time. First published in 1999 as the result of a debate among American academics, politicians, and journalists, the list is now an annual event. Although appearing on the list is often seen—incorrectly—as an honor, Time makes it clear that entrants are recognized for changing the world, regardless of the consequences of their actions.

"We use Key Survey to create questionnaires to send out to the teachers and students - asking what they think of our material and how we can improve on it," says Gordon Wilson, Operations Director of The Times 100, a business-education supplement to the London Times.

Customer and audience feedback is critical for making decisions.

The Times 100 is sent for free to every high school, college and university in the United Kingdom, where it's used to help with business-studies and commerce classes. With such a wide audience, feedback is critical. Do teachers find the Times 100 material to be helpful in the classroom? Do students consider the website a useful resource? And where should resources be allocated for improvement?

Key Survey answers specific questions.

"One recent survey, for example, was aimed at teachers," Gordon said. "The questions were asking how they rated the following areas of our site, and we had different things like quality of content, amount of content, navigation, et cetera. The big question was, which areas did we want to improve, and the clear conclusion was that navigation and interactivity were the two biggest draws to our site. So we decided to focus more resources on those."

And targets specific demographics.

The Times 100 conducts between six and a dozen surveys a year, many of them to specific groups - for example, to students of a particular age, or teachers doing a certain course. The surveys are accessed through email; Gordon decides who a particular survey is going to, selects the address groups, and Key Survey mails them the link. It's not The Times 100's only source of user feedback; there's a paper questionnaire that goes out with the supplement. But it's their fastest, and their best way of getting specific information on specific area of interest.

The information is easy to share and distribute.

The information gathered isn't just used internally - it's shared with other stakeholders, including the writers, designers and teachers. This enables everyone involved to see what the users think of it - often by directly presenting them with the results produced by Key Survey.

Branching allows you to dig for more detailed, more useful information.

The Times 100 makes use of Key Survey features like branching. "I'm able to ask the question 'are you a student or teacher', and depending on the answer, it causes the questions they get. If they answer a question a certain way, you can dig further and ask them why they answered it that way, without them realizing that you're digging," says Gordon.

And it's easy to use - you can get started immediately.

"It was the ease of use," Gordon says of why he chose Key Survey. "I'd never created a survey like this before, but I created this one in maybe an hour. And it was quite complex - it wasn't just a straightforward survey. It was very intuitive; I didn't really need to call tech support. And

also, the ability to bring in my own list of email addresses. If you're sending an email to 10,000 people, you don't want to key every address in. I could import them directly from Excel."

Presentation tools generate graphics automatically.

Information exists to be presented, and Key Survey's powerful reporting tools make this job easier - displaying the information not just as lists and numbers, but graphically. In preparation for a meeting, Gordon doesn't have to spend time moving the data to another application so as to create charts and graphs; he can simply print the report Key Survey has generated.

"We've used it widely, because the reports that you do are fantastic. It's easy to read, and to share them around. It helps us make decisions and to move forwards," he says.

