

Data Management
Unit 1 Line Master 5**Factors Impacting Data Collection**

- **Location:** Conducting a survey in the wrong place. For example, choosing a sporting event as the place to survey the community about a music program may result in biased results.
- **Timing:** Conducting a survey at the wrong time. For example, asking how often one wears sandals to school in December is unlikely to produce useable results.
- **Time investment:** The amount of time someone is willing to invest in completing a survey is related to how important they perceive the issue to be.
Is a 27-question survey short?
Would you answer a 27-question survey on the yearbook theme?
- **Cost investment:** The cost of collecting data must be justified by the value of the outcome. Sending 10 000 surveys would be expensive and the outcome – one colour of garbage bin over another – is not worth the investment. Estimate how much a survey like that would cost!
- **Wording and Language:** The way in which a question is worded can greatly influence how it is received. Is the wording clear? Are there double negatives (i.e., *don't you think that you shouldn't...*) or technical jargon that make the question confusing?
Does the question contain adjectives designed to sway your opinion (e.g., the use of the word *concerned*)?
- **Privacy and Social Pressure:** There are some questions that people may not answer truthfully, for fear of how their response may be received. For example, no one wants to admit they don't always brush their teeth before bed, because the reaction is likely to be very negative.
- **Cultural Sensitivity:** An unbiased data collection is inclusive — eliminating any cultural references which may not apply to the whole population. This isn't just limited to holidays, celebrations, and customs — many cultures are not familiar with playing cards, for example. Some foods are not eaten by some cultures. To identify whether cultural sensitivity is a concern, we have to embrace multiple perspectives other than our own and learn about diverse cultures.
- **Ethics:** There are many ways in which data collection could be unethical. For example, the stated intention of the data collection is to determine how many children living in an area could benefit from a new playground. Six months later, that same data are sold to another company for the purposes of selling ice cream in the area. Stating one purpose for collecting data, and then using it for a different purpose, is unethical.