



THE SURVEY SAYS....

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In this article, I would like to relay a communications tool that you may wish to consider. This is the use of free online surveys. The one that I utilize is [surveymonkey.com](https://www.surveymonkey.com), but there are alternatives.

I use online surveys when I work with communities on source water protection programs. Many of the towns that I am currently working with have many residents that are not serviced by public water systems. To gain information on these private water supplies, I have relied upon the use of an online water well survey. This survey consists of ten simple questions that can be completed in a minute or two. The response to this has been quite good. In one town, I received 118 responses in three weeks.

It is relatively easy to design your own online survey. Once you have finished it, you can create a unique web address for it and share this link to others. For example, if your municipality or system has a website, you can place a link to the survey from your site. You can collect and look over responses and eventually analyze the results.

Why would you want to do an online survey? First, it is a way to gather feedback and collect data. Perhaps your system is considering a rate increase. Using a survey would help you determine what, if any, increase consumers would tolerate. Maybe you want to know if there are any distribution system issues. A survey will tell you if consumers are experiencing any quality or pressure issues.

Second, an online survey is actually an educational opportunity. By asking the right questions, it gets people to think about their responses. For example, if you want to promote water conservation, you can ask them questions like how much water they use, would they consider installing water-saving devices, etc. Finally, an online survey is a free way to improve public relations. It will show your customers that their opinions matter and that their input is valued.

Give an online survey a try. I would be glad to help you set one up and distribute it to your customers. Drop me an email (winkley@nyruralwater.org) if you have any questions. 💧💧