

Why Do My Respondents Report Time Outs?

When a survey respondent loads a survey, they have as much time to complete that response as needed* (at least according to our system). However, there are a lot of factors between our servers and their survey response that might get in the way.

*If you are utilizing Overall or Segmented Quotas to limit the number of responses collected on your survey, safeguards are put in place to expire survey sessions after 20 minutes of inactivity. Learn more about [how quotas work](#).

In managed IT environments such as schools, hospitals or businesses working with sensitive information, there could be network settings in place that only allow active pages to connect to our servers for a limited amount of time. These settings are deployed by IT departments to help protect the sensitive information that can be accessed on the network.

Web browsers also have their own settings that can limit the amount of time an open page can then submit data. Server timeouts can occur when using a browser to view a site and the request is considered to have failed or is incomplete. The device that made the initial request for data from another device gives up on waiting for that information to be sent when a timeout occurs. The timeout duration varies depending on which browser makes the data request from the server and can range from a few seconds to a few hours.

A survey response has to go through multiple checkpoints on its way to our servers. If any of these connecting points are too busy, the request could be dropped. For example, a request may time out when connecting through a network because the router is overtaxed with requests from other computers and devices on the network.

How to Allow Respondents to Return to Their Response

In order to get your respondents back into their survey response to complete it, you'll need to know whose response is whose. Your options for accessing a partial response include, [Edit Links](#) or [Email Campaign](#) links. To use an Edit Link you'll need to collect some identifying information on the first page of the response. The Email Campaign distribution method requires a list of contacts at the outset.

You might also consider using the Save & Continue feature to allow respondents to save their response and continue it later. While this feature will not prevent the survey from timing out, it may decrease the likelihood as respondents will be less likely to leave the browser window open.

If your survey is anonymous, the Edit Link and Email Campaign options are obviously not available to you but the Save & Continue feature is! While we collect an email to send the save and continue link to the respondent, this email is not stored for the survey administrator to!

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