

Terms of Use and Privacy

Healthcare Environment Website and Survey/Data Management Software[®]

This terms of use document provides an overview of access clients have within the website of Healthcare Environment, Inc. Further questions should be directed to surveys@hcentvironment.com.

Terms of use

This first section will review the deliverables available to clients, as defined below. Access to and use of deliverables will also be reviewed.

Definition of client

Clients of Healthcare Environment (HCE) are defined as those who have an active paid use agreement with HCE. Agreements are in effect for one year from receipt of payment for software use. All agreements are one year unless a specific multi-year contract is negotiated with and signed by both the client and an Executive Officer from HCE. Payments are made online using PayPal or by check to the address noted in the footer of this document. There are student rates available for individuals using software for projects in school, including those defending a thesis or dissertation. Student rates apply to both software purchases and statistics support. The same year agreement for use applies to students. Both regular and discounted fees entitle purchaser to the same terms of use delineated within this document, as a client of HCE.

Access to data is granted to clients via: www.hcentvironment.com followed by selection of the research portal noted at the top right of the home page. The research portal is labeled "survey management". Upon entering the research portal, client enters their assigned access code and password, assigned after payment and initial contact with HCE research support. Access codes and passwords can be changed by the client at any time by contacting support@hcentvironment.com.

Deliverables

All clients have access to the following using the HCE website: survey bar graph reports, copy of surveys, response rate report that is in real time, and a copy of the dataset from surveys used in survey software. The bar graph reports include benchmark reports at five levels, including unit, department, hospital, system and Accountable Care Organization (ACO). An ACO consists of all hospitals/systems within a collaborative network which may include a consulting agency, insurance grouping, or unique networking arrangement between hospitals and/or systems. Access to the unit, department, hospital, system and ACO level data will vary on authority granted by the client. For example, a unit manager will not have access to they system level data, the but system level manager will have access to the unit level data. Each person who has access to the survey reports will be coded electronically for their respective level of access of reports. It should be noted that bar graph reports are only available for Likert scale questions. In addition, only one Likert style can be used (e.g., strongly disagree to strongly agree). If multiple Likert styles are used (e.g. a 1-5 scale, a 1-7 scale and a 1-10 scale), only one of the scales will be available via bar graph report, per survey.

Individual responses are available to only the individual who is responding to the survey. This is considered the sixth and final level of available data; from ACO to individual. The individual responder will have the opportunity to print their survey responses just prior to submission of their survey. They

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can decline to print is desired, but the option will be provided to each survey responder. Individual response reports can be useful in action planning at the individual level with the unit/department manager, or personal action planning for change, related to the survey subject. Individual response reports can also be compared to the “aggregate” reports as the responder desires.

Printable copies of surveys, accessed via the website, must be set up by HCE prior to access. This is due to special programming necessary within HCE to ensure extraordinarily large electronic files aren't generated by the client.

Response rate reports are provided in real time. No individual is identified in report, only unit or department name. If no unit or department names are used, and “N/A” will appear, indicating unit or department was not applicable to the respective grouping of potential responders to the survey.

Each software portal comes with one survey of the clients' choosing. The client can select from the 100 plus surveys already programmed within HCE. Each survey has been psychometrically tested for validity and reliability. These data are available upon request from support@hceenvironment.com. Several surveys are already programmed in Spanish (both Central America Spanish and Spanish used in Spain), Italian, and Portuguese. If the survey is not available in the software already, HCE will provide up to 4 hours of programming individual surveys. Additional programming is available at cost for support staff (average cost \$19/hour) to program plus 25% for administration fees. Surveys usually do not take more than 8 hours to design and program in software.

Finally, the dataset can be sent to the client upon request in Excel or SPSS 19.0 format. All names will be cleared prior to sending and replaced with a randomly generated code. This is to maintain confidentiality. Names will be included only for individuals that have approval from the ethics review board or Internal Review Board (IRB). All clients are strongly encouraged to obtain IRB approval if using the HCE software (as of 2011, about 99% of the client secure IRB approval before using HCE software).

Each hospital/facility will need to assign an internal coordinator to work with HCE staff to set up survey, designate survey launch and termination dates, and identification of “client contacts”. Client contacts are individuals who will have access to the research portal and associated deliverables. Internal coordinators who familiarize themselves with the definition of HCE software terms, noted in the following section.

It should be noted that Healthcare Environment often subcontracts with large hospital systems and consortiums. Other deliverables may be presented alongside HCE but are not listed within this document and are thus outside of the responsibility of HCE. Readers of this document may need to contact individuals within their respective organization to clarify who is responsible for deliverables not identified within this document.

Definitions for Healthcare Environment (HCE) Software

Respondent: The number assigned to the employee for this administration of the survey. Repeat responders will be assigned a different number each time.

Employee Last Name: The family name (surname) of the employee.

Employee First Name: The given name of the employee.

Employee ID: The employee identification number assigned by the hospital. This is necessary in large databases with several individual with the same name and/or in areas where certain first and last names are very common. For example, the author of this survey process, John Nelson, attended college with 11 other John Nelson's.

Position/Title: The professional title assigned to the employee that designated the function of their specific job, such as Clinical Nurse I, Nurse Practitioner, Unit Manager, etc.

Role: The general category of the title. Three categories:

Licensed: Provides clinical care to patient.

Unlicensed staff: Staff who provide support or are ancillary to licensed staff.

Leadership: This includes managers, directors, VPs, Officers/Executives, and Coordinators who serve in high level support roles within organizational projects.

Band ID: Used for employees in the United Kingdom and refers to the level of pay.

Band Grade: Used for employees in the United Kingdom and refers to the level of experience in the profession.

Facility: The name of the organization the employee works for.

Unit: the name used to refer to the clinical unit, department, clinic, or facility that the employee works on or in. It is the name the formal name the organization uses when referring to this unit, department, clinic or facility.

If an acronym is used to refer to this unit, please use the full name along with the acronym. For example, if the unit is called 6 Medical North, and the employees defer to the name "6MN", please note the name as "6 Medical North (6MN)."

Service Line: The clinical care services that are defined as a family of organizational arrangements based on an organization's outputs rather than on its inputs (Charns and Tewksbury 1993). For example, Surgical Services would include OR, Peri-Op, Induction (pre-anesthesia), recovery (post-anesthesia), and other units/departments related to the same service output.

Wave: Used to identify the section of units in a period of time taking the HES. Waves are used for organizations who do not launch the entire hospital at one time, but rather do sections of the hospitals in "waves" to make the operations of a large project manageable.

Dataset: Resultant data from surveys used by client

Submit Date: This is the date the survey was completed and submitted.

Submit Time: The time the survey was submitted.

Database of names: Excel file the includes information of potential responders, including unit, service line, employee ID, last name, first name, job position/title, job role, and email. If any information is not applicable, simply state "NA".

Data Security and System for Healthcare Environment Survey Software (HCESS)

Data accuracy and security is a number one priority for our customers. For online surveys, availability is crucial to accurate results. We prepared this document for you, so that you can be secure in the knowledge that Healthcare Environment Survey Software (HCESS) is up to the challenge of managing high-volume online surveys.

HCESS processes and software tools provide security and confidentiality. Our hardware configuration and high capacity network connections make certain that our web-based survey forms are reliable.

This document provides an overview of our network security practices. It also explains the separate issue of how our software provides for confidentiality. And finally why our server and network infrastructure can not only handle high demand but also can handle the kind of highly variable demand that is characteristic of large online survey processes.

Overall Reliability

HCESS online survey and enrollment system runs in a networked environment. Security from third parties is the result of a combination of factors including the security of our network, the architecture of our proprietary software, and our policies about not disclosing client data or creating derivative works. It also complies with the HIPPA requirements.

Our accuracy results from a combination of highly reliable system availability, the architecture of our proprietary systems, and our data backup and recovery procedures.

Software Security

Privacy Policy

Our privacy policy ensures that the data we collect on behalf of clients remains the client's property. We do use client data in national benchmarks but do not use client names or specific information that would identify a client.

Confidentiality

All captured data, whether electronically scanned, manually keyed or collected online, is linked to a complete audit trail that identifies the source of the data and when it was received. This system ensures complete confidentiality and accuracy. Respondent confidentiality is secured by a separation of identifying information and survey responses in our proprietary software.

For online survey processes access to the surveys or any online enrollment system is governed by the use and distribution of single, unique access codes. The survey access codes are single use.

In online enrollment systems, access is gained using a login name and password. The login name and password can be used throughout the various phases of enrollment, approval and survey administration.

This built in security in all of our web applications ensures that participants only have access to appropriate information.

Accuracy and Quality

All of the systems we use to deliver our services are proprietary, which means we know exactly what is going on at every step of the process.

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Our survey managers track and coordinate project functions for both paper and online processes. Our quality assurance and status tracking methods keep your survey administration organized, secure, accurate and on time.

HCESS is a dynamic survey system used to display surveys online and transfer responses to our data repository.

Our online survey enrollment system allows users in a multi-rater process to select their survey respondents and view the ultimate results in a confidential online environment, the HCE research portal.

System Security

Physical Security

The entrance to the HCE facility is either locked or attended at all times. All of our servers are secured in a locked, environmentally controlled room and are only accessible by authorized personnel.

Network Monitoring

HCE deploys advanced security measures explained below, but any security is not worth as much if it is not actively monitored to detect attempts to break in. HCE is not a high profile target for hackers, but nonetheless we analyze our network logs to ferret out attempts to gain access to our systems. This monitoring allows us to react quickly, if needed, to deal with hackers. There are occasional attempts to break security, however none have successfully gained access to our secured internal network.

Firewalls

A firewall is a security system that protects networks from external threats like that posed by hackers, who attempt to gain access to systems from other networks. Firewalls protect against this by preventing computers outside of HCE from communicating directly with systems on our internal network. The firewall detects attempts to gain access and both logs the activity and deflects the attacks away from internal systems.

HCE deploys a multi-tier firewall architecture which provides enhanced security through depth in our network. The first tier firewall restricts access to publicly available servers like our web servers. Then choke point firewalls restrict the access that those publicly available servers have to the rest of the network in case of the unlikely event of a system breach. Using this architecture means that even a successful attack on the initial layer of defenses does not compromise client data, which is secured behind the second layer of defenses. Combined with our network monitoring, this system has proven trustworthy.

Secure Data Transmission

In theory, third parties could intercept client data as it passes from the survey participant's computer across the Internet to our servers. However, these types of network intercepts are difficult. To prevent any chance of intercepting your data, we use encryption that has been proven to stop possible intruders.

Email Distribution Capacity

HCE sends email notifications at a rate that is sufficient to distribute survey notifications for most projects within a single business day. The rate for emails with attachments varies depending on the size of the attachments. Properly paced distribution of emails is important to multiple emails from the same company will not be interpreted as "mail bomb" or "Spam".

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Data integrity

In case of disk drive failure, client data remains safe and up to date as we back data up daily and retain each days backup to ensure redundancy of dataset copies and ability to retrieve archival data. We also protect against data loss due to catastrophe (fire, tornado, etc) by transferring backups to a secure off-site storage facility.

Summary

Overall system security results from a combination of industry accepted measures for fending off third party interlopers including physical security, network security and vigilant monitoring system activities. Confidentiality of opinion surveys, organizational, and patient data is ensured by HCESS. Backup processes and redundancy ensure data is intact despite unforeseen catastrophic events.