SPSS Techniques Series: Data Entry Using Optical Mark Reader Sheets

SPSS

When Optical Mark Reader (OMR) sheets can be used

If you have a survey where each question has fewer than ten responses, your survey can be put onto OMR sheets. There are two kinds of OMR sheets. One sheet has five answers per question and the other has ten answers per question. Either sheet can be used for data entry.

How to record your results on a OMR sheet

If you have surveys, transfer the survey onto the OMR sheet. If possible, match up the questions on the OMR sheet with the questions on the survey. There is room on the left hand side of the sheet to enter other information. Write a number on the top of each survey as you transfer it to the scanning sheet. If you have fewer than 1000 surveys, use "001" for the first survey, "002" for the second survey, and so forth. Do not use a social security number or other id. This number is used to match the sheets to the surveys only. Record this number on the OMR sheet in the left hand side. The "identification" part is a good place. Be consistent about which columns you use on the OMR sheet, and be sure to fill in the dots below.

If the number of questions does not fit on a single scanning sheet, use two OMR scan sheets per person to complete the survey. If you need to use two OMR scan sheets, it is important to mark which sheet is first and which is second. This is essential for sorting the resulting file. Put the sheet number in the area on the left hand side, preferably in the column directly to the right of the survey number. Again be sure to fill in the dots below.

What to do with your sheets once they are complete

Once you have finished filling in each sheet, you can then bring your sheets to ITS for scanning. You should bring them to the I/O window in Business 19. If you have a large amount of data to be scanned, talk to Vergestene Cooper in Bus 15. The 24 hour turnaround time does not apply to raw data. You will need to have a VMS (Acad) account for data analysis. If you do not have one, contact the Consulting Center in ITTC 36 (273-5555) for the paperwork prior to bringing in your sheets.

On the check-in sheet, indicate that you want to have the data put into a file in your account. You should provide your username and a file name. Your password should NOT be included. For example, you could write: "Please scan these sheets as raw data and put onto my VMS account, username SMITHM9999. Please call the file THESIS.DAT". Please try to always use ".dat" as the extension for data files. The first part of the file name should describe the project. You have 39 letters possible. A word that describes the project, such as "THESIS", is helpful. By using the first part of the file name to name the project, you can group together all the files that relate to one project. You can obtain a directory of all the "THESIS" related files by the DCL command "DIRECTORY thesis.*". Once you have prepared the data, leave the OMR sheets with the check-in sheet at the I/O window in Bus 19.

After you pick up your sheets

Once you pick up your sheets, sign onto your account and use the DIRECTORY command to see what files are on your account. Sometimes there will be more than one version of the file. You can use the PURGE command to delete all but the most recent version.

Looking at the file

To look at the file, type:

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$ look filename.type
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OMR data files are wider than 80 characters, so you will not be able to see the entire record at once. You can, however, shift the file to the right to see that part of the file. To do this, press "L" or "R" in the LOOK utility. "Q" will return you to the dollar sign prompt ($).

The answers to the questions begin in column 70 of the file. Prior to column 70 will be the information from the left hand side of the OMR sheet: the name, sex, grade, and ID codes that you had on your sheet. Questions take up 1 column each. It is important to note that for the 10 question answer sheet the "10" will appear as a "0". The name field is in columns 25 to 44. The date field is in columns 45 to 50. The ID and special codes fields are in columns 51 to 66. The sex field will be in column 67. The grade field will be in columns 68-69.

The OMR raw data program puts in some characters that must be taken out prior to running SPSS. A dash (-) will appear where a question did not contain an answer. An asterisk (*) will appear where a question contained more than one answer. If we define our variables in SPSS to be numeric, which is necessary in order to run statistics on these variables, then this data will produce error messages since it is not numeric.

Under normal conditions, these symbols are removed from your data file when it is loaded to the DEC Alpha. If for some reason you wish to have those symbols retained in your data, you can make that request at the time you turn in the sheets for scanning. If you have any questions, please contact Vergestene Cooper between the hours of 7:30 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. in Room 15 of the Business Building by phone at 273-6818, or Email at vergestene.cooper@uni.edu [1]

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