SPSS Export

Our SPSS export feature not only allows you to export your data to SPSS, but will automatically setup and import your variable names, variable types, titles and value labels for SPSS as well. We do this by exporting directly to SPSS's proprietary .SAV format from Alchemer which makes the export process clean and easy.

> Alchemer users *must* be on a Full Access License level to create, download, and leverage SPSS exports.

What is SPSS?

Alchemer has some very powerful, built-in reporting features but if you're looking for serious, in depth statistical analysis you just can't get better than SPSS. SPSS is an analytics software tool used by marketers and researchers around the world. Most top research agencies use SPSS to analyze survey data and mine text data to get the most out of their research projects. If your company has a copy of SPSS and you're looking for a more advanced reporting tool, this export is an excellent option.
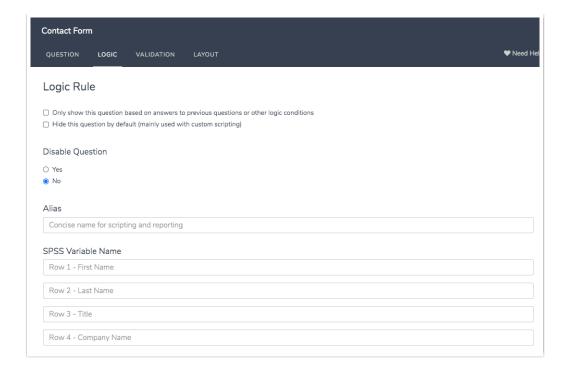
The data from any survey with Alchemer can be exported to SPSS without any of the below preparations. However, following the below best practices will result in a data file with meaningful definitions for you and your colleagues to analyze.

Define SPSS Variable Names

SPSS Variable Names are not required (Alchemer will generate them for you) however they will make your life so much easier when you jump in to do your analysis. Variable Names can be defined in 2 locations, but we recommend making your changes in one or the other:

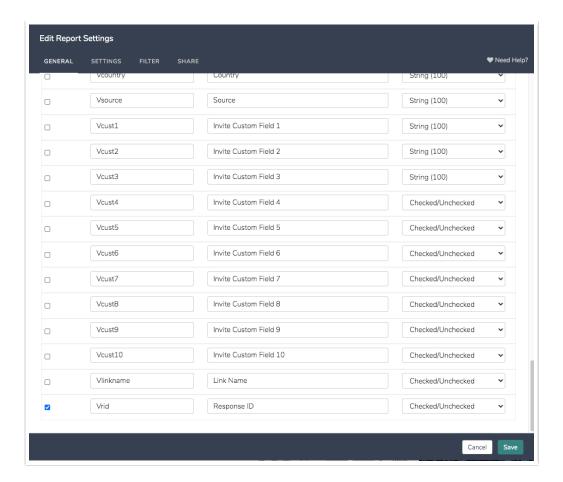**Defining SPSS Variable Names During the Survey Build**
While building your survey you can define SPSS variable names for each of your questions on **Logic** tab of each question. For many questions there will be multiple fields. This is because this question collects and stores multiple data points. For example the below question is a Textbox List. Respondents enter a movie for each Genre so there are 4 variables on output.

Defining SPSS Variable Names in Bulk within an SPSS Export

On the **General** tab of an SPSS export you can customize the **Variable** field. These will be populated by default either by what you defined on the Build tab of the survey or with our auto-generated SPSS variable names. You can customize them here in bulk (make sure to follow the variable name limitations listed below).

> Note: The general tab only shows 500 variables per page. Scroll to the bottom of the General tab to navigate to later pages to customize variables 500+.

If you'd like to save these variable names to the survey so they are available for future exports select the option to **Update SPSS variable names in the survey for later exports**.

Limitations for **Update SPSS variable names in the survey for later exports**:

- This will not work with piped variables, they will have to be renamed every time.
- This will not work with system variables (ResponseID > Postal), they will have to be renamed every time.

SPSS Variable Name Limitations:

- SPSS Variable names cannot start with numbers.
- SPSS Variable names cannot include special characters.
- Duplicate variable names are also not permitted in SPSS (our system will identify any duplicates in the General tab of your export).
- For older versions of SPSS (pre 12.0) there is a character limit of 8.
- Variable names cannot end with an underscore or a period.
- Variable names with reserved words are not allowed. Learn more about reserved words.

Learn more about SPSS variable name limitations.

Use Numeric Reporting Values

Use numeric reporting values that are meaningful to you. To learn more about specifying reporting values visit our Reporting Values Tutorial.

For example, yes=1 and no=2.

This is important only for questions that export as labeled values. This includes Radio Button, Dropdown Menu, Image Select (Single), Dropdown Menu List, Rating (Likert Scale), Radio Button Grid.

If you do not use numeric reporting values our system will just use the answer option SKUs (e.g. 10001).

If you forget to specify numeric reporting values during the survey build, select the option to **Automatically increment labeled values numerically for questions with non-numeric reporting values**. This will assign numeric values, starting with 1, for each question that has non-numeric reporting values and exports as labeled values.

Use Question Labels

Question Labels were previously called Alias Name. If users have not been migrated to the updated feature - they will still see the Alias Name feature.

Each of these best practices are optional but the use of the Question Label, not to be confused with SPSS Variable Names, is the least common customization for SPSS exports. Question Labels are used most often in scripting, but they are useful for SPSS exports too. The Question Label will be used in the Variable Label field in SPSS. This field is not as commonly used in SPSS. Though, if you are sharing your data set with colleagues who are not familiar with your project having this additional information can be beneficial. The Variable Label will pull the question title if the Question Label field is left blank.

> One must enter the Question Label **manually** on the SPSS general tab when exporting as this field will **not** auto populate.

Question Label can also be defined on the Build tab during survey build or on the **General** tab in the SPSS export. Below is some helpful information on how aliases are represented in SPSS:

- Question Label (Build) = Variable Label (SPSS Export)
- SPSS Variable Name (Build) = Variable (SPSS Export)
- Reporting Value (Build) = SPSS Variable Type (SPSS Export)

Understanding SPSS Variable Types

When you create a SPSS Export the SPSS Variable Type will be set by default. In most cases you will not need to fiddle with this in order for your data to export to SPSS properly. Below is the list of SPSS Variable Types, the question types that use that variable type and the corresponding Variable Type in SPSS.

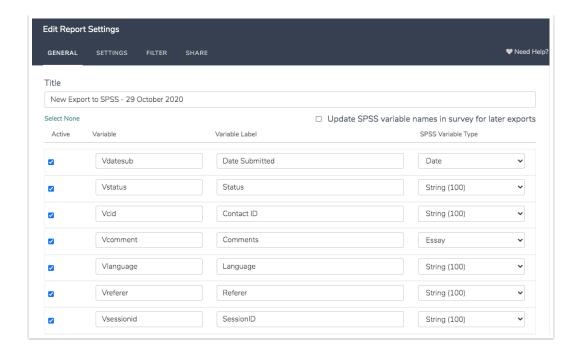| Alchemer SPSS Variable Type	Default Alchemer Question Types	SPSS Variable Type

Alchemer SPSS Variable Type	Default Alchemer Question Types	SPSS Variable Type
String (100)	Textboxes	String
String (255)	"Other" Textboxes	String
Labeled Values*	Radio Buttons, Radio Button Grid Rows and other single select questions	Numeric
Checked/Unchecked	Checkboxes and Checkbox Grid Rows	Numeric
Essay	Essay	String
Number	Ranking Grid, Drag & Drop Rank	Numeric
Whole Number	Textbox with whole number validation	Numeric
Date	Date	Date
Dollar	Textbox with currency validation	Dollar

*Alchemer includes descriptive value labels (answer options) for each value (reporting value) of a variable. Learn about SPSS Value Labels.

How do I export to SPSS?

Easy! Your SPSS export is available with all your other export options via the Results tab.

1. Go to **Results > Exports** and click **SPSS**.

2. On the **General** tab choose which questions you would like to include by selecting the checkbox in the **Active** column. Remove items by deselecting this checkbox.

3. Check for duplicate Variables and customize your **Variable**, **Variable Label**, and **SPSS Variable Type**, if needed. *Note: The general tab only shows 500 variables per page. Scroll to the bottom of the General tab to navigate to later pages to customize variables 500+.*

4. Click **Save & Run.**

5. Click **Download Export** and Unzip the .sav file.

Compatibility

- Comments are not available in SPSS exports.
- The Conjoint question is not available in SPSS exports.
- "Other, Write-In" rows in grid questions as not available in SPSS exports.
- The *Time Started* field is not includes as part of the SPSS export.

FAQ & Troubleshooting

I don't see any respondent data in my export, but the file is not empty. What should I do?

If your export file is not empty but does not contain the expected respondent data, it may be due to the size of the data being exported. To resolve this, try segmenting your export into smaller batches. We have found that exporting **1-3 pages of variables at a time** tends to be more successful. Exporting larger batches, typically around **10-20 pages**, may lead to failures.

Please note that the exact limit can vary due to numerous factors, so if you're still encountering issues, consider further reducing the number of pages per export.

I have foreign characters in my survey, and they're not showing up properly in my SPSS export - why is this happening?

Do not start your SPSS variables in alchemer with numeric values.

Special characters will not work in the normal data file. You will need to run the Syntax file (.SPS) to decode them.

To open your file with the correct characters, you need to set your syntax to unicode and then run the included data file. Depending on your version you can do both of these things using a point and click method or manually. SPSS Version 14 and below does not support Unicode.

To do so, open your syntax file (the .SPS file) and make sure at the top it says SET UNICODE=ON

Then run the syntax file using the .TXT file included in SPSS download folder. Make sure the **/FILE="/Users/SGCustomerService/Downloads/SpssExport/spss.txt**" is correctly pointing to the .TXT file.

Now click run to run your data. This should open your data in Unicode with all the correct characters.

How do I unzip my export?

Windows and Mac devices have the built-in functionality to unzip files. For Mac devices, simply double-clicking the file will unzip it automatically.

for Windows users to accesss all the information within a zipped folder, click and hold (or right-click) the folder, select Extract All, and then follow the instructions.

My zip file is empty - what gives?

This is likely the result of invalid characters in variable names. Variables that start with numbers, for instance. Double-check your variable names for invalid characters. Reserved keywords cannot be used as SPSS variable names: ALL, AND, BY, EQ, GE, GT, LE, LT, NE, NOT, OR, TO, and WITH.

Please refer to the SPSS Documentation for further information regarding variable name limitations.

I cannot unzip my data file - why is this happening?

This is typically the result of duplicate variable names which corrupts the data file. This can also be caused by very long variable names (over 255 characters). Double-check your variable names for duplicates and to ensure that they are not too lengthy (255 characters) re-run the download and you should be all set!

On the Settings tab of my SPSS Export, there is an option to "Enable show, unanswered questions to be distinguished from unshown questions" that is checked by default. What is this? What does it do?

When this option is checked each option in your checkbox questions will receive one of three values, 0 for unchecked, 1 for checked, and null or blank for unseen. If this option is unchecked, checkbox questions that were unseen by the respondent (hidden) will be counted as unanswered (meaning it will be marked with a 0). We recommend leaving this option checked to prevent interpreting unseen checkboxes as unchecked.

What does the "Hide disabled answer options" setting do?

This setting is enabled by default and will remove any disabled answer options from your SPSS Export. If you want to include your disabled answer options, uncheck this setting.

I have numeric reporting values defined but I am still getting option SKUs in my data file - what gives?

More often than not this is due to trailing blanks that are not stripped in our system so that the value is interpreted as a string value triggering the use of option SKUs.

I want to use really long reporting values, how many characters can my reporting values use?

We've found that the upper limit of reporting values for SPSS is 64 characters. Keep yours under 64 and you should be good to go!

Related Articles