CourseEval Anonymity FAQ

Are the survey tools anonymous?

Yes they are. The tools are controlled by an independent third party (CoursEval), who is legally bound to maintain anonymity.

Can the faculty member who taught a course identify a student’s responses? In other words can a faculty member connect your name to answers to the multiple choice or open-ended questions?

No. There is no way for IU faculty or staff to identify who wrote a given response unless you put your name or identifying information in a response. The software administrators at IU are likewise unable to manipulate the software to reveal names associated with their responses.

Why do I need to use my IU log in?

Logging into the system prevents students from entering multiple evaluations or evaluating a course they weren’t in. It also allows a reminder to be sent to students who have not completed their evaluation. Reminders are sent by CoursEval. No one at IU can link evaluations with student names.

Can technical staff at IU break into the database and retrieve students’ names and connect them to their responses?

No. Although our School of Education staff programmers have access to servers they are unable to view meaningful data because the database is encrypted. Thus they cannot connect responses and usernames.

Are the data absolutely safe?

Anonymous survey data are stored on a School of Education server. Our servers are protected by password-enabled firewall technology. In October of 2010, the School of Education participated in an external technology audit that included a review of server security. The goal was to address concerns about whether the security of a server can be breached. The conclusion was that our servers are secure. However, if an expert hacker can break into an FBI server, the remote possibility exists that our security could be bypassed. The possibility is extremely remote because the data on the server do not contain social security numbers or information that could be valuable to a potential hacker.
CourseEval Anonymity FAQ

So far these questions have addressed access by IU personnel (deans, department chairs, and technical personnel) to connect usernames with responses. Can the software developers at CourseEval connect names to responses?

Yes, but only if someone writes a response that contains a threat to a person or imminent danger to the population i.e. terrorism. In this rare case, law enforcement would contact CourseEval and require the response to be connected to a username.