The advantages and disadvantages of data entry methods

	Advantages	Disadvantages
Paper	Paper forms ubiquitous Cheaper set up	No quality control at source Bulky to store Error prone to transcribe Easy to intercept or lose
Telephone	Telephones ubiquitous Quick access Interaction with human operator gives reassurance	It may be difficult to find a global language Staff must work 24-hour basis for international studies Verbal transcription errors arise Lines can saturate
Optical character recognition	Paper forms ubiquitous Much higher throughput than manual re-typing Electronic storage of raw forms facilitated	Impossible to quality control at source Form design constrained Difficult to handle free text Manual supervision required
Web browser	Instant validation of data User tends to self train Bulk handling easy Data instantly available No paper to be stored	Requires internet connection Authentication distribution
Laptop	Instant validation of data Data rapidly available at centre No paper to be stored Available off-line	Expensive equipment Complicated development cycle
Personal Digital Assistants	Instant validation of data Data rapidly available at centre No paper to be stored	Expensive equipment Complicated development cycle Easy to lose equipment Variety of interfaces in use