

May 22, 2007

Mr. Paul Balsarak
Department of Energy Desk Officer
Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs
Office of Management and Budget
Washington, DC 20503

SUBJECT: DOE-887(72), "USE OF GENERIC CLEARANCE FOR THE ENERGY INFORMATION ADMINISTRATION'S WEB SITE CUSTOMER SURVEY"

Dear Mr. Balsarak:

The Energy Information Administration (EIA) plans to use the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) approved generic clearance, DOE-887, (DOE Customer Surveys' OMB No. 1901-0302, expiring 10/31/2009) to conduct a short survey of EIA's website customers. As agreed to under the DOE-887 "DOE Customer Surveys" clearance, we will anticipate your approval within two weeks. However, without the approval, we will not conduct this survey. We will provide OMB with the results of this data collection when we submit the annual report of surveys conducted under the generic clearance.

EIA conducted a similar web-based survey of EIA website customers in 2006 and received a large amount of useful feedback. The redesigned EIA website, launched in November 2005, provides users with a much improved navigation design, and a new search engine, which started in January 2006, provides users better access to our information. We have continued to improve the website in 2006 and 2007 with additions including a more useful FAQ page, more writing for the web rather than paper reports, and the development of several new data products. The results of previous surveys were invaluable in leading EIA to change and improve its search feature and electronic delivery of energy information.

The number of customers using EIA's website has increased rapidly each year. During 2006, unique visits to our site averaged nearly 3 million customers per month. With the move away from paper dissemination, EIA has responded to the exploding growth in electronic customers, and the increased focus on electronic government, and realizes that the design and functionality of a government statistical website has become more critical. Customers, policy-makers, business and financial markets, academia, the media, and private citizens all rely on information about energy from EIA that they can easily access, easily understand, and is of current interest. The best way to determine EIA's success is to ask its customers.

Two years ago EIA participated in the popular American Customer Satisfaction Index survey and collected a large amount of customer information. Last year EIA conducted a very short and simple survey to get an update on the EIA customer base and to determine customer satisfaction with EIA information. In 2007 we are proposing to keep all the

questions from the 2006 survey and add a couple more to collect actionable information for future web activities.

The standard questions are:

- Which category best describes you or your organization?
- How often do you visit EIA's website?
- Do you live in the United States?
- How satisfied are you with the quality of the information on EIA's website?
- Anything else you want to tell us?

The new questions are:

- What information were you looking for? (open text box; creating pre-populated choices is very difficult and the list, if it were inclusive, would be very long)
- Did you find the information you were looking for?
- Which of the following technologies do you use on the internet? (blogs, wikis, etc.)

We want to find out what people were looking for when they came to our site (and also the terms they use to describe their interests, which are sometimes different from our own) and whether they found it. Because of limited resources, EIA would like to determine which technologies are most used by our customers to help direct future efforts.

One of EIA's important performance measures for the Department and for OMB is the level of satisfaction with the quality of EIA information. EIA will include this question as part of the survey. As always, the final question will allow customers to provide open-ended feedback.

The medium for administration of this survey will be the website itself. EIA has created an electronic survey form (HTML document with the questions is attached) that will be posted on the EIA website, allowing customers to easily and automatically submit their feedback. After the customer visits the EIA website and then closes their browser, the short survey will appear on the screen, with a prominent "close-window" button if they don't want to complete the survey. The 8-question survey is expected to fit on two computer screens. EIA thinks that having a short survey will encourage participation.

EIA plans to have this survey on the website for two to three weeks, or until 5,000 responses are received. The number of returns will be monitored each day. If the goal of

5,000 responses is not reached in the two-week period, the survey will remain on the EIA website for a few days longer.

Because EIA does not have a list or frame of its website customers, EIA cannot designate a scientific sample, although direct input from customers is needed. We do expect responses from a diverse group of customers, based on the fact that past surveyed customers represented a diverse group, and due to the sheer volume of input we have received in previous surveys.

This proposed web survey is just one approach EIA has used to gather website user data. Three times in the past several years EIA has conducted usability testing of the website with real users; the Kid's Page also has been tested three times. As we add new features and content, EIA's usability team has gathered user feedback on the specific proposed additions. EIA customer web mail and telephone calls are carefully tracked and analyzed to identify areas for improvement.

While the responses to this survey cannot be claimed as being representative of all users, EIA will get an understanding of users' opinions by obtaining consistent information from a large number of users. During the survey period, EIA can compute a response rate proxy by: survey responses/unique web customers per day, although like for most web surveys, the actual response percentage is expected to be very small.

All participation in this survey is voluntary. No self-identification information will be collected. All results will be presented in aggregate form. Subsequent analysis of the data collected will limit any divulgence of individual customer responses.

The attached 8-question survey will take about 2 minute to complete. The burden for the targeted customer group should not exceed 166.6 hours (5,000 potential respondents multiplied by 2 minute each).

Colleen Blessing, EIA's User Experience Advisor, is the point of contact for questions and may be reached at 202.586.6482. Other questions should be directed to Grace Sutherland at 202.586.6264.

Sincerely,

Nancy J. Kirkendall
Director
Statistics and Methods Group
Energy Information Administration