

SUPPORTING STATEMENT

Technology Clearinghouse National Online Electronic Assessment

(OMB No. 1640-NEW)

B. Collection of Information Employment Statistical Methods

1. The National Online Electronic Assessment (NOEA) will be conducted with individuals from the first responder disciplines. Because the NOEA represents an effort to conduct exploratory research that will provide valuable feedback about the Tech Clearinghouse, a probability sampling technique is not required. Using a non-probability sampling method is appropriate for this type of assessment and will allow the assessment to be conducted without incurring the cost or time required to select a random sample.

A convenience and voluntary response sample will be used. An invitation to participate in the NOEA will be extended to first responders through the First Responder Technologies (R-Tech) User Working Group (UWG), the R-Tech Newsletter, and national and state-level associations representing first responder disciplines. It is anticipated that these sources will announce the opportunity for voluntary participation in the NOEA. Each association will choose the announcement dissemination method it deems most appropriate. It is anticipated that such methods could take the form of a direct e-mail to members, inclusion of the NOEA information in a newsletter, or some other method. A final sample of geographically dispersed state, tribal, and local-level officials representing the first responder disciplines is expected. It is the goal of the assessment to reach a minimum sample size of 100 individuals.

The proposed method of obtaining a convenience and voluntary sample is both a time- and cost-efficient means of obtaining participation in the assessment. Participants will voluntarily choose to participate in the assessment in response to a general appeal. Participants will be self-selected volunteers; therefore opportunity for bias does exist. Such sampling biases will be acknowledged in the final analysis of the assessment. The proposed methodology reduces the likelihood that the sample will represent a cross-section of the first responder population and prevents the results of the assessment from being generalizable to that population. However, because the primary goal of the research is to solicit feedback about the Tech Clearinghouse, results need not be generalizable to the first responder population.

DHS has opted to conduct this collection electronically in order to minimize the burden on participants. The electronic data collection forms will standardize the collection of information that is both necessary and sufficient for assessing the Tech Clearinghouse. A unique, participant developed identification code will be used on each data collection tool. This code will allow assessment administrators to capture data longitudinally across

the assessment process and will allow for useful, reliable analysis of assessment results. All online assessment instruments were created using *mrInterview*[™] 4.0 software, which works in conjunction with the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS[™]). Data collected from online assessment instruments will be analyzed using SPSS[™] 15.0. The assessment was designed to gather useful qualitative data. Qualitative analyses of the results of the NOEA will be used to improve the usability and relevancy the Tech Clearinghouse. Results will be reported in the form of descriptive statistics.

2. The statistical methodology for the sample selection is described above. This is not a recurring data collection effort, therefore, participants will only be asked to complete the assessment one time.
3. An invitation to participate in the NOEA will be extended to first responders through the First Responder Technologies (R-Tech) User Working Group (UWG), the R-Tech Newsletter, and national and state-level associations representing first responder disciplines. Participation in the assessment is voluntary. The announcement of the NOEA will likely reach hundreds of first responders. At this time, it is not possible to determine, or even to estimate, the assessment's response rate. Therefore, the assessment administrators will be ready to augment the sample size through additional outreach as necessary. It is the goal of the assessment to reach a minimum sample size of 100 individuals.
4. An internal beta test of procedures and the online forms will be completed prior to sending the assessment information to all identified participants.
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