

The Census Bureau plans to conduct additional research under the generic clearance for questionnaire pretesting research (OMB number 0607-0725). We would like to expand the usability testing to support the electronic version of the Annual Capital Expenditures Survey (ACES) that we sent you for approval on September 15. The ACES is an annual survey that collects detailed capital expenditure information. Once every five years this survey expands to collect additional information about structures and equipment.

We are currently completing a round of usability testing (with 15-20 respondents) for the 2009 Survey (asking about 2008).. Shortly before this testing the developer of the electronic instrument created two separate versions of the ACES survey, which differ only in layout. Due to this development, the initial visits with respondents have focused on their comparison of each version and an evaluation of which version would be most beneficial for them. Therefore, we would like to conduct a second round of testing between mid-December and mid-January with 15-20 additional respondents in the metropolitan Washington D.C. and Baltimore areas. This second round of testing will focus on the version that respondents preferred during our initial tests and will test the entire instrument.

Enclosed are updated screen shots for both versions currently being tested. The majority of the screens being tested are the same for both versions. The design changes affect the following questions: Capital Expenditures by Industry, Capital Expenditures by Type of Structure, and Capital Expenditures by Type of Equipment. At the end of the first round of interview, one of these two versions will be chosen and tested in the second round.

Most of the interviews will be conducted with previous electronic reporters. We will attempt to recruit a sub-set of test respondents from non-electronic reporters. Interviews will be conducted at the business site by staff from the Establishment Survey Methods Staff within the Census Bureau's Office of Statistical Methods and Research for Economic Programs. Subject area specialists from the Census Bureau will accompany the usability tester on most, if not all, of the interviews. They will assist with respondent debriefing, especially in cases where additional clarification of the subject matter is required. Interviews will be audio recorded with the participants' permission to aid researchers in accurately reporting findings and recommendations.

After businesses are recruited, participants will receive follow-up reminders about their appointments. Participants will be informed that their response is voluntary and that the information they provide is confidential and will be seen only by Census Bureau or special sworn employees involved in the research project. We will not be providing monetary incentives to participants in this study.

We still estimate that each interview will take approximately 1 hour. Thus the total additional burden for the additional companies is 20 hours (1 hour x 20 respondents).

The contact person for questions regarding data collection and statistical aspects of the design of this research is:

Amy Anderson  
Establishment Survey Methods Staff

U.S. Census Bureau,  
Washington, D.C. 20233  
(301) 763-7544  
[Amy.E.Anderson@census.gov](mailto:Amy.E.Anderson@census.gov)