

The Census Bureau plans to conduct a usability test of the emerging American Community Web site (ACS) which is housed on [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov). The Web site disseminates much of the ACS meta data, explains the survey to survey recipients, and directs users to the AFF Web site for the ACS data. The new site is under construction and will launch sometime in 2011.

The developers of the ACS Web site are currently working on a new release of the site. The current study aims to identify issues that are problematic and/or frustrating to the user.

In March 2010, we will interview 15 external participants from the Washington DC metropolitan region. The participants we recruit will be novice users of Census data but must have a minimum of one year Internet experience and use the Internet at least three times a week to search for information. Participants will be recruited from the Usability Lab database, which is composed of people from the metropolitan DC area who volunteered to participate after responding to a Craigslist posting or an ad in a local newspaper. Participants will come to the Usability Lab at the Census Bureau for the study and will be compensated \$40.00 for their participation.

Participants will be given an initial questionnaire about their Internet experience and some demographic characteristics. Then each participant will be given a set of tasks for the Web site. Tasks will be randomized such that no participant will receive the tasks in the same order. Participants will complete the tasks with links that are working, but the design is still early enough in the process to make changes for improvement.

Participants will be asked to think-aloud while they are working on the tasks, and they will also provide feedback about the Web site during a debriefing at the conclusion of the session. Participants will be prompted to think-aloud when they fall silent. Finally, participants will be asked to complete a paper-and-pencil questionnaire designed to measure their satisfaction with the new version of the ACS site. Subjective satisfaction ratings will be collected for such design elements as the layout of page, ease of finding information, and use of Census jargon. A copy of the initial questionnaire, the satisfaction questionnaire, and the task sets are all enclosed.

We estimate that users will spend one hour on average taking the study, including time spent working on the demographic and satisfaction questions, the tasks and the debriefing. Thus, the total estimated respondent burden for this test is 15 hours.

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

Erica Olmsted-Hawala  
Center for Survey Methods Research  
U.S. Census Bureau  
Washington, D.C. 20233  
(301) 763-4893  
[Erica.L.Olmsted.Hawala@census.gov](mailto:Erica.L.Olmsted.Hawala@census.gov)