

**OMB Statement for
TAB Conjoint Update Survey 2011
Wage & Investment Division
Wage & Investment Research & Analysis (WIRA)
BPA TIRNO-05-Z-00014, Task Request # 0109
Requisition W-0-W0-0R-CS-A01-000**

A. Introduction

In 2006, a conjoint study was conducted as part of the Taxpayer Assistance Blueprint (TAB) to investigate taxpayers' preferences among options for contacting the IRS to resolve tax-related issues and how to prepare and file their tax return. The study used a random sample but over sampled for Taxpayer Assistance Center (TAC) users. The data collected in the 2006 conjoint study was used to create the Taxpayer Value Model, so IRS employees can access the data to make decisions about potential service options for taxpayers.

For this project, the IRS wants to collect data to build upon the previous conjoint to include new service channels, service tasks expected to be available within the next 2-4 years (such as tasks related to the recent Healthcare legislation), more realistic performance attribute categories derived from IRS policy and Subject Matter Experts in each service channel, and over sampling for taxpayers who self-prepare their return as prior research indicates that these individuals use IRS service at higher rates than those taxpayers who use a paid preparer. The data collected in this project will be used to update the Taxpayer Value Model.

This research is part of an overarching research effort focused on taxpayers who self-prepare their return in order to fully understand their behavior and service needs. This project is the second phase in a line of work designed to develop a full understanding of self-prepared taxpayers' behavior related to tax-related tasks and service channel usage.

Objectives

The main objective of this project is to determine how tax-related task attributes, service channel attributes, and barriers/perceived burden influence service channel selection among taxpayers. This comparative value analysis process will evaluate service channel options for use by taxpayers.

WIRA will conduct the TAB Conjoint Update Survey (previously named irs.gov Comparative Value Analysis Survey) with a random sample of taxpayers but over sampling for taxpayers who self-prepare their return. Sections of the survey will include questions about:

- Tasks the participants have encountered/expect to encounter (choice tasks)
- Service decisions relative to the task
- IRS and non-IRS service channel and application use
- Service channel and application performance attribute priorities
- Service channel and application attributes that create potential barriers or additional perceived burden

WIRA will use IRS data from past research projects (gathered in Phase 1 of the project) and interviews with Subject Matter Experts to determine the appropriate survey options for questions about task attributes, service performance attributes, barriers, etc.

The data obtained from survey respondents will assist in evaluating various aspects of their experience and to provide input as to establishing the areas of the process that need improvement. The survey feedback received will not institute new policy, yet will enable the Service to effectively meet taxpayer needs.

B. Methodology

Survey Study Design

The study will use a conjoint survey to collect data using KnowledgeNetworks web panels. A copy of the survey questionnaire and invitation are attached.

Data to be Collected

The conjoint questionnaires include screening criteria, profile questions, full descriptions of choice attributes and attribute levels, a training task, and conjoint screens that are programmed to be administered in a randomized fashion.

How Data will be Collected and Used

Data will be collected by conducting a web-based survey using web panel participants through KnowledgeNetworks. Except for that taxpayers who self-prepare their return by hand will be oversampled for; the sample must be representative of the population. Taxpayers who do not have internet access will be given any items necessary to participate in the online survey (such as internet access and hardware).

The following requirements will be met in assembling the online panel for recruitment:

- o The sampling frame must include both listed and unlisted phone numbers.
- o The sample frame cannot be limited to current Web users or computer owners.
- o Panelists must be selected by chance to join the panel.
- o Unselected volunteers may not be allowed to join the panel.

The data will be used to better identify process improvement areas and be used as part of the decision-making process regarding decisions about service channels by showing taxpayer preference changes given specific service channel attributes.

Data Collection Dates

The data collection period for recruitment of participants and conducting the survey is scheduled for June 4 – June 30, 2011.

Who is Conducting the Research/Where

PCG and its subcontractor KnowledgeNetworks will be conducting the research in conjunction with W&I Research & Analysis. The research will be conducted by web panels recruited from a nationwide panel of taxpayers.

Cost of Study

The estimated cost for the survey is \$189,633.

Stipend

There will be no stipend. Participants will receive 50,000 points from KnowledgeNetworks as a token of appreciation.

Location-Region/City and Facility

Participants will be selected from a nationwide web panel.

Expected Response Rate

The expected response rate is 60%. This is based on that the last TAB Conjoint Survey (using the same recruitment and survey administration method) had a response rate of 75%. Since then, the online survey market has become more saturated and therefore we expect a lower response rate than the previous TAB Conjoint Survey.

Methods to Maximize Response Rate

Members of the KnowledgeNetworks panel receive an incentive within the KnowledgeNetworks structure (i.e. points) for participating in the survey. Respondents will be assured privacy of their responses to the extent allowed by law. PCG will provide a Help Desk for participants with questions or issues with the survey.

Test Structure and Design

The study will utilize conjoint design for a single online questionnaire. The online survey administration will use KnowledgeNetworks panel members as the sample source and PCG will provide help desk support. We anticipate that the questionnaire will take approximately 25-30 minutes to complete, and will consist of a choice-based conjoint where participants are given specific attribute levels for a particular scenario and asked to choose which service delivery channel they would use.

Efforts to not Duplicate Research

This is currently the only TAB Conjoint Update study being conducted. WIRA is coordinating with other IRS conjoint survey studies to ensure no duplication, to save time by working together on joint tasks that need to be accomplished in order to write the survey instrument, and conducting interviews with internal Subject Matter Experts (SME) together to reduce burden for the internal SMEs.

Participants Criteria

This project will include taxpayers who filed a tax return in tax year 2008. Since previous research indicates that taxpayers who self-prepare use IRS services more than those who use a paid preparer, the contractor will need to oversample for taxpayers who self-prepare their return by hand (n = 400). The definition of “by hand” means the taxpayer did not use software to prepare their return.

C. Privacy, Disclosure, Privacy, Security Issues

All participants will be subject to the provisions of the Taxpayer Bill of Rights II during this study and Macro will ensure that all participants are treated fairly and appropriately.

The security of the data used in this project and the privacy of taxpayers will be carefully safeguarded at all times. Security requirements are based on the Computer Security Act of 1987 and Office of Management and Budget Circular A-130, Appendices A & B. Physical security measures include a locked, secure office. Notes are stored in locked cabinets or shredded.

The IRS will apply and meet fair information and record-keeping practices to ensure privacy protection of all taxpayers. This includes criteria for disclosure—laid out in the Privacy Act of

1974, the Freedom of Information Act, and Section 6103 of the Internal Revenue Code—all of which provide for the protection of taxpayer information as well as its release to authorized recipients.

The survey data will not contain any taxpayer names, Social Security Numbers, or Taxpayer Identification Numbers. Participants will not be identified in any of the documents or files used for this project. We will limit and control the amount of information we collect to those items that are necessary to accomplish the research questions. We will carefully safeguard the security of data utilized as well as the privacy of the survey respondents. We will apply the fair information and record-keeping practices to ensure protection of all survey respondents. The criterion for disclosure laid out in the Privacy Act, the Freedom of Information Act, and section 6103 of the Internal Revenue Code provides for the protection of information as well as its releases to authorized recipients.

PRA Statement and OMB Control Number

The OMB Control Number for the study and all required information will be provided to participants at the beginning or before starting the survey: The Paperwork Reduction Act requires IRS to display an OMB Control Number (1545-1432) on all public information requests. If you have any comments regarding the time estimates associated with this study or suggestions for making this process simpler, please write to the Tax Products Coordinating Committee, SE:W:CAR:MP:T:T:SP, 1111 Constitution Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20224.

D. Burden Hours

Expected burden hour estimates as follows.

Activity	Per Person	Number of People	Total
Read Invitation to Participate	5 minutes	3,834	19,170 minutes
Complete Screener*	5 minutes	3,000	15,000 minutes
Complete Survey	30 minutes	2,300	69,000 minutes
		TOTAL MINUTES	103,170 minutes
		TOTAL HOURS	1719.5 hours

* Complete screener time is only included for those individuals who read the invitation to participate, completed the screener, and were not eligible to complete the survey. For those taxpayers who complete the survey, the screener time is included in the survey time.

The total estimated burden is 1719.5 hours.

Other Information

The following information will be provided to the Organizational Performance Division within 60 days after the close of the survey data collection operations:

- Findings: A brief summary of significant findings that were evidenced in the results.
- Actions taken or lessons learned: A brief summary of any action taken or lessons learned as a result of the findings.
- Number of participants in the survey.

- Number of requests made for taxpayer participation
- Survey dates.

Statistical Contact

For questions regarding the TAB Conjoint Survey and methodology, contact:

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Attachments

- 1) Invitation to Participate
- 2) Survey Instrument