

Supporting Statement

Supporting Statement Approval Request to Conduct Customer Satisfaction Research (OMB #1545-1432)

A. JUSTIFICATION

1. Circumstances Making the Collection of Information Necessary

Executive Order 12862 directs Federal agencies to provide service to the public that matches or exceeds the best service available in the private sector. In order to work continuously to ensure that our programs are effective and meet our customers' needs, SB/SE Research seeks to obtain OMB approval of a survey to collect feedback on our service delivery, on behalf of SB/SE Office of Business Modernization, Business Systems Planning (BSP).

This collection of information is necessary to enable SB/SE Research to garner taxpayer and practitioner feedback, on behalf of BSP, in an efficient, timely manner, in accordance with our commitment to improving service delivery. The information collected from taxpayers and practitioners will help ensure that users have an effective, efficient, and satisfying experience with using secure messaging technology to communicate with the IRS. This feedback will provide insights into taxpayer and practitioner preferences for continuing to use the SEMS technology to securely communicate with the IRS via email. This collection of feedback will allow BSP to assess the feasibility of using SEMS as a secure method to communicate with the taxpayer and practitioner communities via email until the IRS develops and implements an enterprise-wide solution.

2. Purpose and Use of the Information Collection

Determining if secure email messaging could be an effective, cost efficient and secure form of communication for the taxpayer and practitioner communities to exchange information with the IRS requires assessment of the experiences and preferences of the SEMS Pilot participants. SB/SE Research will collect, analyze, and interpret information gathered through this survey to identify participants' opinions regarding their satisfaction with SEMS email as a form of communication; interest in using secure email messaging in the future; and the benefits of using SEMS email, in terms of easier case resolution, time savings and burden reduction. BSP will be able to use this information to determine the feasibility of using the SEMS process and technology to facilitate secure email communication between the IRS and the taxpayer and practitioner communities. The solicitation of feedback will target areas such as: participants' satisfaction with the SEMS process; participants' perception of the security of their communication with the IRS using SEMS; the purchasing price of the SEMS certificate; participants' perceptions of the benefits of using secure email to facilitate case resolution, time savings and burden reduction. Responses will be assessed to plan and inform efforts to provide opportunities for the taxpayer and practitioner communities to communicate with the IRS using secure email. If this information is not collected, vital feedback from taxpayers and practitioners regarding the SEMS process and technology will be unavailable.

SB/SE Research will only submit a collection for approval under this clearance if it meets the following conditions:

- Information gathered will be used only internally for general service improvement and program management purposes and is not intended for release outside of the Internal Revenue Service (if released, procedures outlined in Question 16 will be followed);
- Information gathered will not be used for the purpose of substantially informing influential policy decisions;¹
- Information gathered will yield qualitative information; the collections will not be designed or expected to yield statistically reliable results or used as though the results are generalizable to the population of study ;
- The collections are voluntary;
- The collections are low-burden for respondents (based on considerations of total burden hours, total number of respondents, or burden-hours per respondent) and are low-cost for both the respondents and the Federal Government;
- The collections are non-controversial and do not raise issues of concern to other Federal agencies;
- Any collection is targeted to the solicitation of opinions from respondents who have experience with the program or may have experience with the program in the near future; and

If these conditions are not met, SB/SE Research will submit an information collection request to OMB for approval through the normal PRA process.

SB/SE Research has established a manager/managing entity to serve for this survey and will conduct an independent review of this information collection to ensure compliance with the terms of this clearance prior to submitting this collection to OMB.

3. Consideration Given to Information Technology

The survey will be administered via email. Upon opening the email, the taxpayer or practitioner will be solicited to take the survey contained in the attachment. The taxpayer or practitioner will consent to take the survey by clicking and opening the fill-able Portable Document Format (PDF) document in the attachment to the email containing the survey. The survey respondent will complete the survey, click “send” at the end of the PDF and the completed survey will be sent to an IRS email address created specifically for this survey. The email inbox will be secured by password.

4. Duplication of Information

No similar data are gathered or maintained by the Internal Revenue Service or are available from other sources known to SB/SE Research.

¹ As defined in OMB and agency Information Quality Guidelines, “influential” means that “an agency can reasonably determine that dissemination of the information will have or does have a clear and substantial impact on important public policies or important private sector decisions.”

5. Reducing the Burden on Small Entities

Small business or other small entities may be involved in these efforts but SB/SE Research will minimize the burden on them of information collections approved under this clearance by asking for readily available information, and using short, easy-to-complete information collection instruments.

6. Consequences of Not Conducting Collection

Without this type of feedback, SB/SE Research will not have timely information regarding SEMS Pilot participants' satisfaction with and opinions regarding the SEMS process and technology that BSP can use to determine the feasibility of providing SEMS secure email messaging opportunities to taxpayers and practitioners.

7. Special Circumstances

There are no special circumstances. The information collected will be voluntary and will not be used for statistical purposes.

8. Consultations with Persons Outside the Internal Revenue Service

Not applicable.

9. Payment or Gift

The SB/SE Research will not provide payment or other forms of remuneration to respondents.

10. Confidentiality

No personally identifiable information will be gathered.

11. Sensitive Nature

No questions will be asked that are of a personal or sensitive nature.

12. Burden of Information Collection

The information will be collected via a Customer Satisfaction Survey. The surveys will be distributed, collected and analyzed electronically.

Estimated Annual Reporting Burden				
Type of Collection	No. of Respondents	Annual Frequency per Response	Hours per Response	Total Hours
Customer Satisfaction Survey	1,500	1	5 minutes	125 hours

Expected dates of data collection are from 6/25/2012 through 7/16/2012.

The total universe of potential respondents will be the population of taxpayers and/or practitioners who participate in the SEMS pilot, which will not be known until the SEMS pilot ends in July 2012. The maximum number of external participants in the SEMS pilot is the total number of taxpayers with cases assigned to the participating 42 ROs and RAs in the pilot. The burden hours calculated in the table above are based on the average caseload numbers for ROs and RAs in FY2010. Based on past survey experience, SB/SE expects to collect at least 20 percent of the maximum number of responses (300 responses). If the response rate is 20 percent, then the burden hours will be 25 hours. The survey period will run for three weeks. There is not an expected response rate for the survey given that the population of potential respondents is unknown. There is no screening of respondents.

13. Costs to Respondents

No costs are anticipated.

14. Costs to Federal Government

The anticipated cost to the Federal Government is approximately \$0 annually.

15. Reason for Change

Not applicable. This is a new IC request.

16. Tabulation of Results, Schedule, Analysis Plans

Feedback collected under this information collection provides useful information, but it does not yield data that can be generalized to the overall population of taxpayers and practitioners. Findings will be used for general service improvement, but are not for publication or other public release.

Although SB/SE Research does not intend to publish its findings, SB/SE Research may receive requests to release the information (e.g., congressional inquiry, Freedom of Information Act requests). SB/SE Research will disseminate the findings when appropriate, strictly following the Internal Revenue Service's "Guidelines for Ensuring the Quality of Information Disseminated to

the Public.", and will include specific discussion of the limitation of the qualitative results discussed above.

17. Display of OMB Approval Date

We are requesting no exemption.

18. Exceptions to Certification for Paperwork Reduction Act Submissions

These activities comply with the requirements in 5 CFR 1320.9.

B. STATISTICAL METHODS

The primary purpose of these collections will be for internal management purposes; there are no plans to publish or otherwise release this information.

1. Universe and Respondent Selection

SB/SE Research will administer the SEMS Pilot survey via email. The taxpayer or practitioner will receive an email invitation to take the survey. There will be no sampling in this survey, as all participants in the SEMS Pilot will be asked to take the survey via email message. The survey will be attached to the email as a fill-able PDF document. Respondents will be able to submit the completed survey to an Internal Revenue Service email inbox by clicking the "send" button at the end of the survey PDF.

2. Procedures for Collecting Information

All taxpayer and practitioner participants in the SEMS Pilot will be solicited to take the survey via email. The survey will be attached to the email as a fill-able PDF document. Respondents will be able to submit the completed survey to an Internal Revenue Service email inbox by clicking the "send" button at the end of the survey PDF.

Respondents will providing feedback regarding their experiences using SEMS process and technology to communicates securely with the IRS as a part of the SEMS Pilot

Research will have a "cut off" date for accepting any completed surveys. The expected dates of data collection are from June 25, 2011 to July 16, 2012.

3. Methods to Maximize Response

Information collected under this survey will not yield generalizable quantitative findings; it can provide useful customer input, but it does not yield data about customer opinions that can be generalized to the population.

4. Testing of Procedures

Pretesting will be done with internal staff. The pretest will be conducted to ensure that the survey form functions properly and the instructions and questions are clear and logical.

5. Contacts for Statistical Aspects and Data Collection

The names and contact information for this project are:

- Cait DeStefano, Operations Research Analyst, SB/SE Research-Philadelphia