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

Online web based survey to understand the effectiveness of IRS notices

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, Office of Taxpayer Correspondence (OTC), (hereafter "the Agency") seeks to obtain OMB approval collect quantitative feedback on 11 IRS notices.

This collection of information is necessary to enable the Agency to garner customer and stakeholder feedback in an efficient, timely manner, in accordance with our commitment to improving service notices. The information collected from our customers and stakeholders will help ensure that users have an effective, efficient, and satisfying experience with the Agency's documents. This feedback will provide insights into customer or stakeholder perceptions, experiences and expectations, provide an early warning of issues with notices, and focus attention on areas where communication, training or changes in operations might improve. These collections will allow for ongoing, collaborative and actionable communications between the Agency and its customers and stakeholders. It will also allow feedback to contribute directly to the improvement of program management.

2. Purpose and Use of the Information Collection

The primary purpose of this web-based research survey is to understand respondent perception and comprehension for 11 IRS notices. Each survey will be tested in pairs inclusive of the existing notice along with its redesigned version. This would enable us to evaluate differences in perception and comprehension. By comparing differences in perception and comprehension among pairs or against S+G benchmarks, we can meet our secondary objective to identify areas that could be improved and what those potential refinements might be.

The research data and findings will be used to:

- Validate and/or quantify the degree of improvement of redesigned IRS notices
- Identify problem areas in the notices and provide guidance and insight on specific refinements
- Enhance an already established perception and comprehension benchmark of IRS notices
- Used internally for general service improvement and program management purposes and is not intended for release outside of the agency
- Information gathered will not be used for the purpose of substantially informing influential policy decisions;
- Information gathered will yield quantitative information; and is expected to yield statistically reliable results that are generalizable to the population of study;
- The collection is voluntary;

- The collection is 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 collection is non-controversial and do not raise issues of concern to other Federal agencies;
- This collection is targeted to the solicitation of opinions from respondents who have experience with the notices or may have experience with it in the near future; and
- The feedback received will not institute new policy, yet enable the Service to effectively meet taxpayer needs.
- Survey responses will be collected through a third-party vendor, Global Market Insite (GMI). GMI will source respondents through their nationally representative online consumer panel. Response data will be collected via GMI's online survey interface.

3. **Consideration Given to Information Technology**
   The Agency will collect information electronically and/or use online collaboration tools to reduce burden.

4. **Duplication of Information**
   No similar data are gathered or maintained by the Agency or are available from other sources known to the Agency.

5. **Reducing the Burden on Small Entities**
   N/A

6. **Consequences of Not Conducting Collection**
   Without these types of feedback, the Agency will not have timely information to adjust its services to meet customer needs.

7. **Special Circumstances**
   There are no special circumstances.

8. **Consultations with Persons Outside the Agency**
   N/A

9. **Payment or Gift**
   A point stipend worth a minimum of $4.00 will be provided for each completed survey. Points can be redeemed for a check that is mailed to the respondent or can be redeemed online. The stipend aims to encourage participation and to thank respondents for sharing their time and contributions to our research.

10. **Confidentiality**
    No PII will be collected during this online research. The data returned to IRS will have no identifying information relating specific records to individual taxpayers. Nonetheless, IRS will ensure that privacy and security of the aggregated results will receive the utmost attention. Public and official access to the information will be tightly controlled. The computer files containing this tabulated information will remain password protected at all times. Data security approaching level C-2 will be accomplished using

the Windows XP operating system. We will apply fair information and record-keeping practices to ensure protection of all taxpayers. 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 taxpayer information as well as its release to authorized recipients.

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

12. Burden of Information Collection
An on-line survey will be used to collect information from respondents. The annual burden hours requested are based on the number of collections we expect to conduct over the requested period for this clearance.

Category of Respondent	**No. of Respondents**	**Participation Time**	**Burden hours**
People contacted to participate in the survey	12,547 approximately	1 Min	209 hrs
Actual participants completing the survey	4,531 approximately	20 min	1,510 hrs
Total	17,078 approximately		1,719 hrs

13. Costs to Respondents
No costs are anticipated.

14. Costs to Federal Government
The anticipated cost to the Federal Government are approximately $55,000. These costs are comprised of online survey programming costs and incentives paid to survey participants.

15. Reason for Change
Not applicable.

16. Tabulation of Results, Schedule, Analysis Plans
Feedback collected will provide useful information, and will yield data that can be generalized to the overall population. Findings will be used for general service improvement, but are not for publication or other public release.

Although the Agency does not intend to publish its findings, the Agency may receive requests to release the information (e.g., congressional inquiry, Freedom of Information Act requests). The Agency will disseminate the findings when appropriate, strictly following the Agency'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.

Survey responses will be collected through a third-party vendor, Global Market Insite (GMI). GMI will source respondents through their nationally representative online consumer panel. Response data will be collected via GMI’s online survey interface.

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.

19. **Dates collection will begin and end**
August 2012 –October 2012

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

This web-based survey will be conducted with general US consumers. The research will be based on voluntary participation by a specific segment of the population that has identified themselves as qualified respondents; over the age of 18 that reside in the US and have filed a tax return in the last five (5) years.

Respondents will be drawn from a standing panel who are voluntarily participating in this survey. Respondents will be sent an e-mail indicating that a survey is available for them to take. They can then click on the link embedded in the e-mail and will be taken to a set of screening questions.

An estimated 348,527 taxpayers will be receiving invitations to participate in the survey. From this, 3.6% are expected to click on the invitation and begin the survey. However, not all respondents who click will complete the survey (some will start and drop off before finishing, and some will not meet the qualification criteria). We anticipate approximately 36% will complete the survey, so we will achieve 400 completed surveys for each test, or 4,400 in total (11 tests, 400 surveys).

2. Procedures for Collecting Information

Data collection will be conducted using commercial survey-specific software to automate analysis of feedback.

3. Methods to Maximize Response

Information collected will yield quantitative findings; it will provide useful customer input and data about customer opinions that can be generalized.

4. Testing of Procedures

Pretesting may be done with internal staff familiar with the notices.

5. Contacts for Statistical Aspects and Data Collection

This statistical expertise will be available from agency statisticians or from contractors and the Agency will include the names and contact information of persons consulted in the specific information collection requests submitted.