

The Census Bureau plans to conduct additional research under the generic clearance for questionnaire pretesting research (OMB number 0607-0725). We will conduct usability testing of the Internet reporting application for the 2012 Commodity Flow Survey (CFS). The CFS is co-sponsored by the Census Bureau and the Bureau of Transportation Statistics (BTS) and is a quinquennial survey producing data on the movement of goods in the United States. Though the survey is quinquennial, it requires respondents to report for the four quarters of the survey year. The electronic version of the CFS will be available for testing in October 2011.

The CFS will be designed and delivered using the Census Bureau's Centurion electronic reporting system. Usability testing of the Internet application will focus on issues such as the layout of questions and screens, the navigation within and between screens, and edits. Special attention will be paid to the layout and functionality of Item F because the visual design of the electronic form differs from that of the paper version.

Draft copies of the available screen shots and protocol are enclosed. Final screen shots will likely differ from the enclosed screen shots as decisions affecting the system design will continue to be made in the weeks preceding the usability testing.

During October we plan to conduct one round of usability interviews with respondents from up to 20 businesses in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area. We will attempt to obtain interviews with businesses that vary in size and complexity. Findings will be used to revise the CFS Internet application.

Interviews will be conducted at the business site by staff from the Response Improvement Research Staff within the Economic Directorate of the Census Bureau. Subject area specialists from the CFS staff and BTS 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 by phone or secure fax. 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 estimate that it will be necessary to interview only one respondent at each company. We estimate the length of the interviews will average 1 hour. Thus, the maximum estimated burden for this research is 20 hours.

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

Nicole Adolph
Response Improvement Research Staff
U.S. Census Bureau
Washington, D.C. 20233
(301) 763-1577
Nicole.S.Adolph@census.gov