

The Census Bureau plans to conduct additional research under the generic clearance for questionnaire pretesting research (OMB number 0607-0725). We will be conducting split-panel usability testing to examine the efficiency and ease of use of the new Consumer Expenditure Web Diary Survey. The Consumer Expenditure Survey, which is sponsored by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, collects information from the Nation's households and families on their buying habits (expenditures), income, and household characteristics. The survey consists of two components -- a quarterly Interview Survey and a weekly Diary Survey, each with its own questionnaire and sample.

In the paper Diary Survey currently in production, respondents are asked to keep track of all their purchases made each day for two consecutive 1-week periods. Each week participants receive a self-administered weekly diary during a separate visit by a Census Bureau interviewer. This research focuses on the prototype Web Diary, which requires only one visit from an interviewer and then the respondent completes the online Diary for those consecutive 2-week periods.

Three different versions of the way of organizing the expenditure items will be tested in this research. One group (Group 1) of usability participants will complete the Web diary for a condition in which the expenditures are organized by day and person. A second group (Group 2) of participants would be presented with the expenditure items organized according to the type of purchase, matching the categories offered in the diary tabs for the current survey -- food purchased for consumption out of home, food purchased for consumption in home, etc. A third group (Group 3) of participants would be presented with the expenditure items with no organization in order to compare participant interaction with the Web diary.

In Group 2, where the organization of the receipts corresponds one-to-one to the organization of the actual instrument, we will be able to get a more pure test of the usability of the instrument without the extra noise associated with how people's organization does or does not articulate with the instrument. This may produce specific insights into the usability. We will also test the usability of the instrument on a tablet computer using an iPad in addition to a desktop computer. Since Group 2 can be expected to take somewhat less time than groups 1 and 3, this will be the best group with which to test the iPad.

Between January and February 2012, staff from the Census Bureau's usability lab will conduct a maximum of 60 usability interviews (20 in each group) using participants from the lab's participant database. The sessions will take place in the Census Bureau's usability lab. We will ask potential participants whether they currently own and/or use an iPad tablet when screening them for participation during the recruitment process. The use of iPads will be restricted to those participants who are screened and determined to be appropriate -- (e.g. those who have experience with tablet computers, iPads specifically). Because we will not recruit specifically for this, we cannot predict how many participants will be given the iPad condition. We will have the iPad users complete the tasks for Group 2 with both the regular computer and the iPad. We will randomly assign those in the iPad subgroup to the condition of beginning with the computer first or the iPad first so that it is a 50/50 split.

Each experimental session will include a test administrator and one participant at a time. Screen shots from the Consumer Expenditure Web Diary can be found in Attachment A. The instrument is the same for all three tested versions with the exception of the organization of the expenditures.

The protocol for the sessions is included in Attachment B. Participants will be asked to fill out an initial questionnaire containing demographic questions and questions about their computer and Internet experience (Attachment D). Then they will use a web guide to complete the survey (Attachment C). Following completion of the tasks, participants will complete a brief satisfaction questionnaire (Attachment E).

Participants will be informed that their response is voluntary and that the information they provide is confidential and will be seen only by employees involved in the research project. Participants will be paid \$40 for their assistance in this project.

The estimated time for completion of the experimental session is one hour and the estimated time for the recruiting phone call is ten minutes. Thus, the maximum burden time for this research is 70 hours.

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

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