

The U.S. 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 alternate options for responding to the American Community Survey's (ACS) Date of Birth Question online.

The two options are using a text-entry box, which is the current procedure, and a drop-down menu. The drop-down menu will be a response option where respondents select the day, month, and year of their birth from a list of options. The goal of the testing is to determine which is easier for respondents and provides more accurate data.

Between April and June 2012, staff from the Census Bureau's usability lab and the Population Division will conduct a maximum of 150 usability interviews (75 in each group). We will recruit and run participants in three offsite locations and in the Census Bureau's Usability Lab. Participants will be from the general population, and we will attempt to obtain a cross-section of participants with respect to their ages, sex, computer experience, and living situations (i.e., how well a person knows the ages and dates of birth for the other members of his or her household).

The sessions will take place at: 1) a local university (most likely the University of Maryland in College Park, MD); 2) a Community Center in Alexandria, VA; 3) a site in Suitland, MD; and 4) the Census Bureau's Usability Lab. Recruiting for the off-site locations will be done through flyers posted at the sites before the session takes place and through contacts at those locations.

In order to check the accuracy of the ages and dates of birth that participants enter during testing, they will be asked for the dates of birth of all members of their household during the screening interview when they are recruited. These will be checked against the responses entered during the usability session. Additionally, we will ask the participants to present their driver's license or some other form of ID with their date of birth at the end of the session as another check of response accuracy.

The participants will complete a total of 10-15 questions (ACS 100 percent items) displayed on screens very similar to those used in the 2011 ACS Internet test. A screen shot of the text-entry Date of Birth screen is included in Attachment A. The drop-down version of the screen is still being developed by the Application Support Division. We will provide that to you upon its completion. Each participant will complete the survey twice, seeing both versions of the screen. The order in which they view the screens will be randomized prior to the sessions. 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, which will be administered using an on-screen computer survey (Attachment C). Following completion of each version of the survey, participants will complete a brief satisfaction questionnaire, also on-screen (Attachment D).

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. Thus, the maximum burden time for this research is 150 hours.

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

Kathleen T. Ashenfelter, Ph.D.
Center for Survey Measurement
Room 5K505
U.S. Census Bureau
Washington, D.C. 20233
301-763-4922
Kathleen.t.ashenfelter@census.gov