

**Census 2010 Deadline Messaging/Compressed Schedule
Experiment
Individual Request for Clearance
April 16, 2009**

The U.S. Census Bureau plans to conduct Census 2010 Deadline Messaging (DM)/Compressed Schedule (CS) Experiment under the 2010 Census Program for Evaluations and Experiments (CPEX) generic clearance (OMB approval number 0607-XXXX). The purpose of this experiment is to determine whether the deadline message and compressed schedule strategies increase form mailback rates (mail response rates) and speed of responses in a decennial census environment.

In a 2006 experiment, a deadline date was combined with a compressed schedule where mail pieces were sent one week later than the control panel. This showed significantly higher response rates on the order of two percentage points. The DM/CS Experiment was, in part, inspired by the results of the 2006 short-form experiment, and we hope to replicate those promising findings in the decennial environment. Also, this experiment will allow us to separate and identify any main effects between the compressed schedule and the deadline messages, which the design for the 2006 test was unable to do. A total of four different deadline messages are being tested along with the compressed schedule.

Updates/Clarifications to DM/CS Description appearing in 2010 Census Program for Evaluations and Experiments (CPEX) generic clearance (OMB approval number 0607-XXXX)

Since the 2010 CPEX generic OMB clearance, there have been a few updates to the design of the Census 2010 DM/CS Experiment. These updates are provided in the following sections.

- **Updates to the experimental treatments**

Previously there were three different deadline messages. Since the generic OMB clearance, one of the deadline messages has been revised and a fourth deadline message has been added, in response to some concerns raised by field staff and based on results from cognitive testing.

See below for a summary of all four deadline messages that will be tested as follows:

1. Deadline Messaging 1 tests a “mild” deadline message. The mild message simply indicates the date by which the respondent should mail back the form.
2. Deadline Messaging 2 tests a deadline message with “progressive urgency.” The stricter and progressively more urgent message emphasizes the “deadline” date and also provides a reminder that census response is required by law.

3. Deadline Messaging 3 tests a “NRFU motivation” deadline message. This message informs respondents about interviewers coming to their home if they do not mail back the form by the indicated due date.
4. Deadline Messaging 4 tests a “cost savings” deadline message. This message reminds respondents that mailing back their form on time saves money since no interviewer followup is required.

- **Updates to sample size**

With the new treatments, the 2010 DM/CS Experiment is now comprised of nine experimental treatment panels plus a control panel. The targeted sample size for each panel is 20,000 housing units (200,000 total). The control panel uses the standard set of 2010 mailing materials and the standard 2010 Census form sent on the standard mailing schedule (this control panel is shared with the privacy notification experiment and the Alternative Questionnaire Experiment 2000 content panel). The control panel could be considered as the fifth different message, and these five messages are crossed with two mailing schedules (normal schedule, and compressed mailing schedule) for a total of ten panels.

- **Updates to overall study design/methodology**

The table below provides an overview of the tentative in-home delivery mailing dates for the normal 2010 census schedule and the experimental compressed schedule. The compressed schedule delivers the materials to homes one week closer to the April 1 Census date.

	Normal 2010 Schedule	Compressed 2010 Schedule
Advance letter	March 8 - March 10	March 15 - March 17
Initial questionnaires	March 15 - March 17	March 22 - March 24
Reminder postcard	March 22 - March 24	March 29 - March 31
Census Day	April 1	April 1
Replacement questionnaires	April 6 - April 10*	April 6 - April 10*

*The targeted replacement questionnaires for the 2010 Census will be delivered April 6-10. The blanket replacement questionnaires (where all households in those areas receive a replacement) will be delivered April 1-3. The CPEX panels will use the targeted replacement strategy. Results from the DM/CS Experiment will be compared with a control panel of housing units that received targeted replacement forms, with no alternative messaging and on the normal mailing schedule.

The wording of the standard 2010 materials that will be used in the control panel is below. The control panel wording does not mention specific due dates or deadlines; it includes generic wording such as promptly, today, and as soon as possible.

Control Panel (2010 Census wording)

Advance letter - “When you receive your form, please fill it out and mail it in promptly.”

Outgoing envelope for IQ - nothing in box underneath “Your Response is Required by Law”

Cover letter for IQ - “Please complete and mail back the enclosed census form today.”

Reminder postcard - “If you have not responded, please provide your information as soon as possible.”

Next, the wording for the four deadline message experimental treatments (“Mild,” “Progressive Urgency,” “NRFU Motivation,” “Cost Savings”) is described. Note that for all of the experimental panels, no messages will be used on the replacement questionnaires, as households will just receive the normal set of census replacement materials. And, as mentioned earlier, there are no changes to the content or appearance of the census questionnaires.

1. Mild Deadline Message Panel

Advance letter - “When you receive your form, please fill it out and mail it in by April 5.”

Outgoing envelope for IQ - “Mail by April 5” in box underneath “Your Response is Required by Law”

Cover letter for IQ - “Please complete and mail back the enclosed census form by April 5.”

Reminder postcard - “If you have not responded, please provide your information by April 5.”

2. Progressive Urgency Deadline Message Panel

Advance letter - “When you receive your form, please fill it out and mail it in by April 5.”

Outgoing envelope for IQ - “Deadline is April 5” in box underneath “Your Response is Required by Law”

Cover letter for IQ - “The deadline to complete and mail back the enclosed census form is April 5.”

Reminder postcard - “If you have not responded, the deadline to provide your information is April 5. Your response is required by law”

3. NRFU Motivation Deadline Message Panel

Advance letter - “When you receive your form, please fill it out and mail it in by April 5.”

Outgoing envelope for IQ - “Mail by April 5” in box underneath “Your Response is Required by Law”

Cover letter for IQ - “Please complete and mail back the enclosed census form by April 5 so that you can avoid a personal visit from an interviewer.”

Reminder postcard - “If you have not responded, please provide your information by April 5 so that you can avoid a personal visit from an interviewer.”

4. Cost Savings Deadline Message Panel

Advance letter - “When you receive your form, please fill it out and mail it in by April 5.”

Outgoing envelope for IQ - “Mail by April 5” in box underneath “Your Response is Required by Law”

Cover letter for IQ - “Please complete and mail back the enclosed census form by April 5. Mailing your census form on time saves money that would otherwise be used to follow up with you.”

Reminder postcard - “If you have not responded, please provide your information by April 5. Mailing your census form on time saves money that would otherwise be used to follow up with you.”

No updates for any of the following:

- Procedures for collecting information
- Methods to Maximize Response
- Tests of Procedures or Measures
- Contact for statistical aspects of data collection

Estimate of Burden Hours

Because experimental forms are official census responses and substitute for the standard census form that would otherwise be sent to the households involved in the experiments, most respondent burden hour estimates are already accounted for in the 2010 Census. The burden hour estimate for the Census 2010 DM/CS Experiment is zero because its burden has already been accounted for by the 2010 Census (OMB number 0607-0919).

Experiment/Evaluation	Total # of Respondents	Estimated Response Time	Estimated Burden Hours
DM/CS	200,000	10 minutes	0 (33,333 already accounted for)
Panels 1-10	20,000		

Project Schedule

Same as production 2010 Census schedule.

Costs To Federal Government

The preliminary estimated cost to the Federal Government for the DM/CS is \$600,000. The Census Bureau is the only agency bearing this cost.

Contact(s) for Statistical Aspects and Data Collection

For questions on statistical methods or the data collection described above, please contact Jason Machowski of the Decennial Management Division at the Census Bureau (Phone: 301-763-4173 or email jason.d.machowski@census.gov, or Erin Love of the Decennial Management Division at the Census Bureau (Phone: 301-763-2034 or email erin.s.love@census.gov).

List of Attachments

Attachment Number	Type of Form	Form Number	Form Description
Attachment A	Advance Letter	D-5L	Standard 2010 Advance Letter
Attachment B		D-5L X1	2010 AL Experimental Version 1 (mild deadline message with April 5 due date in body of letter)
Attachment C		D-5L X4	2010 AL Experimental Version 2 (Standard 2010 AL text with date of letter later due to compressed schedule)
Attachment D		D-5L X5	2010 AL Experimental Version 4 (mild deadline message with April 5 due date in body of letter and date of letter later due to compressed schedule)
Attachment E	Advance Letter Envelope	D-5	Standard 2010 Advance Letter Envelope
Attachment F	Initial Questionnaire Outgoing Envelope	D-6A (IN)	Standard 2010 IQ Outgoing Envelope
Attachment G		D-6A X14	IQ Outgoing Envelope (open

Attachment Number	Type of Form	Form Number	Form Description
			window with Deadline Message 1, 3 and 4 – “Mail by April 5”) – Deadline Message
Attachment H		D-6A X15	IQ Outgoing Envelope (open window with Deadline Message 2 – “Deadline is April 5”) – Deadline Message
Attachment I	Initial Questionnaires	D-1 XA	Control A: Standard 2010 Questionnaire (including help line telephone number only for experimental cases)
Attachment J	Initial Questionnaire Return Envelope	D-8A X1	2010 CPEX IQ Return Envelope (no postal tracking)
Attachment K	Initial Questionnaire Cover Letter	D-16L	Standard 2010 IQ Cover Letter
Attachment L		D-16L X2	2010 Experimental IQ Cover Letter Version 2 (Deadline Message 1)
Attachment M		D-16L X3	2010 Experimental IQ Cover Letter Version 3 (Deadline Message 2)
Attachment N		D-16L X4	2010 Experimental IQ Cover Letter Version 4 (Deadline Message 3)
Attachment O		D-16L X5	2010 Experimental IQ Cover Letter Version 5 (Compressed Schedule with header date change)
Attachment P		D-16L X6	2010 Experimental IQ Cover Letter Version 6 (Deadline Message 1 + Compressed Schedule with header date change)
Attachment Q		D-16L X7	2010 Experimental IQ Cover Letter Version 7 (Deadline Message 2 + Compressed Schedule with header date change)
Attachment R		D-16L X8	2010 Experimental IQ Cover Letter Version 8 (Deadline Message 3 + Compressed Schedule with header date change)
Attachment S		D-16L X11	2010 Experimental IQ Cover Letter Version 11 (Deadline Message 4)
Attachment T		D-16L X12	2010 Experimental IQ Cover Letter Version 12 (Deadline Message 4 + Compressed Schedule with header date change)
Attachment U	Reminder Postcard	D-9	Standard 2010 Reminder Postcard
Attachment V		D-9 X1	2010 Experimental RP Version 1

Attachment Number	Type of Form	Form Number	Form Description
			(Deadline Message 1)
Attachment W		D-9 X2	2010 Experimental RP Version 2 (Deadline Message 2)
Attachment X		D-9 X3	2010 Experimental RP Version 3 (Deadline Message 3)
Attachment Y		D-9 X4	2010 Experimental RP Version 4 (Compressed Schedule with header date change)
Attachment Z		D-9 X5	2010 Experimental RP Version 5 (Deadline Message 1 + Compressed schedule with header date change)
Attachment AA		D-9 X6	2010 Experimental RP Version 6 (Deadline Message 2 + Compressed schedule with header date change)
Attachment BB		D-9 X7	2010 Experimental RP Version 7 (Deadline Message 3 + Compressed schedule with header date change)
Attachment CC		D-9 X8	2010 Experimental RP Version 8 (Deadline Message 4)
Attachment DD		D-9 X9	2010 Experimental RP Version 9 (Deadline Message 4 + Compressed schedule with header date change)
Attachment EE	Replacement Questionnaire Outgoing Envelope	D-6C (IN)	Standard 2010 Return Questionnaire (RQ) Outgoing Envelope
Attachment I	Replacement Questionnaires	D-1 XA	Control A: Standard 2010 Questionnaire (including help line telephone number only for experimental cases)
Attachment FF	Replacement Questionnaire Return Envelope	D-8C (IN)	2010 CPEX Return Questionnaire (RQ) Return Envelope (no postal tracking)
Attachment GG	Replacement Questionnaire Cover Letter	D-17L	Standard 2010 RQ Cover Letter