November 6, 2012

NOTE TO THE   OMB CLEARANCE 1220-0141
REVIEWER OF: "Cognitive and Psychological Research"

FROM: Scott Fricker
                                           Research Psychologist
                                           Office of Survey Methods Research

SUBJECT: Submission of Materials for *CPS Internet
                                           Job Search Survey*

Please accept the enclosed materials for approval under the OMB clearance package 1220-0141

"Cognitive and Psychological Research." In accordance with our agreement with OMB, I am

submitting a brief description of the study.

The total estimated respondent burden hours for this study are 31 hours.

If there are any questions regarding this project, please direct them to Scott Fricker (202-691-

7390).

I.   Introduction and Purpose

Since 1994 when the CPS last underwent a major redesign, the Internet has become much more prevalent, and the means for using the Internet to search for work have expanded. Despite the increase in the number of Americans searching for work using the Internet, we know relatively little about how job seekers use the Internet to search for work, and how these job search techniques are currently being captured in the CPS questions used to classify individuals as unemployed. There also is a lack of conceptual clarity about how Internet job search activities *should* be classified amongst the activities that lead an individual to be considered as actively looking for work, a key component in the classification of an individual as unemployed or not in the labor force. Given this lack of information, a team was formed to explore how the Internet could be used to look for work and ascertain how the use of the Internet is actually being mentioned in CPS interviews.

The current study builds on the team's previous work examining the strategies that job-seekers used to find work, whether and how those strategies involve the Internet, and how they would report those job search activities when asked by a CPS interviewer. In that work, the team conducted five focus groups with recent job seekers in the DC Metro area. These sessions yielded valuable information, but the groups wound up being relatively homogenous despite efforts to recruit participants from diverse educational and socio-demographic backgrounds. Specifically, the groups' consisted predominantly of individuals who were African-Americans, lower-educated, and lower-skilled job seekers. The team was concerned that the Internet job-search activities engaged in by individuals in these groups may not be representative of the entire target population, and that additional targeted data collection would be necessary.

The purpose of the current study is to augment information obtained from the earlier study with feedback from individuals underrepresented in those focus groups (e.g., higher-educated individuals, those seeking professional and/or high-skill work). Budgetary constraints due to the Fiscal Year 2013 Continuing Resolution and the compressed timeline of the project prevent the team from conducting in-house focus groups or cognitive interviews in the coming weeks. Therefore, the team proposes to collect data via a voluntary web survey that will be sent to a small sample of targeted individuals.

II.   Research Design and Procedures

The team has created a survey based on the set of items that were previously approved for the team's earlier focus groups and cognitive interviews. The survey will be administered on the Internet by SurveyMonkey, and is intended to take respondents not more than 15 minutes to complete. The survey questions are provided in Appendix A, and the link to the online version is https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/8ZFBFPP.

The team has contacted several small academic and professional organizations (e.g., graduate program alumni groups) that have indicated they would be willing to distribute invitations to this survey to their members. Those interested in participating will be told to contact one of the team members to receive the survey link; this will enable the team to control the number of respondents (and therefore the associated burden hours). Distribution of the survey will be stratified to three groups: economics graduate program alumni; alumni of an undergraduate music program; and a nursing career group.

III. Participants and Burden Hours

No more than 125 individuals will be sent the survey invitation. The estimated length of the survey is 15 minutes. Therefore, we estimate that the total burden hours will be 31 hours.

IV. Payment

The survey used for this study is voluntary and respondents will receive no payment.

V. Data Confidentiality

Participants will be informed as to the voluntary nature of the survey, and that the study will be used for internal research purposes only. No pledge of confidentiality will be given. The following notice will be placed on the first page of the survey:

Please note that this survey is being administered by SurveyMonkey.com and resides on a server outside of the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) domain. The BLS cannot guarantee the protection of survey responses and advises against the inclusion of personally-identifiable information--such as your full name, phone number, e-mail address, etc.--in any response.

VI. Attachments

Attachment A: Self-Administered Web Survey