Appendix B: Protocol

Introduction

- Hi! Thank you for coming in today.
- I have a couple colleagues in the next room that will be observing and taking notes.
- Explanation of the study purpose:
  - Today we're going to be testing a part of the Consumer Expenditure Survey. This survey collects information about how US households spend their money. We currently ask people to complete a diary to keep track of expenses during a week-long period, but now we want to try out a few different designs to see what works best.
  - It's important to note that this is not a test of your ability. Our purpose today is to find out how easy or difficult it is to use the diary and to identify ways to improve it. Your feedback now can help make our future work more productive.
- Consent Form and permission to record screen and audio.
- Any questions before we begin?

Background about the CE Diary

- The Consumer Expenditure Survey is about understanding how US households spend their money. We provide our respondents with a diary, like this paper one, so they can keep track of daily expenses –eating out, groceries, household shopping, that kind of thing. In our session today, I'll ask you to imagine that you are one of our respondents and you are entering your daily expenses into a diary for us. We ask thousands of people to do this to understand how much of certain types of items people are buying.
- We recently developed an electronic version of the diary, and that's what we'll be working with today. I'd like to start our session by walking through the diary – first, how to enter your expenses. Here are some screenshots of the diary to look at while we talk about it.
  - *For participants in the "Item-based" and "Item-based with outlet follow-up" diary conditions*:
    You'll enter each of your expenses separately into the diary. Say I bought a gallon of milk and a loaf of bread at the grocery store yesterday. I would enter those in one at a time. First, I would enter yesterday's date. Then, for "Description" I would enter "Milk" and then how much I paid "3.99". Then, the diary prompts me to label this expense with one of these pre-assigned labels – it's Food for Home Consumption. Then, I answer the follow-up questions. For this one, I would say "Fresh". And, since I bought it for myself I would leave this checkbox empty.
    - *For the "Item-based with outlet follow-up" diary condition*:
      Then I would type in that I got it from Safeway in Washington, DC. Here, for "vendor", we're looking for the name of the place where you spent your money – be it Safeway for your groceries or Pepco for your electricity bill.
    Done. Save it, and then enter my second item – the bread. So I do this again.

- o *For participants in the "Outlet-based" diary condition*:
  You'll enter each of your shopping trips into the diary. Say I bought a gallon of milk and a loaf of bread at the grocery store yesterday. First, I would enter yesterday's date. Then, where I bought the items: Safeway in Washington, DC. Here, for "vendor", we're looking for the name of the place where you spent your money – be it Safeway for your groceries or Pepco for your electricity bill.
  Then, it prompts me to enter all of the stuff that I bought there that day. First it prompts me to label this expense with one of these pre-assigned labels – it's milk so it is Food for Home Consumption. Then I'll enter "Milk" for $3.99. Then, I answer the follow-up questions. For this one, I would say "Fresh". Done. Save it, and then enter my second item. Since it is from the same store, I can hit "Add another item" and continue on. See, the store information is still there.
- Does that make sense?
- Now you can always come back to your Home screen to see a summary of your expenses.
  - o *For participants in the "Item-based" and "Item-based with outlet follow-up" diary conditions*:
    See, here are all of the expenses you entered – the milk and the bread. If you're ever looking for an item – to check that you entered it or to maybe go back and delete it if you returned the item – then you can look for it here.
  - o *For participants in the "Outlet-based" diary condition*:
    See, here it shows us that I entered in a shopping trip to Safeway. If I click on Edit, it then shows me all of the items that I entered for this Safeway shopping trip – it's like a receipt. If you're ever looking for an item – to check that you entered it or to maybe go back and delete it if you returned the item – then you can look for it here.
- Does that make sense? We can go through another example if you'd like.
- Now, that's how it will work for most things you enter into the diary. Expenses for eating out are a little different. We care about the entire meal altogether, not each dish you ordered.
  - o *For participants in the "Item-based" and "Item-based with outlet follow-up" diary conditions*:
    You start off the same way – entering the date. Then you type in a description for the meal – maybe "Dinner with Joe". Then you enter the total expense for the meal and answer the follow-up questions.
  - o *For participants in the "Outlet-based" diary condition*:
    You enter the vendor information like normal. And then you answer the follow-up questions about the meal, including any expenditures on alcohol.
  In that way, it's different from groceries where we're interested in the items that you bought. Here, we just need to know answers to these basic follow-up questions.

Tasks

Now I'm going to ask you to enter expenses into the diary. Most of them will be made-up expenses. Imagine that you have agreed to take part in our survey and you're task is to enter the information into the diary. Do you have any questions before we begin?

Ok, I'll describe each expense to you and present it to you in the form of a receipt or bill. Please enter that expense into the diary. While you're entering the expense, imagine that you're at home on the computer and that I'm not here. When you finish entering something into the diary, let me know. I'll ask you a quick question about how easy or difficult that task was, and then we'll move on to the next thing.

1. **Enter own food expense**
   Let's start with something from real life. Think back to the last purchase you made. Please add that item to the diary.

2. **Enter an expense from Jmart**
   You went shopping at Jmart on December 10th. You got some spray cleaner, some Tupperware, and some milk. Here's your receipt. Please enter these into the diary.

3. **Enter an expense from Percy's**
   The next day, you stopped by a department store called Percy's on your way home from work. You picked up a shirt. Please enter that into the diary.

4. **Enter an expense from Jmart**
   You started having second thoughts about the shirt you just bought. You went back to Jmart and ended up buying a shirt that you had seen the last time you were there. Here's your receipt.

5. **Return shirt (from Percy's)**
   Now you want to return the first shirt you got. Please go into the diary and delete that shirt from the diary.

6. **Enter an expense from Sahara.com**
   That night, you went online to pick out a book for a friend. Here's your receipt. Please enter this book into the diary.

7. **Enter multiple expenses from ValUMart**.
   You went shopping at ValUMart and picked up several things for your household. Here is your receipt. Please enter these expenses.

Great, we're about halfway through now.
Open up a new diary, with 15 grocery expenses from ValuMart grocery store already filled in.
Items include apples, oranges, crackers, cookies, frozen pizza, etc.
We don't want to make you do too much typing so we've gone ahead and entered some expenses for you – just some groceries. Pretend that these are yours, you've already entered them.

8. **Enter expenses from Sureway and café within Sureway**
   Imagine that you went in to Sureway, your neighborhood grocery store, in the morning on your way to work. It's easy for you because you like to get a coffee in the morning at Fourbucks, and there's a Fourbucks located inside of Sureway. So, you go in to get a

coffee to drink on your way to the office, and a loaf of bread for home. Here are your receipts.

9. **Enter expenses from GoodBuy**
   Imagine that you bought an accessory to go with your TV at home. You bought it online and had it shipped to the store so you could pick it up. You had it shipped to your local GoodBuy location. Here's your order information.

10. **Enter expenses from dinner and a movie**
    Now, it's your friend's birthday so you treat them to a night out. Dinner at a restaurant called Harvest Table and a movie at J Street Cinema, and you paid for both. Here's your receipt from dinner and the two movie ticket stubs.

11. **Enter parking meter fees**
    While you're out that night, you had to pay for parking. You don't get a receipt so you enter the information as soon as you get home - the meter cost $2.25.

12. **Enter payment for car insurance bill**
    You get your car insurance bill in the mail and send off the payment by check. Here's the bill. Please enter this expense into the diary.

13. **Edit parking expense**
    You remembered that actually you had to feed the meter twice when you were out with your friend. Go back to that entry for parking and change the total expense to be $5.50.

Post-task follow-up questions

How easy or difficult was that task you just finished?
Present a show card with the following options:
Very Easy, Easy, Somewhat Easy, Neither Easy nor Difficult, Somewhat Difficult, Difficult, Very Difficult
Probe for reason, if any.