

The Census Bureau plans to conduct usability testing for the 2016 Annual Survey of Manufactures and 2016 Report of Organization (ASM and RO, respectively). The ASM and RO are related and similar programs: they both collect establishment-level data (as opposed to strictly enterprise-level) and use the same electronic collection system. The ASM collects data for industry classification, employment, measures of output, assets, expenditures, inventories, expenses, and other industry-specific inquiries from single- and multi-unit companies. The RO collects basic classification, employment, and sales information in service of frame maintenance between economic censuses. The ASM and RO are currently collected electronically, using the downloadable Surveyor application (for multi-unit companies) and via the Census Bureau's Centurion online collection system (for single-unit companies). The Census Bureau no longer mails paper ASM or RO forms, although we provide worksheets to assist respondents in preparing their responses for entry into the electronic collection systems. More information about the surveys can be found at <https://bhs.econ.census.gov/bhs/cosasm/about.html>.

This research will focus on evaluating a revised version of the Centurion online reporting system for single-unit only companies in preparation for the 2016 ASM/RO. The revised Centurion reporting system will provide the same functionality as the current system, but with enhanced visual design in order to make it more user-friendly. We plan to conduct usability interviews with respondents from the ASM/RO single-unit universe in order to test the layout and functionality of the instrument.

In addition to the new web instrument we will conduct usability testing of the eCorrespondence system, which will serve as the online portal for securely accessing the survey(s) assigned to each company. The eCorrespondence system will also provide information related to assigned surveys, allow respondents to communicate securely, and allow respondents to delegate surveys to others within their organization.

We plan to conduct usability interviews with respondents from up to 15 single-unit companies that responded to the 2015 ASM/RO in a metropolitan area to be determined. We plan to conduct one-third of the interviews with manufacturing single-unit respondents to the ASM survey. The other two-thirds of the interviews will be conducted with single-unit respondents from various service industries.

The interviews will begin with the respondents receiving a contact letter containing an authentication code and test URL to access the eCorrespondence system. Once respondents have gone through the account creation process and navigated the eCorrespondence system, they will be asked to access and test the revised reporting system. A test worksheet prototype will be provided to respondents to assist them as they use the revised reporting instrument.

Interviews will be conducted in October 2016 by staff from the Data Collection Methodology & Research Branch within the Census Bureau's Economic Statistical Methods Division. Subject matter and collection operations staff may participate as observers of the interviews as they are able. Interviews will be audio recorded with respondents' permission. After respondents agree to participate, staff will schedule a meeting time and send confirmation emails about the appointment. Participants will be informed that their responses are voluntary and that the information they provide is confidential and will be seen only by Census Bureau or special

sworn employees involved in the research project. We will not be providing monetary incentives to participants in this study.

We estimate that it will be necessary to interview one respondent at each business. We estimate the interviews will take up to 1 hour (15 cases X 1 hour per case = 15 hours). Additionally, to recruit respondents we expect to make up to 5 phone contacts per completed case. The recruiting calls are expected to last on average two minutes per call (5 phone calls per completed case X 15 cases X 2 minutes = 2.5 hours). Thus, the estimated burden for this project is 17.5 hours (2.5 hours for recruiting + 15 hours for interviews).

Enclosed are screen mockups of the new 2016 ASM/RO reporting instrument, screenshots of the eCorrespondence website, a prototype worksheet, draft content of a contact letter, and a draft interview protocol.

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

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#### Enclosures

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