

R. Chase Sawyer, U.S. Census Bureau

Introduction

In 2014, the American Community Survey (ACS) conducted research to determine if improvements could be made to the internet data collection instrument that could increase response rate and quality, as well as reduce respondent burden. The test had the desired outcomes and the changes were implemented in 2016 ACS production.

- ### Instrument Changes
- The changes implemented during the 2016 data year include:
- The addition of security questions for PIN reset capability.
 - Highlighted response fields for unfolding questions.
 - These are questions that provide a write-in field when a certain response triggers the need for more information. These appear on the same screen as the original question.
 - Removal of transition screen and new language for "Pick Next Person" screen.
 - Increasing the height of the ancestry response field.

Methodology and Data

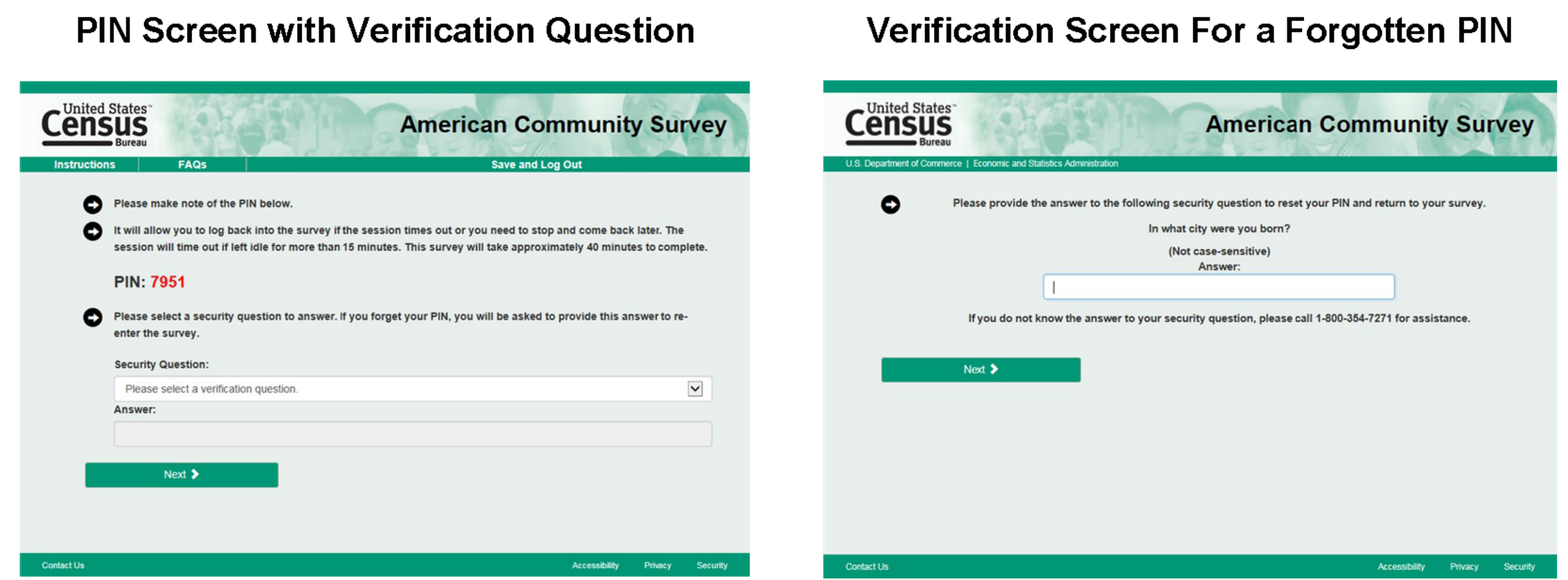
To see if the changes had the expected results, we analyzed data before and after each change was implemented. The change to the ancestry question occurred in late December of 2015. To analyze the effect, we reviewed data from the September 2015 and January 2016 Panel. The rest of the changes mentioned above occurred in late June of 2016, so we analyzed data from the March and July 2016 panels.

- The datasets used include:
- ACS Paradata
 - ACS Coded Ancestry Variables
 - ACS Control File

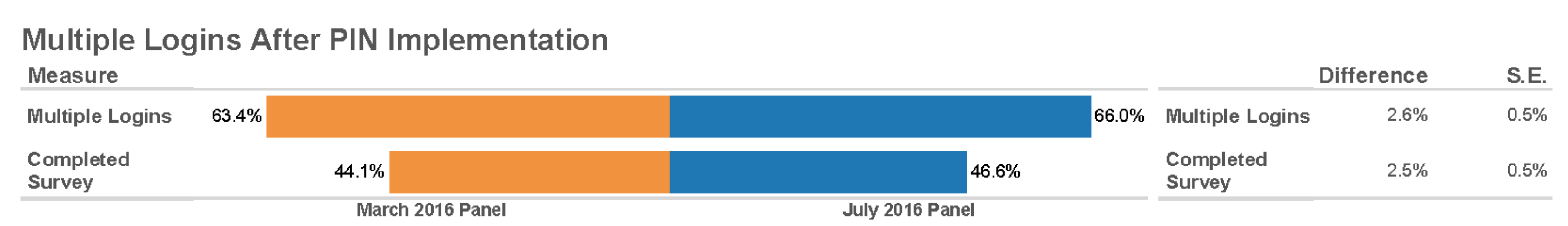
- ### Conclusions
- The research found that the changes to the ACS Internet instrument:
- Increased the number of times respondents reentered the instrument.
 - Decreased the number of errors received on unfolding questions.
 - Decreased the number of breakoffs on transition screens.
 - Increased the number of times multiple ancestries were reported.

For more information about the American Community Survey and ongoing research, visit www.census.gov/acs.

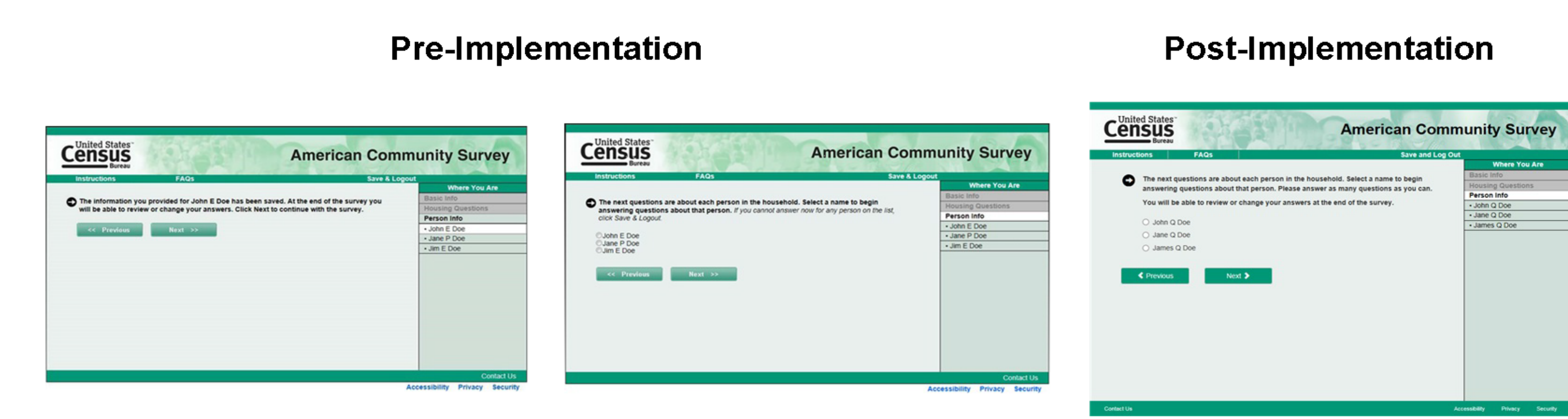
Pin Reset Capability



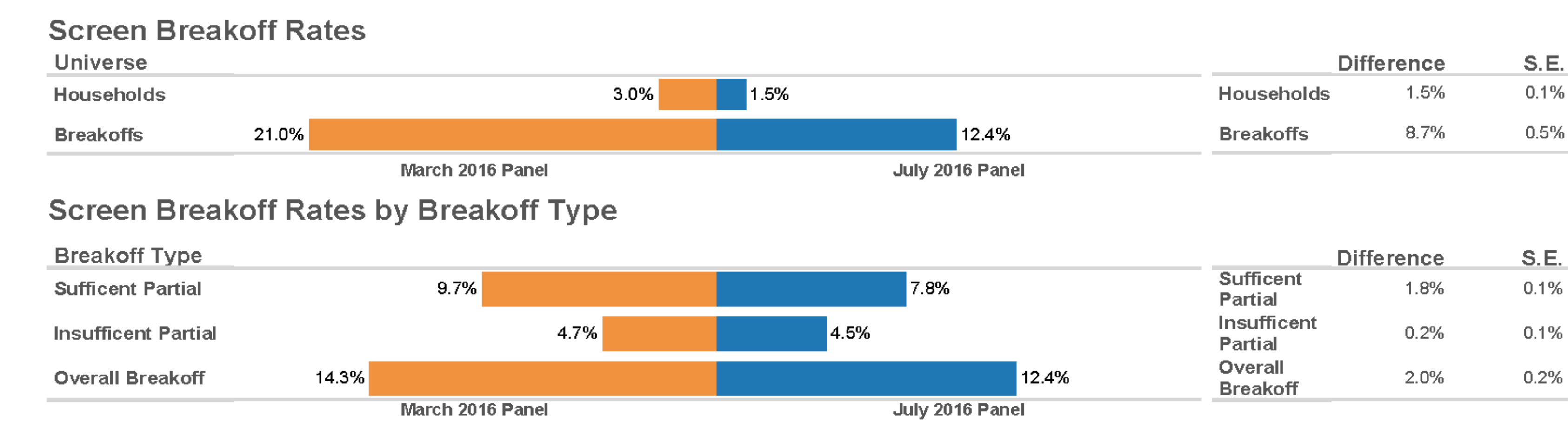
Using the July 2016 panel, we found that 95.0% of respondents utilized the security questions. Below, we analyzed how many respondents had multiple logins and how many respondents returned and completed the survey after leaving the survey incomplete on the first login.



Transition Screens

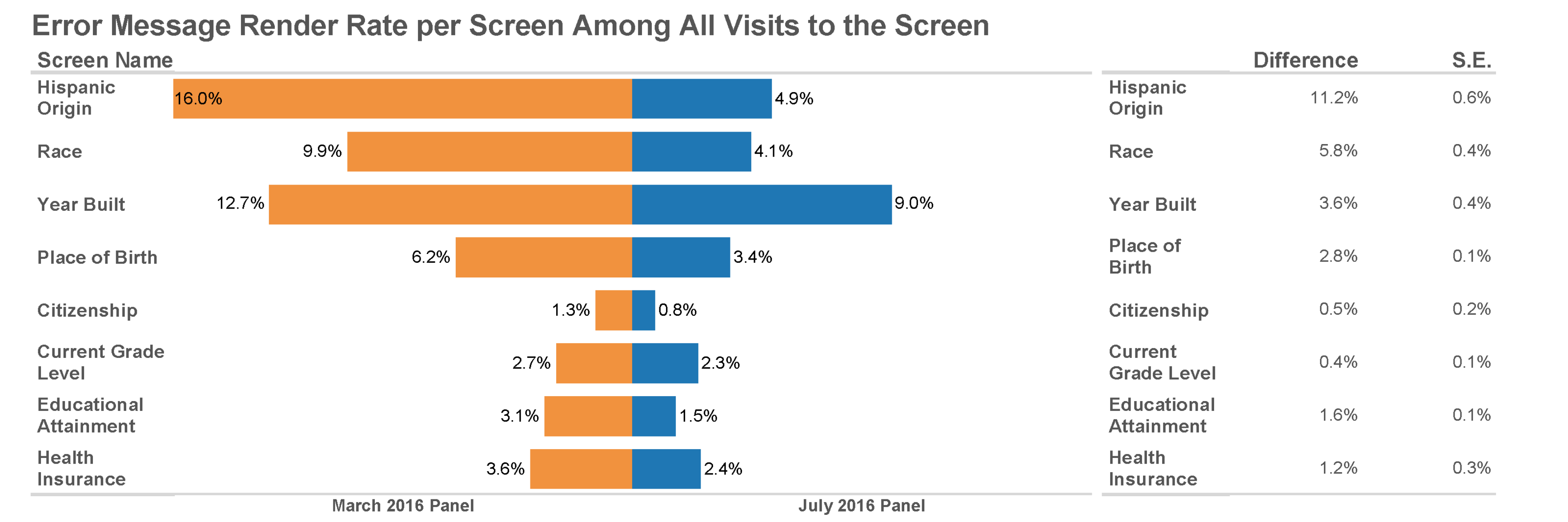
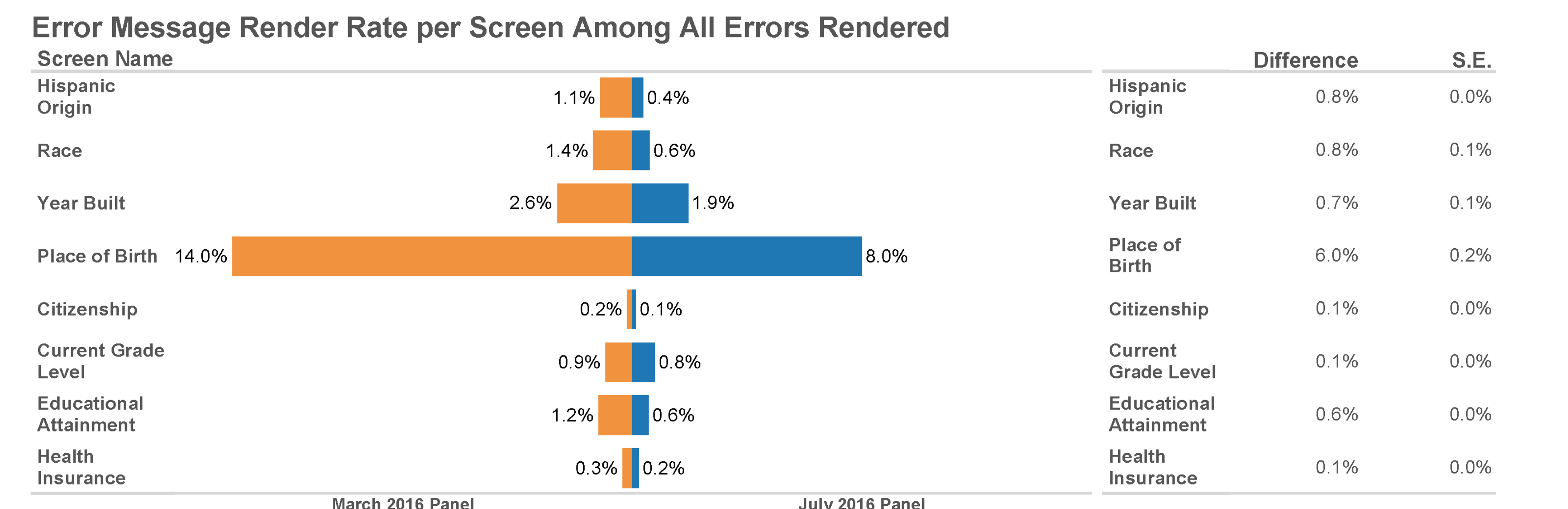


When analyzing breakoffs, we first looked at the number of households that broke off during the transition and what percentage of breakoffs happened on these screens. We then looked at how complete the interview was at the time of all breakoffs.



Note: All the results presented were found to be significant using a one-tailed t-test at an alpha of 0.1.

Error Rates for Unfolding Questions



Ancestry Field Size

