

Accessibility and Accommodations in Westat Data Collection Systems

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Overview

- ❑ Data Collection Systems
- ❑ CAPI Users
- ❑ CATI Users
- ❑ Virtual Telephone Research Center
- ❑ Web Usability and Blind Users
- ❑ Corporate Committee: 508 and Beyond

My Starting Point

- O'Reilly FedCASIC '05, '07
- Data Collection Systems
 - Interviewer-centered
- accessibility
- Call to Jean

CAPI

- Mode choice driven by data needs
- Job requirements: Ambulatory, sighted, hearing (with aids), drivers license, access to car, strong communication skills, English fluency
- Relatively small numbers
- Wide range of environmental conditions
- Blaise Usability Guidelines
 - Font size, color; experienced vs. novice users

CAPI Issues, Accommodations

- ❑ Screen foreground/background reversal
- ❑ Integrating sources, problems with font size
- ❑ Educational testing: protocol for accommodations

CATI

- ❑ Mode choice driven by cost, quality considerations
- ❑ Job requirements: ambulatory (with aides), sighted (with aides), hearing (with aides)
- ❑ Relatively small numbers
- ❑ Controlled environmental conditions
- ❑ TRC usability guidelines
 - Font size

Virtual Telephone Research Center

- ❑ Since 2006, Westat has been pioneering VTRC
- ❑ Integrates telephony, CATI system, QA
- ❑ Supports telecommuting, eliminates ambulatory requirement
- ❑ Opens up many more labor markets

Web Usability and Blind Users (1)

- For Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, HHS:
 - Healthfinder.gov
 - Forwomen.gov
 - Medicare.gov
- 6 blind people, sent email to carry out tasks on the Internet
- Brought them in for a focus group

Web Usability and Blind Users (2)

- ❑ For U.S. Bureau of the Census
- ❑ 20 respondents recruited from Lighthouse for the Blind; all trained in using JAWS
- ❑ Conducted usability test at Census facility
 - Completed some forms on-line
 - Retrieved information from on-line forms
 - Test conditions varied number of drop-downs, rows and columns
 - Analysis of accuracy, speed, satisfaction
- ❑ Results inconclusive

Web Usability and Paraplegics

- ❑ Group of Web users
- ❑ Usability interviews by telephone
- ❑ Big window out of isolation

Corporate Committee: 508 and Beyond

- Dissemination and structure issues
 - “Waves” washing over agencies
 - Skill “pockets”
 - Need to leverage experience, strengths
- Goal: make all Westat products accessible
- Investigating: How to address accessibility issues with each product type
- Developing: approaches for addressing new standards

Web Content Accessibility Guidelines

- Section 508 could be defined as a subset of WCAG
 - A product could be 508 compliant but... have thousands of drop down menus, table rows
 - 508 says tabs must be logically ordered, but blind people may not be able to handle too many tabs

Future Research

- ❑ Unclear how many Web standards are research based
- ❑ Series of research investigations
- ❑ Panel of blind, testing alternatives
- ❑ Cannot ignore disabled, but cannot ignore budget constraints either.
 - What is good enough?