Testing Current Population Survey Instruments

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Overview

- Background on the Current Population Survey
- Stakeholders in the testing process
- How we test
- Challenges unique to testing CPS instruments

The Current Population Survey

- Source of official government statistics on employment and unemployment
- Data collected monthly since 1940
- Monthly sample is about 72,000 households
- Months in sample: 4-8-4
- CATI and CAPI interviews

2011 CPS Supplements

Income, poverty, migration, work experience,

Bank services used by household members

Service-related disabilities, participation in

Volunteer activities, volunteering frequency

Political action and participation in organized

Level of education, type of schooling

Food expenditures, food sufficiency

Broadband use by households: type of internet

insurance, noncash benefits data, etc.

Attitudes about and use of tobacco

service used and online activities

veterans programs

groups

Month of 2011	Supplement Title	Purpose of Supplement/Data collected
January	Tobacco Use	Attitudes about and use of tobacco

ASFC

ASEC

ASFC

Tobacco Use

Unbanked/Underbanked

Computer & Internet Use

Veterans

Volunteers

School Enrollment

Civic Engagement

Food Security

February

March

April

May

June

July

August

September

October

November

December

Stakeholders in the Testing Process

- CPS Subject Matter Branch
- Authors
- Survey sponsors
- Regional Offices
 - CAPI field representatives
- Telephone Centers
 - CATI interviewers

How We Test: May 2010 Tobacco Use Case Study

- Sponsored by NCI
- Measures changes in use of tobacco products and attitudes about smoking
- First of four data collections
- Self-response supplement

May 2010 Tobacco Use Timeline



Jul. '09 Sep. '09 Oct. '09 Jan. '10 Mar '10 Apr. '10 May '10

SPIDER

- Specialized Instrument Design Resource
- Used to create instrument specifications
- Can be used to assign specification changes to individual authors on the authoring staff
- Tracks status of change requests

May 2010 Tobacco Use Timeline



Jul. '09 Sep. '09 Oct. '09 Jan. '10 Mar '10 Apr. '10 May '10

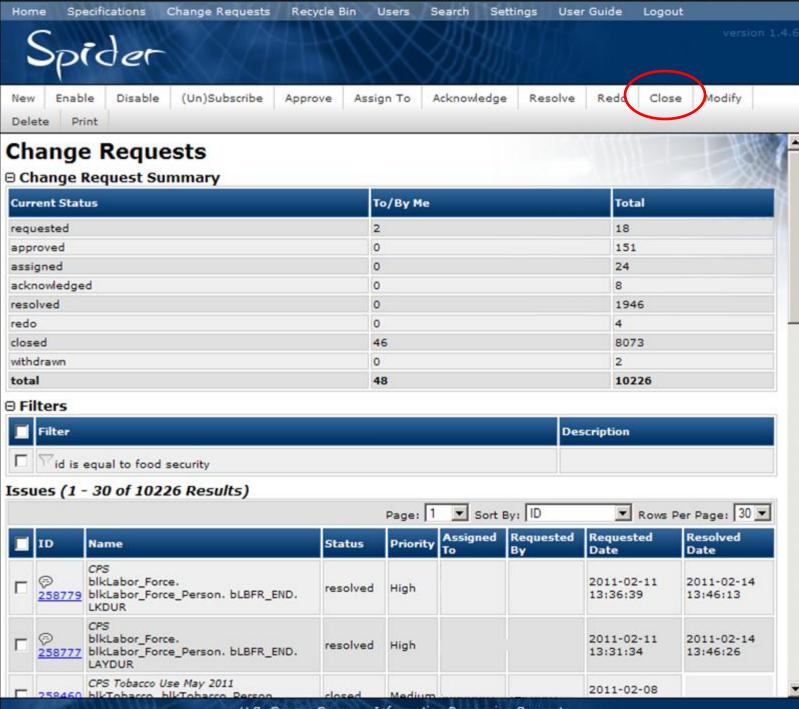
Common Change Requests

- Specification Changes
 - Added/deleted questions
 - Changes to question text
 - Changes to the question universe/skip patterns
- Programming errors

Type of Information found on the Test Scenario File*

- Age
- Name
- Birthday
- Occupation(s)
- Education level
- Race
- Address

*Note that all of the information is fake



May 2010 Tobacco Use Timeline



Jul. '09 Sep. '09 Oct. '09 Jan. '10 Mar '10 Apr. '10 May '10

Output Data Test

- Request test instrument from author
- Provide test instructions to testers
- Complete output data test
- Review frequencies

Challenges Unique to Testing CPS Instruments

- Supplement Requirements: Self Response vs. Proxy/Callbacks
- Supplement Universes
- Age Refusals
- Months in Sample (MIS)
- CPS Test Input File

Supplement Requirements: Self response vs. Proxy/Callbacks

- Callback counter variables specified in Blaise
- When variables are equal, the instrument wraps up
- May 2010 Tobacco Use Instrument
 - Proxy interviews on fourth callback

Supplement Universes

- Can be up to a page in length
- Often incorporate data collected in the Basic CPS interview
- School enrollment supplement

Age Refusals

- Series of age variables in basic CPS
- Supplement Universes Based on Age
- How to handle?

Months in Sample (MIS)

- Months in Sample: 4-8-4
- Split-path instruments

CPS Test Input File

- CATI and CAPI cases
- Many different "real-life" scenarios
- Changing ages on the input file

QUESTIONS?

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