

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

Month of 2011	Supplement Title	Purpose of Supplement/Data collected
January	Tobacco Use	Attitudes about and use of tobacco
February	ASEC	Income, poverty, migration, work experience, insurance, noncash benefits data, etc.
March	ASEC	
April	ASEC	
May	Tobacco Use	Attitudes about and use of tobacco
June	Unbanked/Underbanked	Bank services used by household members
July	Computer & Internet Use	Broadband use by households: type of internet service used and online activities
August	Veterans	Service-related disabilities, participation in veterans programs
September	Volunteers	Volunteer activities, volunteering frequency
October	School Enrollment	Level of education, type of schooling
November	Civic Engagement	Political action and participation in organized groups
December	Food Security	Food expenditures, food sufficiency

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

Sponsor provides specifications

Specifications written to SPIDER

Author delivers testing instrument to subject matter branch

Instrument delivered to sponsor for testing

Sponsor testing/instrument approval

Output data test

Interviewing begins

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

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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



- New
- Enable
- Disable
- (Un)Subscribe
- Approve
- Assign To
- Acknowledge
- Resolve
- Redo
- Close
- Modify
- Delete
- Print

Change Requests

Change Request Summary

Current Status	To/By Me	Total
requested	2	18
approved	0	151
assigned	0	24
acknowledged	0	8
resolved	0	1946
redo	0	4
closed	46	8073
withdrawn	0	2
total	48	10226

Filters

<input type="checkbox"/>	Filter	Description
<input type="checkbox"/>	id is equal to food security	

Issues (1 - 30 of 10226 Results)

Page: Sort By: Rows Per Page:

<input type="checkbox"/>	ID	Name	Status	Priority	Assigned To	Requested By	Requested Date	Resolved Date
<input type="checkbox"/>	258779	CPS blkLabor_Force. blkLabor_Force_Person. bLBFR_END. LKDUR	resolved	High			2011-02-11 13:36:39	2011-02-14 13:46:13
<input type="checkbox"/>	258777	CPS blkLabor_Force. blkLabor_Force_Person. bLBFR_END. LAYDUR	resolved	High			2011-02-11 13:31:34	2011-02-14 13:46:26
<input type="checkbox"/>	258460	CPS Tobacco Use May 2011 blkTobacco. blkTobacco_Person	closed	Medium			2011-02-08	

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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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