

Understanding of Electronic Security Statements and Their Effects on Respondent Cooperation

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Disclaimer: This presentation is intended to inform people about research and to encourage discussion. The views expressed are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the U.S. Census Bureau or RSS.

The Issue

- Increasing numbers of federally sponsored surveys are fielded on the web
 - Over time new laws enacted:
 - to protect participant data
 - which change who can access participant data for different purposes
 - Respondents are informed of their rights and responsible use of system before they respond to the survey
 - How to convey legal messages so respondents can understand
 - Additional complexities in multi-language surveys
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Outline

- ❑ Literature Review
- ❑ About the Study
- ❑ Messages Tested
- ❑ Reactions by Language
- ❑ Summary Reactions across Languages
- ❑ Lessons Learned

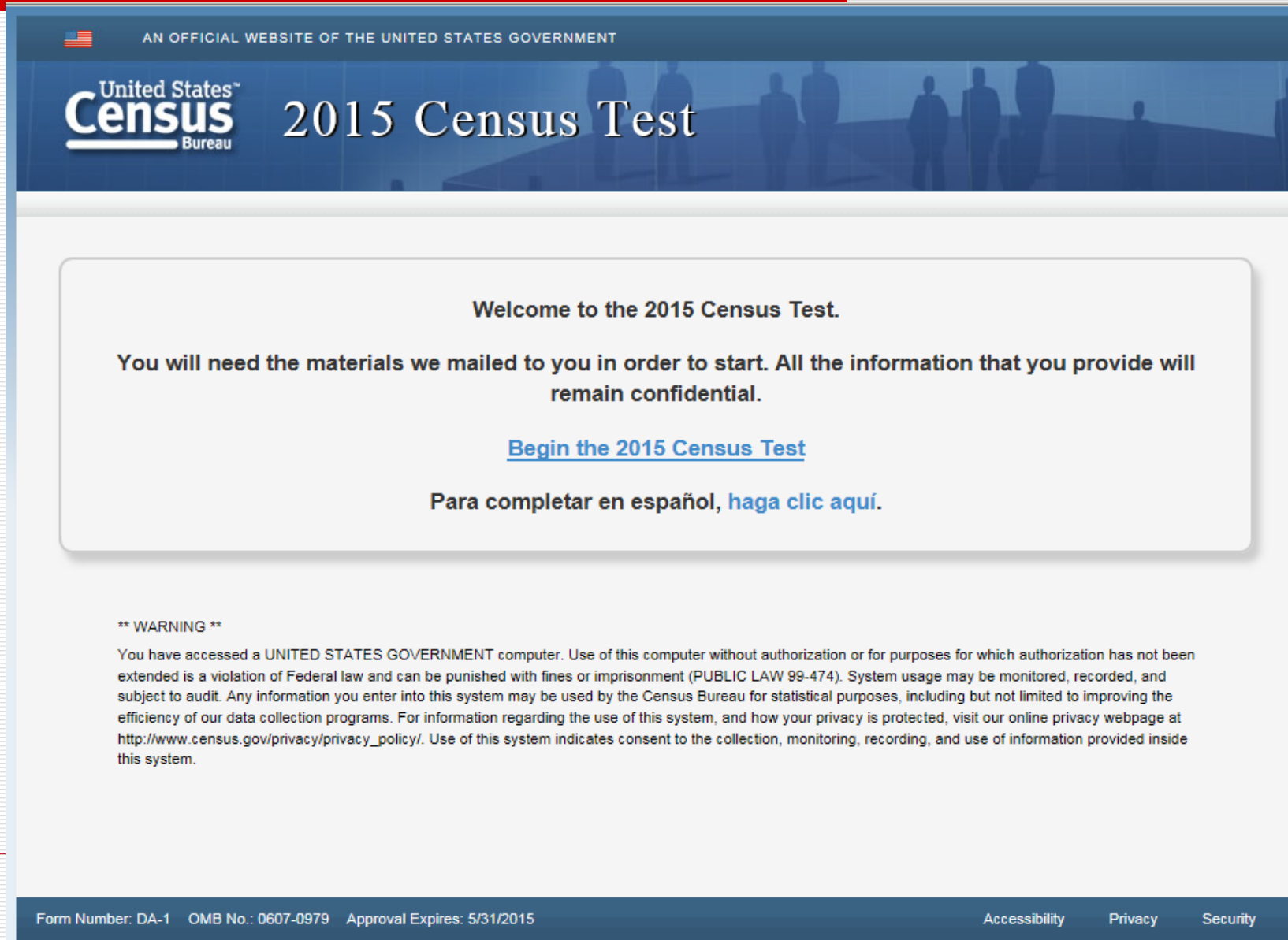
Literature Review

- Changing Privacy Laws
 - PRA: Privacy Act of 1974
 - CIPSEA: Confidential Information Protection and Statistical Efficiency Act of 2002
- Little literature on messages to explain privacy and confidentiality to respondents
 - Madden (2014) Pew Center report
 - Meyers (2017) presentation
- Even less literature about translation of such messages for multilingual surveys

The Study

- Purpose: early decade testing of census form and materials in English and 6 additional languages
- Spanish/Chinese/Korean/Vietnamese/Arabic/Russian
- 30 Focus Groups:
 - 15 tested materials for electronic self administration
 - 15 tested interviewer administered materials
- Census contracted for the study implementation with RTI International and RSS

Earlier Version of Message Tested



AN OFFICIAL WEBSITE OF THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

United States
Census
Bureau

2015 Census Test

Welcome to the 2015 Census Test.

You will need the materials we mailed to you in order to start. All the information that you provide will remain confidential.

[Begin the 2015 Census Test](#)

Para completar en español, [haga clic aquí.](#)

**** WARNING ****

You have accessed a UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT computer. Use of this computer without authorization or for purposes for which authorization has not been extended is a violation of Federal law and can be punished with fines or imprisonment (PUBLIC LAW 99-474). System usage may be monitored, recorded, and subject to audit. Any information you enter into this system may be used by the Census Bureau for statistical purposes, including but not limited to improving the efficiency of our data collection programs. For information regarding the use of this system, and how your privacy is protected, visit our online privacy webpage at http://www.census.gov/privacy/privacy_policy/. Use of this system indicates consent to the collection, monitoring, recording, and use of information provided inside this system.

Form Number: DA-1 OMB No.: 0607-0979 Approval Expires: 5/31/2015

[Accessibility](#) [Privacy](#) [Security](#)

Earlier Version of the Message Tested

**** WARNING ****

You have accessed a UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT computer. Use of this computer without authorization or for purposes for which authorization has not been extended is a violation of Federal law and can be punished with fines or imprisonment (PUBLIC LAW 99-474). System usage may be monitored, recorded, and subject to audit. Any information you enter into this system may be used by the Census Bureau for statistical purposes, including but not limited to improving the efficiency of our programs. For information regarding the use of this system, and how your privacy is protected, visit our online privacy webpage at http://www.census.gov/privacy/privacy_policy/. Use of this system indicates consent to the collection, monitoring, recording, and use of information provided inside this system.

Message Tested in Focus Groups

Terms and conditions

You are accessing a United States Census Bureau computer network to complete a survey. Any information you enter into this system is confidential and may be used by the Census Bureau for statistical purposes, as well as for other uses, such as improving the efficiency of our programs. If you want to know more about the use of this system, and how your privacy is protected, visit our online privacy webpage at http://www.census.gov/privacy/privacy_policy/. Use of this system indicates your consent to us collecting, monitoring, recording, and using the information that you provide.

So that our website remains accurate and available to you and all other visitors, we monitor network traffic to identify unauthorized attempts to upload or change information or otherwise cause damage to the web service. Your usage of this system is likely to be monitored, recorded, and subject to audit. If you are not using the network connection for authorized purposes, then it is a violation of Federal law and can be punished with fines or imprisonment (PUBLIC LAW 99-474).

Positives and Negatives: English

- General/neutral
 - Many people would not read terms and conditions
- Positives:
 - Message about how information protected
 - Liked second paragraph
- Negatives:
 - Concept of being “subject to audit”

Positives and Negatives: Spanish

- General/neutral:
 - About half would not read terms and conditions, other half would
- Positives:
 - Most understood key messages, though all hoped for clearer, simpler formulation of concepts
- Negatives :
 - Legal language could scare undocumented immigrants.
 - “Your usage of this system is likely to be monitored, recorded, and subject to audit.” (worrisome: by whom or why would it be accessed?)
 - Accusatory tone: *“If you are not using the network connection for authorized purposes, then it is a violation of Federal law and can be punished with fines or imprisonment”*
 - Recommended not addressing to YOU.
 - How to know for sure what purposes are authorized

Positives and Negatives: Chinese

□ General/neutral:

- About half of respondents said they would read message

□ Positives:

- Good to have information to verify legitimacy

□ Negatives:

- Some people disliked term “monitor” (not unanimous)

Positives and Negatives: Korean

- General/neutral:
 - Fewer than half of Rs said they would read
- Positives:
 - Information will be protected and used for statistical purposes
 - People who have bad intentions monitored
 - Rs accustomed to similar statements
- Negatives:
 - Concern and misinterpretation of “monitoring”

Positives and Negatives: Arabic

- General/Neutral:
 - Almost all noticed the T&R message and felt they would read it.
- Positives:
 - Text was well understood
- Negatives:
 - Generally no positive messages
 - Some terms not clear/ambiguous, made some participants uneasy
 - "...for statistical purposes, as well as other uses, such as improving the efficiency of our programs." (What other unspecified uses?)
 - "monitoring" sounds like spying

Positives and Negatives: Vietnamese

- General/neutral:
 - More than half of respondents said they would read message
- Positives:
 - Privacy protection/ monitoring against misuse
- Negatives:
 - Concerns with terms “monitoring,” “other uses,” “fines and imprisonment”

Positives and Negatives: Russian

- General/Neutral:
 - Typical of terms and conditions in websites: user is responsible for own actions
 - Understanding that there are controls; wrongful actions may be prosecuted
 - “It’s a serious site, not for games.”
- Positives:
 - 1 participant felt entrusted with use of government system
 - 1 participant felt reassured about confidentiality, privacy and protection of respondent information
- Negatives:
 - One must accept terms “even if you don't quite understand.”
 - Overly technical language – unclear, uncertainty on meaning
 - Threatening tone (e.g. network traffic, causing damage to the system, “however” negates the assurance of confidentiality; for other purposes → unspecified)

Summary Reactions across Languages

- Neutral or good messages across languages:
 - Confidentiality / Protection of information
- Messages/terms that performed poorly across languages:
 - Monitoring / Audit
- Group-specific Message Concerns:
 - Russian: use of technical language
 - Spanish: Use of 'you' in warnings
 - Vietnamese: fines and imprisonment for whom?
 - Vietnamese/Russian/Spanish: "other uses"

Lessons Learned/Future Research

- Drafting of English:
 - Use terms such as “terms and conditions” rather than “warning”
 - Caution with terms such as “monitoring”. Either reword or provide more explanation
 - Avoid high register, technical, unclear language
 - Have a translatability assessment done before finalizing
- Translation
 - Use of adaptations from previous research to start
- Respondent pretesting as critical part of translation process

References

- ❑ Madden, M (2014). "Public Perceptions of Privacy in the Post-Snowden Era"
<http://www.pewinternet.org/2014/11/12/public-privacy-perceptions/>
- ❑ Meyers (2017). "Respondent Confidentiality Concerns and Possible Effects on Response Rates and Data Quality for the 2020 Census" Presentation for the National Advisory Committee on and Other Populations.
<https://www2.census.gov/cac/nac/meetings/2017-11/Meyers-NAC-Confidentiality-Presentation.pdf>

Thanks for your attention!

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