

Report on Cognitive Pretesting of the Census 2010 Mailing Package Materials

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As part of the mailing strategy for Census 2010, respondents will receive an advance letter, the census questionnaire mailing package that includes a cover letter, a reminder postcard, and a replacement questionnaire mailing package targeted to mail non-respondents. These mailing pieces are an essential part of the communication strategy. Their goal is to provide informational and motivational messages that will persuade people to complete the census form and mail it back.

The materials developed for Census 2010 were subjected to two phases of pretesting. First, the four communications to respondents (advance letter, initial cover letter, reminder postcard, and replacement cover letter) were pretested through cognitive testing. Respondents were given each mailing piece separately and asked to read it, before being probed about their reactions. Second, all the components of the initial census mailing package were tested by giving the package to respondents and observing their reactions and behaviors.

This report contains the results of both phases of testing. First, we present the methods and results of Phase 1, which tested the advance letter, initial cover letter, reminder postcard, and replacement cover letter. Then we provide the results of the testing of the initial mailing package, including the outgoing envelope, cover letter, questionnaire, and return envelope in Phase 2.

PHASE 1. TESTING OF THE FOUR COMMUNICATION PIECES

MATERIALS

We first describe the four communication pieces that were tested in Phase 1.

Advance Letter

The advance letter is printed on white 8 ½" x 11" paper and sent in a 4 1/8" x 9 ½" envelope. It has Office of the Director letterhead at the top and the Census Bureau watermark on the bottom left. The Census 2010 logo is on the bottom right, and beneath the logo is the url for the 2010 Census. The letter is addressed to "Dear Resident" and contains four paragraphs, including a message that the census form is coming, what the respondent should do when it comes, a statement of the uses of census data, a notice about recruitment for census enumerators, and a thank you. The letter is signed by Steve H. Murdock, Director of the Census Bureau. See Appendix 1 for a facsimile of the advance letter.

Initial Cover Letter

The cover letter is written on a 5 ½" x 8" piece of paper and contains text on both sides. Written in black text on a blue background, the front page is in the form of a letter, which ends with the Director's signature followed by "Enclosures." The back of the letter, also on blue background, contains text about privacy and confidentiality under the heading **Your Answers Are**

Confidential. Respondents are referred to the back of the letter by the last sentence of the last paragraph on the front which says, “The back of this letter contains more information about protecting your data. This sentence was added based on previous cognitive testing (Landreth, Gerber, and DeMaio, 2007) that found that without this last sentence, respondents did not turn the letter over and when the sentence was added, they generally did. See Appendix 2 for a facsimile of the cover letter.

Reminder Postcard

The reminder card is a white 3 ½" X 5" postcard, with the front including a Jeffersonville, IN return address, a postal permit indicia (in the upper right corner), a mailing address label, and a box that says “Your response to the U.S. Census Bureau is required by law” outlined in black. The back of the card contains Office of the Director letterhead, a three-paragraph letter to respondents asking them to mail back their census forms if they have not done so, and thanking them if they have done so. It also includes telephone numbers for respondents who need help in English, Spanish, or through TDD. The bottom of the postcard contains the Census Bureau watermark on the left and the Census 2010 logo and url on the right. See Appendix 3 for a facsimile of the cover letter.

Replacement Cover Letter

The replacement cover letter mimics the initial cover letter in color, letterhead, logos, watermark, and font. The front page is in the form of a letter, which ends with the Director’s signature. Unlike the initial cover letter, however, there is no “Enclosures” line. The content of the first three paragraphs of the replacement letter is different. Rather than stressing the importance of the census because of the uses of the information collected, it takes a firmer approach, focusing on the legal requirement to participate, the prospective followup by a census representative, and the need to fill out the form only if they have not already mailed it back. The content of the final paragraph on confidentiality and the text on the back of the form are identical to the text on the cover letter. See Appendix 4 for a facsimile of the replacement cover letter.

RESEARCH METHODS

In March and April, 2008, staff from the Center for Survey Methods Research in the Statistical Research Division conducted 15 cognitive interviews. We targeted general population respondents, since all households in the U.S. will receive a census form in the mail. Respondents were recruited through an advertisement on craigslist.org and calls to people in our recruiting database. Table 1 contains the demographic characteristics of the respondents.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristic of Respondents in Phase 1

GENDER		RACE		AGE		EDUC	
Male	6	White	8	≤30	3	hs, GED	5
Female	9	Black	6	31-45	3	some coll, AA	4
		Hispanic	1	46-60	6	Bachelor's	5
				61+	3	Some grad	1

The interviews were conducted at the Census Bureau’s cognitive laboratory and at places more convenient for respondents. During each interview, the general outline of the mailing strategy with the four mailing pieces was first presented to the respondent. Then the interviewer presented each letter (or postcard) to the respondent one at a time, instructing him or her to read it (but not read it aloud) and verbalize any thoughts or reactions to it. After the respondent read the letter, the interviewer probed about how much of the letter was read, the respondent’s understanding of the letter, including what the main point of the letter was and whether he or she noticed parts of the text or design features. A copy of the research protocol is included in Appendix 5. The interviews were tape-recorded to facilitate summarization of the results, and respondents were paid an honorarium of \$40 for assisting in the research.

RESULTS

Advance Letter

Most of the respondents said they read “all” of the letter. When asked to show explicitly where they stopped, many said “thank you in advance for your help.” Fewer respondents said they read to “sincerely,” and at least one read through “Steve H. Murdock, Director, U.S. Census Bureau.” However, as we will note later, they did not pay much attention to the logos and watermark at the bottom of the page.

Respondents were asked if they spent time reading any part of the letter more than other parts. By far, respondents said they spent the most time reading the second paragraph, which contains the messages about the uses of the data. They made comments such as “Comment on highways, schools, and health facilities was probably the most interesting,” ““You and your neighbors’ made the letter more personal.” and “It’s how the responses are going to be used. Sometimes you don’t know why they are doing this and you want to know.” One respondent said that the second paragraph made her feel like she really needed to be a part of the census to get funds for the community she lives in. Many respondents said that this paragraph should be highlighted. It gave them information they did not know and was very important. On the other hand, one respondent did not find these arguments persuasive because the letter did not say that participation is mandatory. He did not see any authority behind it.

When respondents were asked what the letter said about reasons for doing the census, they mentioned three general areas: government funds, the community's fair share, and particular government expenditures (highways, schools, health care). One respondent, who seemed unfamiliar with the census and the Census Bureau, wondered why the government would "all of a sudden" be giving money. Another respondent, who lives in DC, did not find the schools a particularly persuasive argument, since the mayor is planning to shut some of them down. But she said it would not affect her willingness to participate in the census.

Respondents were asked what they thought the main point of the letter was and most understood that the main purpose was a "heads up"—they will be getting a census form and they should fill it out promptly. A few gave different reasons, such as "the significance of everybody participating in the census" and "to get volunteer help to fill out the form."

The letter included a paragraph that gave information about getting a job as a census enumerator. The majority of respondents, but not all, read this paragraph. One respondent said she did not read the paragraph about jobs because she knew she would not be interested in working on the census. (This comment suggests she had to have at least glanced at it to grasp its content.) At least three people did not notice the paragraph at all. Another respondent noticed it and said that she did not remember seeing it in the letter for previous censuses.

Those respondents who read the paragraph seemed to notice both the phone number and the website. Of those who were asked which they would choose if they were interested in a job (this was not asked in all interviews), the majority said they would go to the website. One respondent said she is on the computer all the time, so she would just go there. Another said she does not like 800 numbers because they get very busy. In contrast, some respondents had a stated preference for the phone number. This suggests that including both the website and the toll-free number will increase the "catch" of potential enumerators.

As alluded to above, in general, respondents did not notice the information at the bottom of the letter. The exception was the Census 2010 logo. The size and bold font of this logo made it stand out. Most respondents said they noticed it and seemed to understand the significance of it. Among those who noticed it, only a few respondents noticed the url underneath it. Some commented on the small size of the type. When asked whether they would go to the website, reactions were mixed. Some respondents said they would. Others said they would if they had privacy or confidentiality concerns, although many of these respondents did not have such concerns. Other respondents said they would not go to the website at this time, suggesting that they might go there later, perhaps when the questionnaire came in the mail.

Most respondents did not notice the Census Bureau watermark. One respondent who did notice it had a negative reaction to it. She had trouble reading it because the letters were all spaced out and made into what looked like one word. After this watermark was pointed out during the interview, other respondents said they did not think it was needed.

Observation of the letterhead at the top of the page was mixed. Some respondents said they noticed it and some said they did not. All had the same general reaction to it; they said it looked official. For some respondents, this was expected: this is what they generally see at the top of government letters, so they did not pay attention to it. “It’s just something that’s official.” “Typical government letterhead, mediocre.” “It was printed nice. It fills up the page nicely.” On the other hand, some respondents were impressed by the letterhead. One respondent volunteered that the letterhead meant more to him than the logos and watermark at the bottom of the page. Another said that the letterhead connotes authority.

Respondents expressed two minor points of interest. First, one respondent asked if this was the type of paper that the real letter would be printed on and said it looked “cheesy,” like it was photocopied. She seemed to be saying she expected textured paper that was not so flat. Second, although almost all our respondents were native English-speakers (one was a native Spanish-speaking Hispanic), several of them expressed concern about people who do not speak English, in particular those who speak Spanish.

Recommendation: The layout of the information at the bottom of the page is not effective. It is not seen by many respondents and, particularly in the case of the Census Bureau watermark, is not understood or interpreted positively by others. Our recommendation for improving the design is to remove the Census Bureau watermark on the bottom left and replace it with the url that is currently underneath the Census 2010 logo. This would allow the url to be printed in larger font and increase the chances that respondents would notice it.

Cover Letter for Initial Mailing

Two-thirds of the respondents in these interviews (9 out of 15) turned the letter over to read the back. Another respondent flipped over the bottom corner and saw blue background but no text, so he did not turn the page all the way over. One respondent did not turn it over because of the cognitive interview procedures. She said she thought the interviewer would ask her to read that piece specifically. Another respondent said she saw the last sentence of the letter, but did not turn the page over because she had read it all before in her job as a law enforcement officer. Another respondent who did not read the back of the letter said she would assume “it’s the standard rights and privacy notices that you see on the backs of ... credit card statements.” Another respondent saw the Director’s name and “Enclosures” and thought they signaled the end of the letter. Regardless of the reason, the proportion of respondents who read the back of the letter is lower than desired, given the importance of the information contained on the back.

Front of the Letter

Respondents thought there were three main points to the letter:

1) to ask people to complete the form quickly, for example, “It is important, mail it back today,” “Fill out the form, it is important,” “To get you to hopefully respond as soon as possible,” and “Trying to convince people to fill out the actual census form and mail it back”;

2) to convey the reasons for the census, such as “We need people’s information to decide policy, how the government spends money and proper representation,” “Inform people that it is important to them in their communities,” “Get everyone’s answers for reasons for deciding the number of representatives in Congress and to provide government money”;

3) to inform people about privacy and confidentiality, including “It is important for you to answer, your answers are confidential,” “Census is important, answers are confidential,” and “Information is needed, answers are private.”

The quotes above focused on just one of these points, but other respondents felt that there was more than one main point to the letter. They said things such as, “Census is enclosed, need to fill it out today, important because it gives statistics for money, representatives,” “Information is needed, how the money is gonna be used, information is private,” and “Need information to properly serve community, information is private.” These responses suggest that all these pieces of information may be equally significant in their importance to respondents.

These responses also suggest that completing the questionnaire quickly is not the key information that respondents take away, despite the fact that this information is in boldface type. Two respondents felt it was not realistic for people to fill out the questionnaire today, as the letter instructs. They might get around to it the weekend after the form arrived when they had some free time. They thought a time frame should be included in the letter, and their perceived time frame (three weeks) was longer than the Census Bureau expects.

One respondent expressed a very different attitude: she felt that “people are just being nosy, want to find out how many people might be living in your house when they aren’t on the lease.” It should be noted that when this respondent read the back of the letter (which she did not do on her own but only after she was instructed to by the interviewer), she was much more reassured and it changed her mind about the “nosiness” of the Census Bureau.

Respondents were asked about the uses of census data that were included in the cover letter, specifically whether there were any that were not included in the advance letter. People correctly observed that different data uses were mentioned in the two letters. Several referred to children and the elderly. Almost everyone mentioned allocation of congressional representatives. The latter came as news to some respondents. One respondent spontaneously volunteered that it was a good thing to mention different things in both letters.

A couple of respondents mentioned “local needs” as being a data use that was not included in the advance letter. One of them was confused as to what that meant.

Respondents expressed personal preferences about the statements of data uses. One person liked the wording of services in the first letter better because they are more specific (e.g., highways, schools) rather than services for a group of people. Another respondent did not like the mention of roads and thought that money should be used for helping the homeless. However, she did like the fact that the letter mentions children and the elderly. One respondent was surprised that schools were not mentioned.

We asked respondents if they noticed the “enclosures” below the Director’s signature. About 3/4 of them said they noticed it. Most respondents thought it referred to the form that would be included in the mailing package. One thought it referred to the paragraph on the back of the letter. As noted previously, the “enclosures” statement signaled the end of the letter to one respondent and caused her not to turn it over and read the back.

Back of the Letter

Most respondents reacted positively to the messages on the back of the letter. They noted the information about the title and section of the law protecting respondents’ privacy, and thought this was positive information. One respondent commented, “When you’ve got the Title 13 code, section... so it can’t be obtained by law enforcement or tax collection agencies, that pretty much says what needs to be said.” Another said, “There’s a code and a section and everything, so it’s definitely something to be taken seriously.” However, this feeling was not universal. Another respondent read the part about “they [your answers] cannot be obtained by law enforcement or tax collection agencies” and said, “Nobody, NOBODY, believes that.” She had been a law enforcement officer and knew that their files were not confidential. Perhaps she felt the same way about all confidential information.

Several respondents commented on the “public after 72 years” text on the back of the letter. One person reacted negatively, but said it would not change her willingness to fill out the form. The possibility of doing family history research after 72 years was a plus for several respondents. One respondent was surprised at the possibility of doing that kind of research.

We instructed respondents to look at the back if they had not already done so, and asked if they had noticed the website. Approximately half noticed it and half did not, or did not notice that it was different from the one on the other side. Some respondents said they would go to the website, either out of curiosity or if they had questions about privacy. A larger fraction said they would not go to the website, either because they were not concerned about privacy or they were not computer literate. One respondent volunteered that it was good to mention the website so that people who were concerned about confidentiality could find more information. The people who said they would go to the website indicated they would do so for the following reasons: out of curiosity, because “everyone today is website orientated (sic),” or to learn more about privacy and confidentiality.

One respondent totally misunderstood the purpose of the website. He connected it with the statement about data being available in 72 years, and thought he could find 72-year-old census data there and could do genealogical research.

Recommendations: The content on the back page of the letter is important, well-received by respondents, and actually changed one of our respondent's perception of the census. It would be beneficial if we could increase the number of people who turn the letter over and read the back. We suggest that the "Enclosures" be deleted since this directs respondents' attention away from the back and onto the other components of the mailing package. We note that this line does not appear on the cover letter for the replacement mailing package.

We suggest that the bottom of the cover letter contain the same design as recommended above for the advance letter.

Reminder Postcard

Several respondents commented that the reminder postcard looked like junk mail. They said things such as, "Too many junk mail advertisements come in postcard form." Two said that it would be better if the information were conveyed in letter form; for example, "Someone can just drop and lose this or play with this and not take it seriously." A couple of respondents said the postcard would wind up in the trash. One respondent said the print was too small to really notice what was on the card.

One feature of the postcard that would diminish the junk mail look is the black box containing the mandatory notice. We did not consistently hand the card to respondents so that this side was facing them, but many turned the card over to see it. This is the first mention in the mailing materials in Phase 1 that the census is mandatory and it surprised some respondents. There were different reactions to this message. Some were negative ("Those sounded like harsh words," "How are they gonna enforce it if they don't have any names?"), some were positive ("It makes you really want to do it") and some were in between (this answered one respondent's first question when she saw the advance letter—is it voluntary or mandatory?). One respondent noted a contradiction between the text in the letter, which he considered to be an appeal to reason, and the front side, which provided the mandatory message. One respondent said he would read the postcard if he first saw the side containing the mandatory notice, but if he saw the other side first he would not read it. The Census Bureau has no control, of course, over which side of the card the respondent would see first.

Respondents understood that the card was basically a reminder. In general they saw two main points: 1) "If you've already mailed it, thank you. If you haven't, send it;" and 2) "Fill out the form and if you need help, call one of the numbers." One respondent said the main point was: "It's your responsibility to send it in, it's required by law." Another made a distinction between mailing the form and giving the information. "It's important to give the information. Not mail it back, but provide the information."

Regarding the first main point, one respondent had trouble with the sentence “There is no need to provide your answers again.” She didn’t know what we meant by “again.” She thought it meant she might get another form. Or it could mean that someone might call to get the information.

Most respondents noticed the paragraph associated with the second main point, containing the phone numbers. Many respondents said they would call the general assistance number if they needed help filling out their form. Two respondents said they would not call the number. One said she did not think she would need help completing the form; the other person did not give a reason. Respondents knew generally what the TDD telephone number was for. Many knew it was for the deaf or hard of hearing, and others knew it was for people with some type of disability. Seeing the TDD number prompted one man to ask if there is a Braille version of the form.

Respondents also noticed the telephone number for assistance in Spanish. While several people thought this was a good idea, two respondents volunteered that people who speak only Spanish would not be able to read the English message, so the message should be in Spanish.

Another respondent, in looking over the card, said she was looking for a due date (“like taxes”). She thought it might be the end of the month.

One respondent compared the timing of the date on the census mailing package (February 15) and the date on the postcard (March 7). This is a difference of three weeks, yet the postcard says “a few days ago, you should have received... .” He was annoyed by this wording and suggested that it be changed to “a while ago.”

Recommendations: The respondents who noted that Spanish-speaking respondents will not be able to read the English instruction to get assistance in Spanish have a good point. We recommend that this message be translated into Spanish and put in a separate paragraph to increase visibility.

It seems odd to have a return address of Jeffersonville, IN on one side of the card and Washington, DC on the other side of the card. Can these be made the same?

We also suggest that the bottom of the cover letter contain the same design as recommended above for the advance letter.

Replacement Cover Letter

All the respondents read the front of the letter, at least down to “sincerely.” This may be a result of a conditioning bias. Respondents had been asked how far they read on previous letters, and this caused them to read all the way to the bottom of the page. About three-fourths of the respondents looked at the back of the letter. Some read it carefully, others read it quickly

because they assumed it was the same as the back of the other letter. Still other respondents did not turn the letter over because they assumed the content was the same as that on the back of the initial cover letter.

Respondents noticed the new messages that appeared in the replacement cover letter. Some people, who had not noticed the mandatory box on the reminder postcard, noted that this (“U.S. law requires you to respond”) was a new message. Some respondents asked what would happen if they did not mail in their form. One person thought it was an exaggeration and stated that nothing would happen if he did not return his form. In general, respondents did not find this language overly upsetting. One respondent commented that it was “firm, but fair.” Another said, “The whole U.S. law thing. It’s almost like a scare tactic. It’s a scare, but also an encouragement as to how it could hamper services.” Another mentioned the possibility of putting the mandatory language in bold, but thought that might be heavy-handed. He did not think the current text was heavy-handed. Several respondents said this language would encourage people to return their forms.

Almost everyone noticed and commented on the “last chance” message, and the fact that if they did not respond by mail they would be contacted by a Census Bureau representative. Many respondents assumed that the contact would be by telephone. Others, possibly because they remembered from previous censuses, knew that the contact would be knocks on the door. Several respondents thought the letter should mention that the contact would be in person. This would be a powerful incentive to mail in the form because people would not want a Census Bureau representative knocking on their door.

Respondents thought that the bold font in the second paragraph contributed to a view that this letter was more intense, and in some sense more pushy, than previous communications. For the most part they did not have a problem with the increasing severity of the messages, because they realized that people were waiting at the Census Bureau to process the data. This feeling was not universally held, however. One respondent thought the first paragraph of the letter should be softened by including information about data uses, and the second paragraph should have all the more dramatic language about being required by law and requiring contact from a Census Bureau representative.

Three respondents suggested that the third paragraph from the reminder postcard, containing the telephone assistance numbers, should be added to the replacement cover letter. They felt that one reason people may not have completed their form was because they needed help. This is a very astute observation and certainly worth considering.

Another positive suggestion was to put “your answers are confidential” in the same boldface type as “return your form today.” One respondent thought this was just as important and would contribute to increased mail response.

One respondent said that there is no time period specified for response. She suggested saying, “If we do not receive your response within 30 days.”

Recommendations: We have two recommendations for changes to the replacement cover letter. We agree with the respondents who suggested that the last paragraph of the reminder card would be a good addition, because it would encourage people who need assistance to get it. Even though the same language may be included on the back of the form, people may be too overwhelmed by the form to give it more than a quick glance. (Only four respondents in Phase 2 noticed the telephone assistance number on the back of the form.) Adding this information to the cover letter might be more effective in getting respondents who need it to seek help.

Our second recommendation concerns the respondents' overwhelming impression that they will be contacted by telephone if they do not mail back their form. We believe it would be more motivating to specifically state that the contact will be by personal visit. Respondents seemed to suggest this, and it may be more persuasive.

We also suggest that the bottom of the cover letter contain the same design as recommended above for the advance letter.

Debriefing Questions

After the respondents provided information about each of the mailing pieces, we asked some general questions to gauge their reaction to the mailing strategy.

First, we asked whether respondents would be likely to open a letter if it said U.S. Census Bureau on the envelope. All of them said they would open such an envelope. Some said they would open it because it looked official and important (we showed them a facsimile of the envelope). Some were familiar with the work of the Census Bureau. It must be kept in mind that this sentiment is not representative of a larger group of people. They all agreed to participate in this research and they were talking to Census Bureau employees, in the Census Bureau building in most cases. One respondent said that, although he would open the envelope, he would most likely not read beyond the first two sentences of the advance letter.

Next, we asked whether respondents would read the cover letter that came with the questionnaire package. Here the pattern was somewhat different. Many respondents said they would read the letter, either because they read all their mail closely or they would want to know what it was about. Some said they would be likely at least to scan it or glance at relevant parts. Others said they would only look at it if they needed more information after they started to fill out the form. One respondent said her response would be situational – it would depend on what kind of mood she was in and how much junk mail she received that day.

We also asked questions about how respondents would react to receiving the follow-up mailing pieces, especially if they had mailed their form in. Most respondents would not be concerned if they received the postcard, especially since it thanked them if they had already mailed in their form. They might think there was some overlap in the mail. If they received the replacement mailing, most said they would have a stronger reaction. One said she thought it would be

wasteful. One said she would wonder, “What is wrong with these people?” One said she would wonder why the Census Bureau does not have her form, maybe it had gotten lost in the mail. Another would call the Census Bureau to let them know she had already completed it. Only one person said he would complete the form again (the interviewer showed the form to the respondent, who noticed that it was short).

Respondents were asked to comment on differences in tone between the initial and replacement cover letters. They used stronger words to describe the second letter (“strident,” “more forthright,” “commanding,” “more demanding”). For the most part respondents did not find these differences to be bothersome. One thought it was “a polite way of demanding.” However, one respondent was definitely bothered by “the whole US law push in the face.” She did not like the tone of the letter and said it did not encourage her to fill out the form faster. But she did not say it would cause her not to fill out the form if she had not already done so.

Respondents were also asked about the language in the letters and postcard. Was it too difficult, too easy, or about right? Most respondents thought the level of language was just right. They said things like, “Direct and to the point. It’s not overbearing, and I think just about anybody can understand it,” “Not overly wordy or anything like that, or you need a dictionary to figure out,” and “not dumbed down.” There were, however, some specific words that a couple of respondents thought some people might not be familiar with. Three people mentioned “statistical purposes.” One person was confused herself about the phrase “local needs.” She was suspicious about what that would mean, but did not specify any further.

We asked respondents if the messages brought up issues that some people might find sensitive or uncomfortable. Several issues were raised, but there was not a groundswell of support for any of them. They included the following:

- the letters might not appeal to immigrants, who might find the census intrusive;
- some people might think of the census as government intrusion, “no matter ... what kind of letter you send them, they’re going to go ‘ewwww’”;
- the special sentence for Spanish-speaking respondents might have a negative effect on others;
- the “last chance” statement and “required by law” might not make people happy;
- “the US law requires” might turn people off;
- people might be concerned about confidentiality (but respondent felt the letters dealt with the subject well);
- the request for response “today” is too soon after receipt of the form and is not realistic; and
- “There are always paranoid people.”

In general, respondents did not have a negative reaction to the mailing strategy and the fact that they could potentially receive two mailings after they had mailed back their census form. There could, however, be a surge in the number of calls to the telephone assistance line, especially after the replacement questionnaires are mailed out. This surge could occur because people want to

verify that their original form was received by the Census Bureau. Operators should be clued in to this possibility and told how to respond.

The single response above about people having a negative response to the special sentence for Spanish-speaking people contradicts our previous recommendation, based on multiple respondents, that the instruction for Spanish speakers be translated into Spanish. This is an area where there are clear differences of opinion among the general public. The Census Bureau's goal of maximizing response rates to minimize costs may be the overriding factor here, or the Census Bureau may choose to view it as a public perception issue, which would negate making the change.

PHASE 2. TESTING THE MAILING PACKAGE

In Phase 2, the focus of the pretesting was respondents' behavior as they received the census mailing package, completed the questionnaire and got it ready for mailing.

MATERIALS

The four documents that comprise the census mailing package are described below.

Outgoing envelope

The outgoing mailing is a 6" X 10 1/8" white envelope with a 2 3/4" X 4 3/4" film-covered opening for the respondent's address to show through and a postal permit indicia in the upper right corner. The return address includes the U.S. Department of Commerce, Economics and Statistics Administration, U.S. Census Bureau and shows that the package was mailed from Jeffersonville, IN. There are two distinguishing features on the envelope. First, a large box with a thick black outline containing the words "U.S. Census Form Enclosed; Your Response is Required by Law" is on the left side of the envelope below the return address. Second, the Census 2010 logo in very large type is situated at the middle top of the envelope, between the return address and the postage paid stamp. See Appendix 6 for a facsimile of the envelope.

Cover Letter

The cover letter used in Phase 2 is the same as the version used in Phase 1. It is written on a 5 1/2" x 8" piece of paper and contains text on both sides. Written in black text on a blue background, the front page is in the form of a letter, which ends with the Director's signature followed by "Enclosures." The back of the letter, also on blue background, contains text about privacy and confidentiality under the heading "**Your Answers Are Confidential.**" The last paragraph on the front of the letter, which says, "The back of this letter contains more information about protecting your data," refers respondents to the back of the letter. See Appendix 2 for a facsimile of the cover letter.

Census Form

The census form that was used in this research is the planned Census 2010 census form. It was modified to contain a March 1, 2008 reference date. See Appendix 7 for a facsimile of the census form.

Return Envelope

The return envelope is a white 5 11/16" X 9 7/16" envelope. The front contains a Jeffersonville, IN return address, a business reply legend box, a postal permit indicia in the upper right corner, and a printed Jeffersonville, IN address. In the center of the envelope is an opening covered with plastic film that stretches across most of the length of the envelope. On the left side of the envelope the opening is approximately 5/8" high, and on the right side it increases to 1 1/8". On the inside of the envelope showing through the film on the right side of the envelope is the bolded text **"To return your census form, please make sure the BAR CODE ABOVE THE ADDRESS appears in this window."** The back of the envelope contains a "thank you" on the flap. Below the flap there appear additional instructions about putting the form in the envelope, including a picture of what it should look like when the form is put in the envelope correctly. See Appendix 8 for a facsimile of the census return envelope.

RESEARCH METHODS

In May, 2008, staff from the Center for Survey Methods Research in the Statistical Research Division conducted 15 cognitive interviews. General population respondents were targeted, since all households in the U.S. will receive a census form in the mail. Again, respondents were recruited through an advertisement on craigslist.org and calls to people in our recruiting database. Table 2 contains the demographic characteristics of the respondents.

Table 2. Demographic Characteristics of Respondents in Phase 2

GENDER		RACE		AGE		EDUC	
Male	6	White	4	≤ 30	4	hs, GED	6
Female	9	Black	11	31-45	5	some coll, AA	3
		Hispanic	0	46-60	6	Bachelor's	4
				61+	0	some grad	2

The interviews were conducted at the Census Bureau's cognitive laboratory and at places more convenient for respondents. During each interview, the interviewer handed a sealed census mailing package to the respondent face up so the address was facing him or her. (The package was addressed to Resident at Apt. 8., 2008 Census Way, Suitland, MD 123456-1234.) We asked respondents to do what they would do at home in the absence of the interviewer, and to think aloud as they handled the various components of the mailing package. The interviewer observed

the respondent's actions, taking notes as she went along. After the respondent completed the census form and put it back in the envelope, the interviewer administered debriefing questions. Some of the questions (about the cover letter) were the same as those administered in Phase 1. Others asked about such things as what parts of the materials respondents noticed, how respondents knew they were done filling out the form, and how hard or easy it was to put the form back in the envelope. A copy of the research protocol is included in Appendix 9. The interviews were tape-recorded to facilitate summarization of the results, and respondents were paid an honorarium of \$40 for assisting in the research.

RESULTS

It should be noted at the outset that it was not always possible for us to observe how respondents initially examined the questionnaire. Opening the envelope and removing the contents happened quickly. As a result of the quick un-folding of events, we were unable to always tell exactly what respondents first noticed on the materials.

Operating the Mailing Package

As noted previously, the interviewer handed the respondent the sealed questionnaire mailing package front-side up, addressed to Resident. Most respondents had no difficulty in either opening the envelope or pulling the contents out; two people had just minor problems. We tried to keep track of how the process unfolded. All 15 respondents pulled the materials from the envelope all at once. Seven kept the materials in a stack and looked through them in order before setting them aside. The rest either organized the materials on the table or left them scattered on the table to take up one at a time. All of them set the original package envelope aside. Just one respondent put something back into the original mailing envelope. She put the letter back into the envelope after she completed the form and put it in the return envelope. This respondent explained that she does this for her own record keeping, in order to keep track of what she has filled out or paid (bills).

We observed that ten respondents looked at the letter first and six of those ten looked at the questionnaire second, with the other four glancing at the envelope before taking up the questionnaire. The rest of the respondents started by looking at the questionnaire first. Three of these just glanced at the questionnaire, then looked at the letter. Two never read the letter and eight did not look at the envelope until it was time to insert the completed questionnaire into it.

Later we asked respondents how they decided what to look at first when they took things out of the package. Five respondents said that they first looked for the letter to get an explanation and/or instructions on what they were being asked to do. Four others said that they looked for the questionnaire first, because that was the task they were being asked to do (although one of these was observed reading the letter before looking at the questionnaire). The remaining six respondents said they just took the pieces in the order in which they came out of the questionnaire mailing package.

The Envelope

We asked respondents if they had noticed anything in particular about the envelope. Many respondents (seven of the 15) identified one or more specific features, two gave a general impression that it looked official without identifying any particular feature, and the rest said they did not notice anything. Of the seven who noticed specific features, three said they saw the mandatory message, two noticed the logo, and one mentioned she had seen both of these. One person said she realized the envelope was from the census, but did not specify whether she had learned this from looking at the logo, the message about the census form in the mandatory message box, or the inclusion of “Census Bureau” on the third line of the return address.

These observations were likely to have been quick glances, since we noted that while handling the materials the large majority of respondents either barely glanced at the front of the envelope or turned it over immediately and did not look at it at all. One respondent looked at it carefully and two others noticed one or more features. Just two offered comments at the time they were handed the envelope; both commented on the message “Your response is required by law.”

When asked directly about whether they noticed each specific feature on the envelope, a larger number of respondents claimed to have seen these things. For example, when asked if they had noticed the mandatory message “Your response is required by law,” nine claimed to have seen this (five more than had mentioned it when asked the general probe above). Once their attention was focused on the mandatory message, most said that it was trying to convey the message that filling out the form is important, with two mentioning there could be punishment if they did not complete it. One other person said it made the form more official and less like junk mail; he suggested that we print this in color to make it stand out more on the envelope and distinguish this from junk mail.

Likewise, when asked specifically if they had noticed the Census 2010 logo on the envelope, nine respondents said they had done so (compared to the three above who mentioned it when asked if they had noticed any particular features of the envelope). When we asked respondents directly if they had noticed the return address, the majority said they had (though just one identified this feature when asked the general probe). Most people said the return address made sense to them. One mentioned that “Department of Commerce” and “Economics and Statistics Administration” was distracting to him and that having them listed on the top two lines of the return address might confuse some people or result in their missing the fact that the Census Bureau is also part of the return address.

It was clear to respondents that the envelope had come from the Department of Commerce and included the census form. All but two people thought the envelope looked official. Those two suggested the package would look more official if it were in the usual brown envelope that the government uses to send important mail in (such as checks). One volunteered that seeing the envelope addressed to Resident, rather than to him personally, made it seem more like junk mail. He wanted it addressed to him personally (the interviewer informed him about the address-based, not person-based, nature of the census).

Recommendation: We do not have any recommendations for changing the outgoing census envelope.

The Cover Letter

Our observations as the respondents worked their way through the materials revealed that nine read the front of the letter, four appeared to skim or glance at it, and one did not look at it at all. The majority did not turn the letter over. Only three read the back and two others skimmed it. (This is even less than our finding from Phase 1 that one-third of the respondents did not turn the letter over to read the back.)

When we asked respondents directly about how much of the letter they had read, a large majority of respondents claimed to have scanned or read the front of the letter. Twelve said they read the full text on the front, two admitted they just read the first paragraph, up to and including the bold text. One did not read it at all. In contrast, just two said they read the back of the letter, while seven said they glanced at the back but did not really read it, and six said they never turned the letter over to the back side. Note that these self-reported numbers differ slightly from our observations.

All of the respondents understood that the letter was asking them to complete the form and mail it back. Nine of them added that the letter was explaining the reason for doing the census and six of those mentioned that this is important. One of them said that the census is important and that “your answers are safe and confidential. That good warm and cozy feeling, of not Big Brother, but government trying to assist.”

When asked if, in general, they look at letters that come with surveys or other requests for information, five of the 15 respondents said that they do. Four more said their decision to read would depend on whether it was official and/or appeared to be important, noting that they would not read packages that were commercial or marketing in nature. The rest said they would not typically read such letters.

Recommendation: We do not have any additional recommendations for changes to the cover letter besides the ones mentioned in Phase 1.

Operating the Questionnaire

The respondents most frequently had the docuprint address side of the form facing them when they pulled it out of the envelope. They opened the form to its full length, but few respondents noticed or spent time looking over this side of the form. Respondents who did notice this side of the form seemed to spend very little time looking at the docuprint address, despite the fact that it was the first side of the questionnaire they saw. However, some respondents did take notice of, glance at, or read through the blue text boxes containing the mailing address, instruction about

how to get help in completing the form, and the respondent burden statement. Two respondents did not notice these boxes until they had finished filling out the form and were attempting to stuff the envelope, after folding the questionnaire.

Once respondents unfolded the form, they did not seem to pay attention to the black banner at the top of the form, which indicated that this was the official Census form. However, most respondents did seem to pay at least cursory attention to the residence rules instructions. Some of these respondents seemed to pay careful attention to the residence rules instructions, mumbling the instructions as they read them. Other respondents did not read any of the “start here” instructions.

Two respondents made significant navigation errors when attempting to fill out the questionnaire. One respondent failed to read the first page of the form. She opened immediately to page 2, and seemed to be operating on some sort of familiarity with a previous census form. This familiarity may have prompted her to begin filling out the form on page 2. She began listing herself at Person 2 and commented that the relationship question did not have a place to mark “self.” She realized her mistake when she got to Person 3, and went back and listed herself as Person 1. The second respondent who made a mistake spent time carefully reading over the entire form before she completed it. She made comments about the residence rules and the column one questions. Despite her careful attention to the form, when she started to fill it out she did so incorrectly. She started filling out the second column of the first page, the Person 1 questions. She skipped over the count, coverage, tenure, and phone number questions in the first column. She did not realize her mistake until the interviewer asked her about skipping these questions.

Two other respondents did not make navigation errors, but did incorrectly fill out the form. Both initially left themselves off the form. One respondent misinterpreted the Person 1 instructions to be asking about the people in her household *in addition to* herself. She listed her adult son as Person 1. She realized her mistake when she flipped open the form and noticed Person 2. She listed herself as Person 2. However, as a result of this error, she also incorrectly answered the relationship question, listing herself as “biological son or daughter.” She was referring to Person 1’s relationship to *her*, rather than her relationship *to* Person 1. The other respondent listed his father as Person 1 and said he had provided information about himself in the first column, when he provided his telephone number. He knew he should provide information about two people, and thought he had done so. Only during the debriefing did he realize that he had not actually provided information about himself.

Many respondents did not initially figure out that they had completed the form after they completed questions for the last person in the household. Eventually, though, all were able to determine this. It occurred in one of three ways: 1) they eventually noticed the note at the bottom of the last person column; 2) they noticed the Thank You at the bottom of the page containing questions for Persons 7-12; or 3) they looked over the entire form and did not see any more questions to answer and decided that they were finished.

Six of our 15 respondents had four or more members in their households. Five of these respondents were able to fill out the form without any problems. One respondent seemed momentarily confused that the information for respondents 7 through 12 was immediately to the left of Person 2. However, after looking at the page for a moment, he realized he needed to fold out the form. He did not make any errors.

Respondents generally did not notice the blue boxes on the back of the form containing the Jeffersonville, IN mailing address, the phone numbers for obtaining help in English and Spanish. Only five of our 15 respondents said they had noticed them. Two of these only noticed the boxes as they were putting their completed, folded questionnaires into the return envelope. Most of the respondents said they did not have any trouble completing the form. One respondent said that if she did have trouble she would search the entire form trying to find some place she could call for help. When they were shown the instruction, many respondents said they would call the telephone assistance center if they needed help. Others said they would not. One said he would keep working on the form himself until he figured it out. The others, having completed the form, said they would not need assistance.

One respondent in this phase of interviews, and several in the previous phase, commented that the instructions for Spanish-speakers are insufficient in general. The questionnaire does not tell Spanish-speakers how to get a census form in Spanish and the reminder postcard contains a message in English with a phone number for help in Spanish. When asked to look at the blue boxes, one non-Hispanic man read through them and made an astute observation. The text in the blue boxes does not mention anything about forms in Spanish. In his words,

“If this is one generic form that goes to every household, I would definitely think this is a problem. How would you even know to request one in Spanish if you get one in English? A lot of households aren’t proficient in English.”

Recommendation: The lack of instructions for non-native speakers is potentially problematic. Neither the advance letter nor the census form contain any instructions for obtaining forms in foreign languages. This puts a heavy burden on the Public Information Campaign and the local partnerships for conveying this important information. We suggest that consideration be given to whether the mailing materials should contain more information for households in need of assistance due to limited English-speaking ability.

Putting the Questionnaire into the Return Envelope

Respondents had some trouble when attempting to put the questionnaire into the return envelope correctly. These problems were largely isolated to inserting the correct side of the questionnaire in the envelope. All but one of our respondents were able to fold the questionnaire back up correctly. This respondent folded the first page of the questionnaire backward so that the Person 2 and Person 3 columns were facing out. She then folded the questionnaire in half and put it in the envelope, realizing it was folded wrong because the address was not showing in the window.

Getting the questionnaire back in the envelope so that the bar code was in the correct window proved to be quite difficult for some respondents. Seven respondents put the questionnaire in the envelope correctly without any difficulties. One respondent, who was talking while stuffing the envelope, started to put the questionnaire in the envelope incorrectly, but immediately stopped and corrected her mistake before she had finished stuffing it. The remaining seven respondents had to make at least two attempts to put the questionnaire in the return envelope correctly. One respondent was not able to put the questionnaire in the envelope correctly, despite four attempts. On her final try, she thought it was correct, but the bar codes showed through the wrong windows.

Respondents made several different errors when attempting to stuff the envelope. Three respondents put the form in on the wrong side. They had the blue boxes facing through the window. One respondent noticed the Jeffersonville address in the text of the blue boxes while the questionnaire was still folded. He thought this was the address that needed to show through the return envelope window. After starting to put the questionnaire in the envelope, he realized this address would not line up with the window. He removed the questionnaire, read the instructions in the address window and correctly put the questionnaire in the envelope. Three other respondents put the form in upside down, so that the bar codes were in the wrong window.

Part of the respondents' problems stemmed from their not noticing the instructions about how to put the form back in the envelope. There were two instructions on the envelope: one on the back of the envelope and one showing through the window on the front of the envelope. Most respondents did not notice the instructions on the back of the envelope at all. Others glanced at the instructions but did not read them. Only three people actually read the instruction on the back of the envelope. When these instructions were pointed out to respondents who had not noticed them, all said they were helpful, but they just did not see them.

The instruction printed on the inside of the front of the envelope was similarly overlooked. Our probing of this instruction was not as complete as the previous one, but although respondents saw the plastic window on the front of the envelope, they did not notice the words behind the film. At least four respondents said they did not see the instruction that showed through the window.

In the absence of seeing the instructions, there was confusion about what was supposed to show through the window. Some respondents understood that the bar code was supposed to show through the window, but others thought an address, either the Jeffersonville, IN address or the respondent's address, was supposed to show through the window. Once some respondents realized that the address was printed on the envelope below the window, they did not think it mattered what showed through the window.

While only one respondent in these interviews did not get succeed in getting the form in the envelope correctly, this may not be the case when respondents are in the privacy of their own home. One respondent strongly expressed irritation and frustration at not being able to get the

form in correctly. She mentioned that she would simply discard the envelope and use her own envelope that she would address to the Jeffersonville processing center. Other respondents said they would not bother to try and correct the form in the envelope, even if the blue boxes were facing out, since the form would still get to the right place.

Having the bar codes in the wrong windows is not nearly as problematic as having the wrong side of the form showing. Although relying on the return address will still get the form to the processing center, it will delay the arrival and also make the scanning process more difficult.

Recommendation: The window design on the return census envelope causes confusion about how to put the form in correctly. The two instructions on the envelope are viewed as helpful by respondents, but they are frequently overlooked. We recommend that additional graphic devices be used to draw attention to them. Perhaps the instructions could be printed in a different color ink. Or a stop sign could be added to the back of the form to alert respondents to stop and read the instructions. Another possibility might be to add an instruction on the questionnaire. This might take the form of an arrow that would point to the fold in the form with an instruction to put this end in the envelope first. This could be placed in the general area of the docuprint address, and would result in the bar codes being properly positioned in the windows.

DEBRIEFING

We asked respondents if there was anything they did, or any questions they answered, that they thought people might find difficult. Nearly half of them mentioned the Hispanic and race questions as difficult in some way. One of these wondered about the need for the Hispanic origin question.

“Why not just ask if you are Latino, rather than not...The “not of” is the part to me [that’s the problem]. If you are “not of” then you are one of these [pointing to the race question]. Then the Hispanic could be put into the race question and the yeses to Hispanic could be taken off.”

Two others thought the questions about Hispanic and race could be offensive. One of these said, “This makes me ponder why Hispanic origin is not a race. There doesn’t seem to be a right answer for Hispanics in the race question. I believe Hispanic is a race. That’s a personal belief. If I was a Hispanic, I don’t know if I would find a correct answer to Q9.”

A fourth respondent thought some people might find the race/origin questions difficult to answer. The fifth respondent found the formatting of the race question difficult. She marked her own category, “African American,” and became confused because she thought that the line of write-in boxes below the American Indian category was associated with the Asian category. She had not seen the arrow at the end of the Indian line pointing to the boxes for write-ins of the name for tribal enrollment. Upon looking at it later, she said that arrow is smaller than the others, and that might had contributed to her overlooking it.

Two other people thought the race question would be difficult for multiracial people to complete. These two respondents were white and not themselves multiracial, and they did not notice the instruction that more than one race could be marked. It is possible that people who are multiracial would read more carefully than non-multiracial people to find an option for multiple responses to the race question. However, we had no multiracial respondents in this study so we cannot say anything about this at this time.

Other questions that respondents identified as problematic included the tenure question (one respondent) and the Person 1 instruction, figuring out who was supposed to be Person 1 (one respondent). Several others found the Person 1 instruction puzzling.

We also asked if there were any questions that some people might find sensitive. Four mentioned the race question, with two of those specifying the “Negro” category as sensitive. Other questions identified by one respondent each as sensitive included: Hispanic origin, telephone number, sex, relationship, and the coverage question (question 2), without explaining why it might be sensitive.

We do not offer any recommendations on revising the race or Hispanic question at this time of finalizing the questionnaire for the 2010 Census. However, we believe it is important to note that 1) nearly half of our respondents identified race and Hispanic origin as difficult questions and 2) nearly a quarter of them found the race question to be sensitive. We suggest that these respondent reactions be kept in mind as we start thinking of revisions to the race and Hispanic questions to improve the next census in 2020.



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
Economics and Statistics Administration
U.S. Census Bureau
Washington, DC 20233-0001
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

February 1, 2008

Dear Resident:

About one week from now, you will receive a 2010 Census form in the mail.

When you receive your form, please fill it out and mail it in promptly.

Your response is important. Results from the 2010 Census will be used to help each community get its fair share of government funds for highways, schools, health facilities, and many other programs you and your neighbors need. Without a complete, accurate census, your community may not receive its fair share.

If you are interested in working on the 2010 Census, please call our toll-free jobs line at 1-866-861-2010, or visit our Web site at www.census.gov/2010census/jobs/.

Thank you in advance for your help.

Sincerely,

Steve H. Murdock
Director, U.S. Census Bureau

United States™
Census
2010

U S C E N S U S B U R E A U

www.census.gov/2010census



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
Economics and Statistics Administration
U.S. Census Bureau

Washington, DC 20233-0001

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

February 15, 2008

Dear Resident:

This is your official 2010 Census form. We need your help to count everyone in the United States by providing basic information about all the people living in this house or apartment. **Please complete and mail back the enclosed census form today.**

Your answers are important. Census results are used to decide the number of representatives each state has in the U.S. Congress. The amount of government money your neighborhood receives also depends on these answers. That money is used for services for children and the elderly, roads, and many other local needs.

Your answers are confidential. This means the Census Bureau cannot give out information that identifies you or your household. Your answers will only be used for statistical purposes, and for no other purpose. The back of this letter contains more information about protecting your data.

Sincerely,

Steve H. Murdock
Director, U.S. Census Bureau

Enclosures

United States™
Census
2010

U S C E N S U S B U R E A U

www.census.gov/2010census

DY-16(L)
(1-28-2008)

Your Answers Are Confidential

Federal law protects your privacy and keeps your answers confidential (Title 13, U.S. Code, Sections 9 and 214). The answers you give on the census form cannot be obtained by law enforcement or tax collection agencies. Your answers cannot be used in court. They cannot be obtained with a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request.

As allowed by law, census data become public after 72 years (Title 44, U.S. Code, Section 2108). These forms can be used for family history and other types of historical research.

Please visit our Web site at <http://www.census.gov/privacy/> to learn more about our privacy policy and data protection.

DY-16(L)
(1-28-2008)

**U.S. Department of Commerce
Economics and Statistics Administration
U.S. Census Bureau**

1201 E 10th Street
Jeffersonville IN 47144

OFFICIAL BUSINESS
Penalty for Private Use \$300

DY-9 (1-2008)

PRESORTED
FIRST-CLASS MAIL
POSTAGE & FEES PAID
U.S. CENSUS BUREAU
PERMIT NO. G-58

**U.S. Department of Commerce
Economics and Statistics Administration
U.S. Census Bureau**

1201 E 10th Street
Jeffersonville IN 47144

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DY-9 (1-2008)

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Your response to the U.S. Census Bureau
is required by law.

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**U.S. Department of Commerce
Economics and Statistics Administration
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DY-9 (1-2008)

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POSTAGE & FEES PAID
U.S. CENSUS BUREAU
PERMIT NO. G-58

Your response to the U.S. Census Bureau
is required by law.

Your response to the U.S. Census Bureau
is required by law.

Draft 4 1/28/08

March 7, 2008



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
Economics and Statistics Administration
U.S. Census Bureau
Washington, DC 20233-0001
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

Dear Resident:

A few days ago, you should have received a request to participate in the 2010 Census. It was sent to your address as part of our effort to conduct the most accurate census possible.

It is important that you respond. If you have already provided your census information, please accept our sincere thanks. If you have not responded, please provide your information as soon as possible.

If you need help completing your questionnaire, please call 1-866-872-6868 or, for help in Spanish, call 1-800-845-8243. The TDD telephone number for assistance is 1-800-786-9448. Census Bureau staff are available to help you everyday, 7 days a week, from 8 a.m. to 9 p.m.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Steve H. Murdock
Director, U.S. Census Bureau



www.census.gov/2010census
DY-9 (1-2008)

U S C E N S U S B U R E A U

March 7, 2008



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
Economics and Statistics Administration
U.S. Census Bureau
Washington, DC 20233-0001
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

Dear Resident:

A few days ago, you should have received a request to participate in the 2010 Census. It was sent to your address as part of our effort to conduct the most accurate census possible.

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Thank you.

Sincerely,

Steve H. Murdock
Director, U.S. Census Bureau



www.census.gov/2010census
DY-9 (1-2008)

U S C E N S U S B U R E A U

March 7, 2008



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
Economics and Statistics Administration
U.S. Census Bureau
Washington, DC 20233-0001
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

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Thank you.

Sincerely,

Steve H. Murdock
Director, U.S. Census Bureau



www.census.gov/2010census
DY-9 (1-2008)

U S C E N S U S B U R E A U

March 7, 2008



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
Economics and Statistics Administration
U.S. Census Bureau
Washington, DC 20233-0001
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

Dear Resident:

A few days ago, you should have received a request to participate in the 2010 Census. It was sent to your address as part of our effort to conduct the most accurate census possible.

It is important that you respond. If you have already provided your census information, please accept our sincere thanks. If you have not responded, please provide your information as soon as possible.

If you need help completing your questionnaire, please call 1-866-872-6868 or, for help in Spanish, call 1-800-845-8243. The TDD telephone number for assistance is 1-800-786-9448. Census Bureau staff are available to help you everyday, 7 days a week, from 8 a.m. to 9 p.m.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Steve H. Murdock
Director, U.S. Census Bureau



www.census.gov/2010census
DY-9 (1-2008)

U S C E N S U S B U R E A U



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
Economics and Statistics Administration
U.S. Census Bureau

Washington, DC 20233-0001

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

March 10, 2008

Dear Resident:

A few weeks ago, the U.S. Census Bureau sent you an official 2010 Census form. U.S. law requires households to respond. If you have not yet responded, we encourage you to do so immediately.

Return your form today. This is your last chance to respond by mail before a Census Bureau Representative contacts you.

It is important that each household respond only once. If you have already provided your census information, we thank you—there is no need to provide it again.

Your answers are confidential. This means the Census Bureau cannot give out information that identifies you or your household. Your answers will only be used for statistical purposes, and for no other purpose. The back of this letter contains more information about protecting your data.

Sincerely,

Steve H. Murdock
Director, U.S. Census Bureau

United States™
Census
2010

U S C E N S U S B U R E A U

www.census.gov/2010census

DY-17(L)
(1-29-2008)

Your Answers Are Confidential

Federal law protects your privacy and keeps your answers confidential (Title 13, U.S. Code, Sections 9 and 214). The answers you give on the census form cannot be obtained by law enforcement or tax collection agencies. Your answers cannot be used in court. They cannot be obtained with a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request.

As allowed by law, census data become public after 72 years (Title 44, U.S. Code, Section 2108). These forms can be used for family history and other types of historical research.

Please visit our Web site at <http://www.census.gov/privacy/> to learn more about our privacy policy and data protection.

DY-17(L)
(1-29-2008)

Appendix 5

Package Testing Protocol for Phase I

Introduction:

Hello, my name is _____. I work for the Census Bureau. Thanks for agreeing to help us today. Let me start by telling you a little about what we will be doing today. Every ten years the United States conducts a census, or count, of everyone who is living in the United States at that time. First, we send out mail questionnaires to all of the households in the United States, and ask them to complete and return the questionnaire. Today we are going to look at some of the letters and postcards that you would get in the mail before and during the mailings. There are four things to look at. I'll explain each one to you as we go along. I'm going to ask you to read the letters, and then ask you some questions about them: what they mean to you, and what your reactions to them are.

There are no right or wrong answers. We are interested in how these letters work for you.

Permission to Tape-Record:

Because it would be hard to keep track of everything you say today, we're going to tape-record this session. [Hand respondent consent form.] Please read this over and sign it. I want you to know that your responses will be kept strictly confidential and will only be seen by Census employees. Your participation in this study is completely voluntary and you can decline to answer any particular question.

Think-out-loud Instructions:

As I said before, we are interested in how these letters and postcards work for you. So what I would like you to do is to read each one as I give it to you. But so I know how you are thinking and reacting as I read it, I'd like you to tell me everything that's going through your mind as you look at the letters.. Instead of thinking to yourself, I'd like you to think out loud. I would like you to tell me everything you're thinking as you read the letters: questions that come to your mind, reactions you're having, what information you are getting from the letter.

After you've completed reading each piece, I will ask you some additional questions.. Again, there are no right or wrong answers. We're just interested in how these letters work for you. From time to time, I will ask you questions about what you've done so far.

TURN ON TAPE RECORDER

General Probes:

What are you looking at?

What are you thinking?

Why are you laughing/crying/twitching/screaming?

ADVANCE LETTER:

SET-UP. A week or so before the census form comes in the mail, you would be sent the letter I am going to show you now. It doesn't come with a form; this is the only thing in the envelope. As you'll see, it is addressed to "Dear Resident" (as all the mailings are.) That's not just for this test. Please look at this letter, and remember to think aloud as you go through it.

Standard Probes: (when R indicates he/she is done reading.)

1. How much of the letter did you read? Where did you stop?
2. Was there any part of the letter you spent more time on than other parts?
3. What do you think the main point of the letter was?
4. Did the letter mention any reasons for doing the census? What were they?
5. What was your reaction, in general to paragraph 2?
6. If you were interested in a job with the census, what would you do? (If not clear: Did you notice the telephone number? The website? Both?)
7. Did you notice the logo at the bottom left? The bottom right? The logo at the top? What reaction did you have?
8. Did you notice the url below the bottom left logo? Do you think you might go to that website?

MOMB COVER LETTER:

SET-UP: After about a week, you would receive the census form in the mail. It would come in an envelope with a questionnaire for you to fill out, and an envelope to return it in. This letter would be on top of the questionnaire. Please look at the letter and remember to think aloud as you go through it.

BY OBSERVATION: Does R turn the letter over and find text on back? Read it?

1. How much of the letter did you read? Where did you stop?
2. Was there any part of the letter you spent more time on than other parts?
3. What do you think the main point of the letter was?
4. Did the letter mention any reasons for doing the census? What were they?
5. Did you notice any new reasons to do the census that weren't in the other letter? What were they?

6. Did you look at the back of the letter? How much of it did you read? (Did you notice that there's a new website mentioned here?) Do you think you would check the website?
7. Did you notice the line under the signature that says "Enclosures?" What did you think that was referring to?

REMINDER POSTCARD:

SET-UP: A little while later, you would receive this post card in the mail, whether or not you had already returned the form in the package or not. Please look at the card and remember to think aloud as you go through it.

1. How much of the postcard did you read? Where did you stop?
2. Was there any part of the postcard you spent more time on than other parts?
3. What do you think the main point of the postcard was?
4. What was the second paragraph trying to tell you?
5. What was the third paragraph trying to tell you? (If necessary: what were the phone numbers for? What's TDD?) Do you think you would call the telephone assistance number?
6. Did you notice anything about whether you could get a form in Spanish if you need one?

REPLACEMENT MAILING COVER LETTER:

SET-UP: Shortly after you get the postcard, if we haven't received your questionnaire, we will send you another package. This is the letter that would come with your replacement questionnaire. Please look at the letter and remember to think aloud as you go through it.

1. How much of the letter did you read? Where did you stop?
2. Was there any part of the letter you spent more time on than other parts?
3. What do you think the main point of the letter was?
4. Did you notice any new reasons to do the Census that you hadn't seen yet?
5. What is the main point of the first paragraph? The second paragraph? Do you think these paragraphs would encourage you to fill out your census form?

DEBRIEFING:

I just have a few more questions for you.

1. Would you be likely to open a letter if it said "US Census Bureau" on the envelope?
2. In general, would you say you were likely to read a letter that came along with a survey? What would really happen to the letter?

3. Let's say that you sent in your form, and then got the postcard and a replacement mailing. What would your reaction be?
4. Comparing the first and second cover letter, do you think there's a difference in tone? Would you find that bothersome?
5. If you send in the first questionnaire but we don't receive it right away for some reason, you could still get the replacement. What would your reaction be to that?
6. Do you think that the language of the letters and postcards is too difficult? Too easy? About just right? Are there any specific words and phrases you think that some people might not be familiar with?
7. Did the messages in the letters bring up any issues in your mind that some people might find sensitive or uncomfortable?
8. Was there anything you haven't already told me about that troubled you or that you didn't understand?

That's all, thanks for helping us out today.

Protocol for Phase II.

Introduction:

Hello, my name is _____. I work for the Census Bureau. Thanks for agreeing to help us today. Let me start by telling you a little about what we will be doing today. Every ten years the United States conducts a census, or count, of everyone who is living in the United States at that time. First, we send out mail questionnaires to all of the households in the United States, and ask them to complete and return the questionnaire. Today we are going to work on the questionnaire that you would receive in the mail.. I'm going to give you the envelope, and ask you to fill it out exactly as you would if you were at home and I was not there. Then I'll ask you some questions about the process, and what your reactions are.

There are no right or wrong answers. We are interested in how the questionnaire works for you.

Permission to Tape-Record:

Because it would be hard to keep track of everything you say today, we're going to tape-record this session. [Hand respondent consent form.] Please read this over and sign it. I want you to know that your responses will be kept strictly confidential and will only be seen by Census employees. Your participation in this study is completely voluntary and you can decline to answer any particular question.

Think-out-loud Instructions:

As I said before, we are interested in how this Census mailing works for you. When you're working on it, I won't ask you many questions. But so I know how you are thinking and reacting, I'd like you to tell me everything that's going through your mind as you work on it. Instead of thinking to yourself, I'd like you to think out loud. I would like you to tell me everything you're thinking: questions that come to your mind, reactions you're having, how you are thinking about what to do next, etc. Also: as you work, I may take a few notes so I can recall what you are doing as well as what you say.

After you're finished I will ask you some additional questions.. Again, there are no right or wrong answers. We're just interested in how the package works for you.

TURN ON TAPE RECORDER

Ok, here's the package. Your address would show here, and it would say "resident" and not have your name.

Note: All packages should be handed to respondents in exactly the same way. They should be 1. Sealed and 2. Handed to the respondent with logo and address

showing.

BY OBSERVATION:

Operating the package

1. Does R spend time looking at the front of the envelope or turn it over to open right away?
2. Does R comment on any aspect of what he/she sees on the front?
3. Does R have any difficulty opening the envelope?
4. Does R appear to have difficulty pulling contents out?
5. Does R pull out all of the contents, or one piece at a time? If one at a time, what order?
6. Do all pieces come out of the envelope in the end? How is this arranged on the table? (Piled up, what on top? Helter skelter?)
7. Does R put any pieces back in the envelope, and when?
8. What does R look at first? Second? Third? Do all pieces get looked at?
9. How much time/attention does R spend on the letter? The return envelope?

Operating the Questionnaire:

1. What is facing the R as it comes out of the package? This is the opposite of what you are seeing if you are across the table, so don't complain.
2. Does R spend time looking at the blue boxes? The docuprint address?
3. Does R unfold the questionnaire, and find the start of the questionnaire immediately?
- 4.(Just for fun) Does R appear to spend time on the black banner? The residence instructions?
5. Does R find and fill out Person 1?
- 6.. Does R turn page immediately?
7. If R has a large household and there's time, do they find Persons 4 and 5?

Stuffing the Envelope:

Note: If R does not continue to envelope stuffing, say: "Ok, what would you do to mail the questionnaire back?"

1. How does R fold the questionnaire?
2. Does R put the questionnaire into the envelope with the correct address showing?
3. What does R include in the mail return package?

STANDARD PROBES:

Ok, now I have a few questions that I'd like to ask you.

1. If R showed or expressed any puzzlement: "Remember when you....What were you thinking at that time? Did you have a problem? What was it?"

2. Did you have difficulty in finding anything in particular? Were you able to find it? Was it difficult to find?

3. The delivery envelope:

Did you notice anything in particular about the delivery envelope?

Did you notice this box (Your response is required by law.) What do you think it was trying to tell you?

Was it clear who the envelope came from? Did it look like an official government letter?

Did you notice the logo?

Did you notice the return address? Commerce/ESA/Census: did that make sense?

4. When you took things out of the package, how did you decide what to look at first? Did you notice the text in the blue boxes? What did you think they were telling you about?

5. In general, are you likely to look at letters that come with surveys or other requests for information?

6. How far did you read in the letter? Did you look at the information on the back?

7. What was the main point of the letter?

8. After you took the questionnaire out of the envelope, where did you start reading?
What was the first thing you looked at? How did you decide where to start?
9. Did you see the telephone assistance number on the questionnaire?
10. Would you call the telephone assistance center if you needed help filling out your questionnaire?
11. When you filled out the questionnaire, how did you know that you were finished?
12. When you put the questionnaire back into the envelope, how hard was it to get the questionnaire in the right way?
13. Did you notice the instruction and picture on the back of the return envelope?
What was it telling you to do? Was that helpful information?

Debriefing:

Was there anything you did, or any questions that you answered, that you think some people might find difficult?

Were there any questions that some people might find sensitive?

What would really happen in your household if you got this package? Who would open it? Would you open it right away? Who would fill it out?

U.S. Department of Commerce
Economics and Statistics Administration
U.S. Census Bureau
1201 E 10th Street
Jeffersonville IN 47144

OFFICIAL BUSINESS
Penalty for Private Use \$300

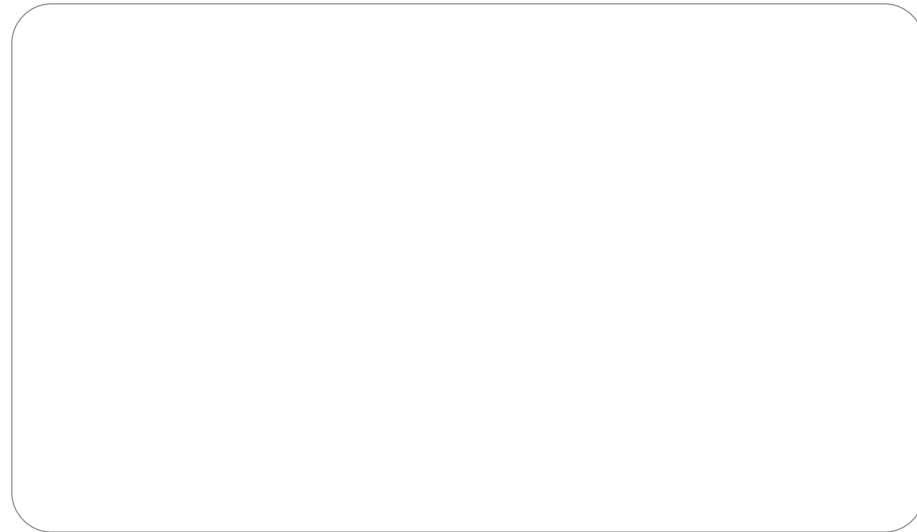
DY-6A (1-2008)

AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

United States™
Census
2010

PRESORTED
FIRST-CLASS MAIL
POSTAGE
& FEES PAID
U.S. CENSUS BUREAU
PERMIT NO. G-58

U.S. Census Form Enclosed
YOUR RESPONSE
IS REQUIRED BY LAW



U S C E N S U S B U R E A U

If you don't have room to list everyone who lives with you and has not been counted, please list the others below. You may be contacted by the Census Bureau for the same information about these people.

This is the official form for all the people at this address.
It is quick and easy, and your answers are protected by law.

Use a blue or black pen.

Start here

The Census must count every person living in the United States on March 1, 2008.

Before you answer Question 1, count the people living in this house, apartment, or mobile home using our guidelines.

- Count all people, including babies, who live and sleep here most of the time.

The Census Bureau also conducts counts in institutions and other places, so:

- Do not count anyone living away either at college or in the Armed Forces.
- Do not count anyone in a nursing home, jail, prison, detention facility, etc., on March 1, 2008.
- Leave these people off your form, even if they will return to live here after they leave college, the nursing home, the military, jail, etc. Otherwise, they may be counted twice.

The Census must also include people without a permanent place to stay, so:

- If someone who has no permanent place to stay is staying here on March 1, 2008, count that person. Otherwise, he or she may be missed in the census.

1. How many people were living or staying in this house, apartment, or mobile home on March 1, 2008?

Number of people =

2. Were there any additional people staying here March 1, 2008 that you did not include in Question 1? Mark all that apply.

- Children, such as newborn babies or foster children
- Relatives, such as adult children, cousins, or in-laws
- Nonrelatives, such as roommates or live-in baby sitters
- People staying here temporarily
- No additional people

3. Is this house, apartment, or mobile home — Mark ONE box.

- Owned by you or someone in this household with a mortgage or loan? Include home equity loans.
- Owned by you or someone in this household free and clear (without a mortgage or loan)?
- Rented?
- Occupied without payment of rent?

4. What is your telephone number? We may call if we don't understand an answer.

Area Code + Number
 - -

OMB No. 0607-0919-DR: Approval Expires 8/30/2010.

Form DY-1 (1-31-2008)

5. Please provide information for each person living here. Start with a person living here who owns or rents this house, apartment, or mobile home. If the owner or renter lives somewhere else, start with any adult living here. This will be Person 1.

What is Person 1's name? Print name below.

Last Name

First Name MI

6. What is Person 1's sex? Mark ONE box.

- Male Female

7. What is Person 1's age and what is Person 1's date of birth?

Please report babies as age 0 when the child is less than 1 year old. Print numbers in boxes.

Age on March 1, 2008 Month Day Year of birth

→ **NOTE: Please answer BOTH Question 8 about Hispanic origin and Question 9 about race. For this census, Hispanic origins are not races.**

8. Is Person 1 of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin?

- No, not of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin
- Yes, Mexican, Mexican Am., Chicano
- Yes, Puerto Rican
- Yes, Cuban
- Yes, another Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin — Print origin, for example, Argentinean, Colombian, Dominican, Nicaraguan, Salvadoran, Spaniard, and so on. ↘

9. What is Person 1's race? Mark one or more boxes.

- White
- Black, African Am., or Negro
- American Indian or Alaska Native — Print name of enrolled or principal tribe. ↘

- Asian Indian Japanese Native Hawaiian
- Chinese Korean Guamanian or Chamorro
- Filipino Vietnamese Samoan
- Other Asian — Print race, for example, Hmong, Laotian, Thai, Pakistani, Cambodian, and so on. ↘
- Other Pacific Islander — Print race, for example, Fijian, Tongan, and so on. ↘

Some other race — Print race. ↘

10. Does Person 1 sometimes live or stay somewhere else?

- No Yes — Mark all that apply.
- In college housing For child custody
- In the military In jail or prison
- At a seasonal or second residence In a nursing home
- For another reason

→ If more people were counted in Question 1, continue with Person 2.

If your enclosed postage-paid envelope is missing, please mail your completed form to:

U.S. Census Bureau
National Processing Center
1201 East 10th Street
Jeffersonville, IN 47132

If you need help completing this form, call 1-866-872-6868 between 9:00 a.m. and 9:00 p.m., Monday through Saturday, and between 11:00 a.m. and 9:00 p.m., Sunday. The telephone call is free.

TDD—Telephone display device for the hearing impaired. Call 1-800-786-9448 between 9:00 a.m. and 9:00 p.m., Monday through Saturday, and between 11:00 a.m. and 9:00 p.m., Sunday. The telephone call is free.

¿NECESITA AYUDA? Si usted necesita ayuda para completar este cuestionario, llame al 1-800-845-8243 entre las 9:00 a.m. y 9:00 p.m., de lunes a sábado, y entre 11:00 a.m. y 9:00 p.m., los domingos. La llamada telefónica es gratis.

The U.S. Census Bureau estimates that, for the average household, this form will take about 10 minutes to complete, including the time for reviewing the instructions and answers. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this burden to: Paperwork Reduction Project 0607-0919-DR, U.S. Census Bureau, 4600 Silver Hill Road, AMSD-3K138, Washington, DC 20233. You may e-mail comments to Paperwork@census.gov; use "Paperwork Project 0607-0919-DR" as the subject.

Respondents are not required to respond to any information collection unless it displays a valid approval number from the Office of Management and Budget.

**Thank you for completing your official
2010 Census form.**

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

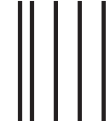
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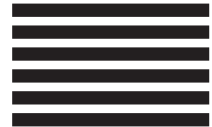
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and 1-1/8"v (larger window) Draft 2 2-7-08

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U.S. Census Bureau
1201 E 10th Street
Jeffersonville IN 47144

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DY-8A (2-2008)



NO POSTAGE
NECESSARY
IF MAILED
IN THE
UNITED STATES



BUSINESS REPLY MAIL
FIRST-CLASS MAIL PERMIT NO. 16081 WASHINGTON DC

POSTAGE WILL BE PAID BY U.S. CENSUS BUREAU

**To return your census form, please make sure
the BAR CODE ABOVE YOUR ADDRESS appears
in this window.**

U.S. CENSUS BUREAU
PO BOX 5500
JEFFERSONVILLE IN 47199-5500



4719955000

Thank you for participating in the 2010 Census.

**Your return envelope should look like this.
Make sure the **BAR CODE ABOVE YOUR ADDRESS**
appears in the larger part of the window.**



Appendix 9

Package Testing Protocol for Phase II

Introduction:

Hello, my name is _____. I work for the Census Bureau. Thanks for agreeing to help us today. Let me start by telling you a little about what we will be doing today. Every ten years the United States conducts a census, or count, of everyone who is living in the United States at that time. First, we send out mail questionnaires to all of the households in the United States, and ask them to complete and return the questionnaire. Today we are going to work on the questionnaire that you would receive in the mail.. I'm going to give you the envelope, and ask you to fill it out exactly as you would if you were at home and I was not there. Then I'll ask you some questions about the process, and what your reactions are.

There are no right or wrong answers. We are interested in how the questionnaire works for you.

Permission to Tape-Record:

Because it would be hard to keep track of everything you say today, we're going to tape-record this session. [Hand respondent consent form.] Please read this over and sign it. I want you to know that your responses will be kept strictly confidential and will only be seen by Census employees. Your participation in this study is completely voluntary and you can decline to answer any particular question.

Think-out-loud Instructions:

As I said before, we are interested in how this Census mailing works for you. When you're working on it, I won't ask you many questions. But so I know how you are thinking and reacting, I'd like you to tell me everything that's going through your mind as you work on it. Instead of thinking to yourself, I'd like you to think out loud. I would like you to tell me everything you're thinking: questions that come to your mind, reactions you're having, how you are thinking about what to do next, etc. Also: as you work, I may take a few notes so I can recall what you are doing as well as what you say.

After you're finished I will ask you some additional questions.. Again, there are no right or wrong answers. We're just interested in how the package works for you.

TURN ON TAPE RECORDER

Ok, here's the package. Your address would show here, and it would say "resident" and not have your name.

Note: All packages should be handed to respondents in exactly the same way. They should be 1. Sealed and 2. Handed to the respondent with logo and address showing.

BY OBSERVATION:

Operating the package

1. Does R spend time looking at the front of the envelope or turn it over to open right away?
2. Does R comment on any aspect of what he/she sees on the front?
3. Does R have any difficulty opening the envelope?
4. Does R appear to have difficulty pulling contents out?
5. Does R pull out all of the contents, or one piece at a time? If one at a time, what order?
6. Do all pieces come out of the envelope in the end? How is this arranged on the table? (Piled up, what on top? Helter skelter?)
7. Does R put any pieces back in the envelope, and when?
8. What does R look at first? Second? Third? Do all pieces get looked at?
9. How much time/attention does R spend on the letter? The return envelope?

Operating the Questionnaire:

1. What is facing the R as it comes out of the package? This is the opposite of what you are seeing if you are across the table, so don't complain.
2. Does R spend time looking at the blue boxes? The docuprint address?
3. Does R unfold the questionnaire, and find the start of the questionnaire immediately?
- 4.(Just for fun) Does R appear to spend time on the black banner? The residence instructions?
5. Does R find and fill out Person 1?
- 6.. Does R turn page immediately?
7. If R has a large household and there's time, do they find Persons 4 and 5?

Stuffing the Envelope:

Note: If R does not continue to envelope stuffing, say: "Ok, what would you do to mail the questionnaire back?"

1. How does R fold the questionnaire?
2. Does R put the questionnaire into the envelope with the correct address showing?
3. What does R include in the mail return package?

STANDARD PROBES:

Ok, now I have a few questions that I'd like to ask you.

1. If R showed or expressed any puzzlement: "Remember when you....What were you thinking at that time? Did you have a problem? What was it?"

2. Did you have difficulty in finding anything in particular? Were you able to find it? Was it difficult to find?

3. The delivery envelope:

Did you notice anything in particular about the delivery envelope?

Did you notice this box (Your response is required by law.) What do you think it was trying to tell you?

Was it clear who the envelope came from? Did it look like an official government letter?

Did you notice the logo?

Did you notice the return address? Commerce/ESA/Census: did that make sense?

4. When you took things out of the package, how did you decide what to look at first? Did you notice the text in the blue boxes? What did you think they were telling you about?

5. In general, are you likely to look at letters that come with surveys or other requests for information?

6. How far did you read in the letter? Did you look at the information on the back?

7. What was the main point of the letter?

8. After you took the questionnaire out of the envelope, where did you start reading?
What was the first thing you looked at? How did you decide where to start?
9. Did you see the telephone assistance number on the questionnaire?
10. Would you call the telephone assistance center if you needed help filling out your questionnaire?
11. When you filled out the questionnaire, how did you know that you were finished?
12. When you put the questionnaire back into the envelope, how hard was it to get the questionnaire in the right way?
13. Did you notice the instruction and picture on the back of the return envelope?
What was it telling you to do? Was that helpful information?

Debriefing:

Was there anything you did, or any questions that you answered, that you think some people might find difficult?

Were there any questions that some people might find sensitive?

What would really happen in your household if you got this package? Who would open it? Would you open it right away? Who would fill it out?