

**IRS Oversight Board**  
**2006 Taxpayer Attitude Survey**

February 2007

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## Information on the IRS Oversight Board Annual Taxpayer Attitude Survey

Since 2002, the IRS Oversight Board has conducted an annual survey to gain deeper understanding of taxpayers' attitudes. The 2002 survey asked questions primarily on compliance attitudes, and used questions and methodology identical to that used by the IRS in a 1999 survey. The survey was expanded in 2003 to include additional questions about taxpayers' expectations about customer service. In 2004, the survey was expanded to add a question on taxpayers' willingness to provide additional funding for IRS service and enforcement functions. Another question was added in 2006 regarding views of IRS activities.

This document shows the results of the 2006 survey, and compares the results to earlier results where identical questions and methodology were used.

### Methodology

OmniTel is a weekly national telephone omnibus service of GfK NOP.

### Sample Size

The sample for each week's OmniTel wave consists of 1,000 completed interviews, made up of male and female adults (in approximately equal number), all 18 years of age and over.

### Sampling Method

All interviews are conducted by telephone from four NOP World sites: Alamogordo, NM; Rexburg, ID; San Jose, Costa Rica and Cebu, Philippines. Together, the four sites have a full-time capacity of 400 lines, and utilize an interviewing procedure known as CATI - Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing. Interviewers have been professionally trained and are continuously monitored and supervised.

Each OmniTel study is based on a random digit dialing (RDD) probability sample of all telephone households in the continental United States. The RDD sampling system is totally computer based and provides an equal probability of selection for each

and every telephone household. Thus, the sample represents telephone households with both listed and unlisted phones in their proper proportions. All sample numbers selected by this procedure are subject to an original and at least four follow-up attempts to complete an interview.

All data are entered and cleaned through the CATI system during the interviewing process. Thus, this process eliminates the editing and keypunch operations.

### Weighting and Sample Reliability

All completed interviews are weighted to ensure accurate and reliable representation of the total population, 18 years and older. The raw data are weighted by a custom designed computer program which automatically develops a weighting factor for each respondent. This procedure employs five variables: age, sex, education, race and geographic region. Each interview is assigned a single weight derived from the relationship between the actual proportion of the population with its specific combination of age, sex, education, race and geographic characteristics and the proportion in our sample that week. Tabular results show both weighted and unweighted bases for these demographic variables.

Because of the use of rigid and replicable sampling, field, and weighting procedures, all OmniTel studies are parallel to one another. This affords the opportunity to draw trend comparisons, as well as point-in-time analysis.

### Interviewing Dates

Interviewing for this survey was started on September 15, 2006, and completed on September 17, 2006. A total of 1,009 interviews were completed, 528 with females adults and 481 with male adults.

The margin of error on weighted data is +/- 3% for the full sample.

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1. How much, if any, do you think is an acceptable amount to cheat on your income taxes? (*in percentage*)

	2006	2005	2004	2003	2002	1999
A little here and there	8	7	8	12	10	8
As much as possible	4	3	4	5	3	3
Or, not at all	86	88	86	81	86	87
NK/NR	1	2	2	3	1	2

2. For each statement, do you completely agree, mostly agree, mostly disagree, or completely disagree.

	Completely agree (%)					Mostly agree (%)					Mostly disagree (%)					Completely disagree (%)					DK/NR (%)									
	06	05	04	03	02	99	06	05	04	03	02	99	06	05	04	03	02	99	06	05	04	03	02	99	06	05	04	03	02	99
It is every American's civic duty to pay their fair share of taxes	73	72	73	68	72	81	21	24	21	27	23	14	3	3	4	3	2	2	2	1	1	2	2	2	1	2	1	1	1	*
Everyone who cheats on their taxes should be held accountable	66	63	62	60	65	64	25	30	29	28	25	25	5	4	5	8	6	7	2	2	3	3	3	3	1	1	1	1	2	1
It is everyone's personal responsibility to report anyone who cheats on their taxes	30	30	24	19	21	18	28	32	29	29	25	30	22	19	22	25	24	25	16	16	20	24	26	24	4	3	6	5	4	3
Taxpayers should just have to pay what they feel is a fair amount	15	13	13	12	15	11	21	18	17	18	14	15	23	28	29	24	23	26	40	40	38	44	45	47	2	2	3	2	3	2
The more information and guidance the IRS provides, the more likely people are to correctly file their returns	45	46	45	44	NA	NA	38	40	39	38	NA	NA	9	8	8	12	NA	NA	6	4	4	5	NA	NA	2	2	5	2	NA	NA

DK = Don't know  
 NA = Not asked  
 NR = No reply

3. How important is it to you, as a taxpayer, that the IRS does each of the following to ensure that all taxpayers honestly pay what they owe? Would you say it is very important, somewhat important, not very important, or not at all important?

	Very important (%)					Somewhat important (%)					Not very important (%)					Not at all important (%)					DK/NR (%)				
	06	05	04	03	02	06	05	04	03	02	06	05	04	03	02	06	05	04	03	02	06	05	04	03	02
Ensure low-income taxpayers are reporting and paying their taxes honestly	61	66	61	63	56	28	26	28	24	28	5	6	6	7	8	4	2	2	4	5	2	1	3	2	3
Ensure small businesses are reporting and paying their taxes honestly	68	73	70	70	68	25	22	22	23	25	6	2	3	3	3	3	1	1	2	3	2	1	4	2	2
Ensure high-income taxpayers are reporting and paying their taxes honestly	76	81	79	79	77	18	16	15	16	16	2	1	2	2	1	2	1	1	2	3	2	2	3	2	2
Ensure corporations are reporting and paying their taxes honestly	80	87	85	83	83	14	10	10	12	10	2	2	1	1	1	3	1	1	2	3	2	1	2	2	2

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4. How much influence does each of the following factors have on whether you report and pay your taxes honestly? Would you say it has a great deal of influence, somewhat of an influence, very little influence, or is not at all an influence?

	A great deal of influence (%)					Somewhat of an influence (%)					Very little influence (%)					Not at all an influence (%)					DK/NR (%)				
	06	05	04	03	02	06	05	04	03	02	06	05	04	03	02	06	05	04	03	02	06	05	04	03	02
Fear of an audit	35	36	35	37	29	26	26	25	22	25	14	16	16	14	13	21	19	20	23	30	4	3	5	4	4
Belief that your neighbors are reporting and paying honestly	20	21	20	18	20	23	21	22	20	18	16	19	20	18	15	36	33	32	40	40	5	6	6	4	7
3rd parties reporting your income (e.g., wages, interest, dividends) to the IRS	40	41	37	37	33	27	27	32	27	27	12	11	10	11	11	17	17	15	21	22	3	4	6	4	7
Your personal integrity	76	82	79	73	74	15	13	12	15	14	4	3	3	5	4	3	1	2	5	4	3	1	3	2	4

5. How important is it to you, as a taxpayer, that the IRS provides each of the following services to assist taxpayers? Would you say it is very important, somewhat important, not very important, or not at all important? How about...

	Very important (%)					Somewhat important (%)					Not very important (%)					Not at All Important (%)					DK/NR (%)				
	06	05	04	03	02	06	05	04	03	02	06	05	04	03	02	06	05	04	03	02	06	05	04	03	02
A toll-free telephone number to answer your questions	74	78	77	76	77	17	14	15	15	13	3	3	3	3	4	4	4	4	5	5	1	-	2	1	2
Office locations you can visit where an IRS representative will answer your questions	60	66	63	66	66	26	24	27	23	19	6	5	5	4	7	6	5	4	6	7	1	-	2	1	2
A web site to provide you with information	63	65	61	62	59	24	21	24	22	21	5	5	5	4	6	7	8	8	11	11	1	1	3	2	3
The ability to e-mail your questions directly to the IRS	59	57	53	55	NA	25	24	26	26	NA	7	7	8	7	NA	9	10	9	11	NA	1	1	4	2	NA
Opportunities for electronic filing of tax returns	61	63	59	60	55	32	32	31	31	NA	5	4	8	6	6	7	6	6	10	11	1	1	3	2	NA
A computer terminal located in a kiosk at a library or shopping mall	36	36	35	33	NA	35	36	35	35	NA	14	16	18	15	NA	16	15	13	19	NA	2	1	3	2	NA
A tax assistance van that visits locations not convenient to IRS offices to provide information and assistance	43	45	42	43	NA	35	36	35	35	NA	10	10	11	9	NA	10	7	9	11	NA	2	1	3	2	NA
Community-based tax clinics at convenient locations, such as schools, community centers, libraries, etc.	51	54	51	51	NA	32	33	31	31	NA	8	6	9	7	NA	8	6	6	9	NA	2	1	3	1	NA

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6. How likely would you be to use each of the following services for help with a tax issue? Would you be very likely, somewhat likely, not very likely, or not at all likely?

	Very likely (%)				Somewhat likely (%)				Not very likely (%)				Not at all likely (%)				DK/NR (%)			
	06	05	04	03	06	05	04	03	06	05	04	03	06	05	04	03	06	05	04	03
A toll-free telephone number to answer your questions	58	61	57	58	24	24	25	23	9	6	7	6	8	9	9	11	1	-	2	1
Office locations you can visit within 30 minutes travel time where an IRS representative will answer your questions	36	40	39	43	32	26	29	29	17	19	17	12	14	15	14	14	1	-	2	2
Office locations you can visit within 30 to 60 minutes travel time where an IRS representative will answer your questions	25	28	26	26	26	23	23	24	22	27	28	21	25	22	22	26	1	-	2	2
A web site to provide you with information	51	52	49	52	27	24	23	20	8	10	10	9	13	14	15	18	1	-	4	2
The ability to email your questions directly to the IRS	44	46	43	43	27	24	24	23	11	12	14	12	17	17	17	20	1	1	3	2
A computer terminal located in a kiosk at a library or shopping mall	23	19	19	22	23	27	23	24	23	24	28	20	30	30	28	33	1	1	2	2
A tax assistance van that visits locations not convenient to IRS offices to provide information and assistance	24	25	23	25	32	32	28	32	19	21	24	19	23	21	22	23	2	1	3	2
Community-based tax clinics at convenient locations, such as schools, community centers, libraries, etc.	31	35	30	33	31	29	30	33	19	19	19	14	19	16	19	20	1	1	2	1

7. You said you would be likely to use a toll-free telephone number to contact the IRS. How long are you willing to wait to speak to a customer representative when calling an IRS toll-free telephone number?

	06 (%)	05 (%)	04 (%)	03 (%)
None	-	2	2	2
1 minute or less	7	4	3	6
2 to 5 minutes	40	44	47	43
6 to 10 minutes	22	25	23	23
11-30 minutes	25	20	27	20
31 to 60 minutes	3	2	2	2
60+ minutes	-	<1	<1	2
DK/NR	2	--	--	1

**Mean (including none) = 11 9 11 11 minutes**  
**Median (including none) = 8 5 8 5 minutes**  
**Mean (excluding none) = 11 10 11 11 minutes**  
**Median (excluding none) = 8 5 8 5 minutes**

8. You said you would be likely to use office locations where an IRS representative will answer your questions. Would you prefer to schedule an appointment to speak with a representative at a specific time or would you prefer to walk in at your convenience and wait for the next available representative?

	06 (%)	05 (%)	04 (%)	03 (%)
Prefer to schedule appointment	59	62	62	59
Prefer to walk in	39	36	35	39
DK/NR	1	2	3	2



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- 8a. How long are you willing to wait to speak to a customer representative if you visited an IRS walk-in assistance center without an appointment?

	06 (%)	05 (%)	04 (%)	03 (%)
None	--	3	2	2
5 minute or less	8	7	5	3
6 to 10 minutes	9	16	12	17
11 to 15 minutes	18	21	15	18
15 to 30 minutes	64	44	45	37
31 to 60 minutes	8	9	17	18
60+ minutes	8	1	4	5
DK/NR	1	--	--	1

<b>Mean (including none) =</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>31 minutes</b>
<b>Median (including none) =</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>19 minutes</b>
<b>Mean (excluding none) =</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>32 minutes</b>
<b>Median (excluding none) =</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>20 minutes</b>

9. How valuable would you say each of these sources is for getting tax advice or information? Would you say it is very valuable, somewhat valuable, not very valuable, or not at all valuable?

	Very valuable (%)				Somewhat valuable (%)				Not very valuable (%)				Not at all valuable (%)				DK/NR (%)			
	06	05	04	03	06	05	04	03	06	05	04	03	06	05	04	03	06	05	04	03
IRS representatives	48	50	49	51	34	34	33	32	7	7	7	6	9	8	8	10	2	1	3	2
IRS printed publications, for example, brochures, instructions	50	54	52	50	34	32	30	32	6	7	8	8	8	7	7	8	1	-	3	2
IRS web site	52	55	50	51	29	26	27	26	6	6	7	7	11	13	12	14	1	1	5	2
Paid tax professional	52	54	50	52	33	29	31	31	6	8	8	7	7	7	7	9	2	2	4	2
Family or friends	30	31	30	30	32	32	33	31	19	19	18	17	17	18	16	20	2	1	3	2
Reference materials from sources other than the IRS (for example, books, software, private sector web sites)	31	31	28	26	42	41	40	41	11	13	17	14	14	14	11	17	2	1	3	2

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10. Most people have had some type of interaction with the IRS, whether it's just filing your tax return or actually speaking with an IRS representative. How satisfied would you say you have been with your personal interaction with the IRS? Would you say very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, not very satisfied, or not at all satisfied?

	06 (%)	05 (%)	04 (%)	03 (%)
Very satisfied	37	39	38	41
Somewhat satisfied	42	39	41	41
Not very satisfied	7	8	6	5
Not at all satisfied	7	5	5	6
DK/NR	8	8	10	8

11. I'm going to read you some statements about the funding the IRS receives. For each one, please tell me whether you completely agree, mostly agree, or completely disagree. How about...

	Completely agree (%)			Mostly agree (%)			Mostly disagree (%)			Completely disagree (%)			DK/NR (%)		
	06	05	04	06	05	04	06	05	04	06	05	04	06	05	04
The IRS should receive extra funding to enforce tax laws and ensure taxpayer pay what they owe	24	20	22	39	43	40	19	19	19	15	15	15	3	3	5
The IRS should receive extra funding so it can assist more taxpayers over the phone and in person	24	22	22	42	44	42	16	16	18	15	15	13	3	2	5

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12. Considering the resources the IRS receives to do its job, which of the following statements do you most agree with?

	06 (%)
IRS maintains a proper balance between its enforcement activities and its customer service programs.	45
IRS devotes too much of its resources to enforcement activities and not enough to its customer service programs.	30
IRS devotes too much of its resources to customer service programs and not enough to its enforcement activities.	13
DK/NR	12

## **IRS Oversight Board**



### **Contact Information**

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