

# How BEA Could Better Explain its Data - Responses to Recommendations from the Nov. 2005 Meeting

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## Better Explanation and Delivery of Data

### New Since Last Meeting

- Interactive chart of Government Current Receipts and Expenditures (implemented shortly before last meeting); URL= <http://www.bea.gov/bea/dn/nipaweb/GovView.asp>
- Interactive charts and table of “Comparison of Personal Saving in the NIPAs with Personal Saving in the Flow of Funds Accounts (FFAs)” (implemented in March 06); URL= <http://www.bea.gov/bea/dn/nipaweb/Nipa-Frb.asp>
- RSS News Feeds (implemented in March 06); URL= [http://www.bea.gov/rss/rss\\_info.htm](http://www.bea.gov/rss/rss_info.htm).
- Previously published estimates -- Regional Accounts archives added (implemented in March 06); URL= <http://www.bea.gov/histdata/RMyear.asp>.
- Interactive direct investment and MNC time series data (implemented in March 06 ); URL= <http://www.bea.gov/bea/di/home/directinv.htm>

## Web Site – Design

### Recommendation

Provide help and organization for less experienced users, such as links to other statistical agencies

### BEA Response

- Implemented an enhanced FAQ system and Glossary. This system allows browsing or keyword search of FAQs in the BEA database. Permits customer to submit questions and be notified if a particular FAQ is updated.
- Will implement revised, consistent navigation (based on contractor usability study) by September 2006.
- Contractor analyzing use of common language labels to aid novice users.
- Will add a Glossary “Term of the Day” box to the home page by September 2006.
- Redesigned “GDP and the economy” article in *Survey of Current Business*.

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Recommendation	BEA Response
Provide a search window to search the web site	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Made available in mid-November 2005.</li> </ul>
Make data more accessible, less hidden	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By September 2006, BEA will:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Implement consistent labeling of navigation elements to increase usability.</li> <li>○ Provide meaningful icons for advanced table features.</li> <li>○ Reorganize home page to better highlight important releases and services.</li> <li>○ Flatten and simplify navigation on the Web site.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Conduct periodic comprehensive revision of Web site design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Currently performing a web site navigation review and redesign, using information gathered from the Customer Satisfaction Survey, Internet server statistics, and other user feedback.</li> </ul>

### Web Site – Interactive Tables

Recommendation	BEA Response
Provide links within tables to FAQs, footnotes, and other explanatory tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Within all interactive tables, BEA is implementing:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Hyper-linking of words directly to Glossary definitions.</li> <li>○ Consistent navigation to Help files, Glossary, and FAQs on site.</li> <li>○ Standard tool bars across all interactive tables (see example on page 3)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Within Regional personal income tables, links to definitions for each statistic are currently available.</li> <li>• Also in Regional personal income tables, users can toggle between types of tables. For example, users may view the components of personal income for a specific state, and also view values for the same component for all states, by clicking on a link to generate the new table.</li> </ul>
Explain tables in keyword index, rather than just providing a list of tables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prototyping the addition of table names within the keyword index.</li> </ul>

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Recommendation	BEA Response
Show how tables are related to each other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An existing guide to table categories and relationships is available and linked from the interactive tables ; URL= <a href="http://www.bea.gov/bea/ARTICLES/2003/08August/0803NIPA-Preview.pdf#page=9">http://www.bea.gov/bea/ARTICLES/2003/08August/0803NIPA-Preview.pdf#page=9</a></li> </ul>
Put table labels on left and right for scrolling purposes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An existing feature to lock table stubs is available.</li> </ul>

### Web Site – FAQs

Recommendation	BEA Response
Address “errors frequently made”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Additional FAQs are under development for inclusion in the new searchable FAQ database.</li> </ul>
Develop “Handbook of Methods”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Will report on handbook at the November, 2006 Advisory Committee Meeting.</li> </ul>

### Web Site – *Survey of Current Business*

Recommendation	BEA Response
Provide full-text search capability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Acquired new software to provide full-text search capability for the <i>Survey of Current Business</i>. Now in testing.</li> </ul>
Improve subject index and create an index for 2004	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Software solution includes a full-text search capability to eventually be applied to all <i>Survey of Current Business</i> files posted on the Web site.</li> <li>Currently developing subject indexes for 2004 and 2005.</li> </ul>

# Interactive Tables – Example of Standard Toolbars

BEA Bureau of Economic Analysis U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

Regional Economic Accounts

Tools: About Regional Methodologies Articles Release Schedule FAQs Staff Contacts Search:  Go

Home > Regional Economic Accounts > State Quarterly Personal Income > SQ1 - Personal income

SQ1 - Personal income

Data Table Options Tools Options

SQ1 - Personal income  
(Millions of dollars, seasonally adjusted at annual rates)

FIPS	Area name	2004.1	2004.2	2004.3	2004.4	2005.1	2005.2	2005.3	2005.4
00	United States	9,473,036	9,607,693	9,723,125	10,018,162	10,076,392	10,187,219	10,252,278	10,490,665
01	Alabama	122,025	124,697	125,602	128,996	130,304	132,127	132,832	135,921
02	Alaska	21,857	22,138	22,454	23,004	23,205	23,475	23,738	24,119
04	Arizona	159,072	162,313	165,854	170,741	173,689	177,454	182,446	185,472
05	Arkansas	69,439	70,572	71,121	72,820	73,708	74,000	74,848	76,192
06	California	1,231,830	1,250,976	1,264,851	1,301,567	1,309,316	1,326,517	1,347,384	1,369,508
08	Colorado	162,018	164,788	166,226	171,719	173,743	174,932	178,451	180,975
09	Connecticut	155,181	156,071	159,175	163,835	165,254	166,159	168,607	171,413
10	Delaware	28,943	29,415	29,584	30,685	30,913	30,951	31,378	31,820
11	District of Columbia	27,691	28,019	28,420	29,279	29,591	29,986	30,510	30,995
12	Florida	530,991	542,104	545,632	569,702	575,796	584,892	596,026	607,101
13	Georgia	259,099	263,063	266,171	274,063	276,118	279,948	283,904	289,419

Interactive Table toolbars added.

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Data Table Options Tools Options

First Year: 2004 Last Year: 2005 Get All Years:  Refresh Table

Tools Options

- Download data in CSV format.
- Printer: friendly page
- Help and Step-By-Step instructions are available for downloading and importing.
- Questions and comments.
- Click on a year heading to view a table with that column sorted.

SQ1 - Personal income  
(Millions of dollars, seasonally adjusted at annual rates)

FIPS	Area name	2004.1	2004.2	2004.3	2004.4	2005.1	2005.2	2005.3	2005.4
00	United States	9,473,036	9,607,693	9,723,125	10,018,162	10,076,392	10,187,219	10,252,278	10,490,665
01	Alabama	122,025	124,697	125,602	128,996	130,304	132,127	132,832	135,921
02	Alaska	21,857	22,138	22,454	23,004	23,205	23,475	23,738	24,119
04	Arizona	159,072	162,313	165,854	170,741	173,689	177,454	182,446	185,472
05	Arkansas	69,439	70,572	71,121	72,820	73,708	74,000	74,848	76,192
06	California	1,231,830	1,250,976	1,264,851	1,301,567	1,309,316	1,326,517	1,347,384	1,369,508

Toolbars can be opened to reveal available table options.