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**Final Report for Cognitive Testing for the 2010 Census
Quality Survey Mailing Materials**

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

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January 11, 2011

To: 2010 Census Quality Survey (CQS) Development Team, Joan M. Hill, Chair, DSSD

From: Usability Team: Kathleen T. Ashenfelter, Temika Holland, CSM

Subject: Final Report for Cognitive Testing for the 2010 Census Quality Survey Mailing Materials

Abstract

In the spring of 2010, cognitive testing was performed on the mailing pieces associated with the 2010 Census Quality Survey (CQS). The Census Quality Survey (CQS) was conducted in order to estimate measurement error, such as simple response variance, from a census Internet questionnaire compared to that from a census paper questionnaire (Hill, Reiser, & Bentley, 2010). Overall, the mail pieces were understood by participants, although there were some issues, such as inconsistent reasons for the survey being mentioned in different pieces of mail. Where possible, these issues were addressed by the sponsor team before the survey went live.

Introduction and Background

Although the Census Bureau would like to reduce paper use as well as costs by moving from a paper form to an online version of the decennial census, there is concern that many United States residents do not have Internet access and it is uncertain whether the situation will change before 2020. Additionally, there is evidence that offering both a mail and an Internet option for taking a survey actually lowers the response rate (Smyth, Dillman, Christian and O'Neill, 2010). The Census Quality Survey (CQS) was conducted in order to estimate measurement error, such as simple response variance, from a census Internet questionnaire compared to that from a census paper questionnaire (Hill, Reiser, & Bentley, 2010).

The CQS study was conducted in preparation for 2020 Census, when the Census Bureau plans to have an Internet option for taking the census. The CQS was offered to respondents using paper materials delivered by the U.S. Postal Service.

This report contains results of the cognitive testing of the CQS mailing materials. Although only the letters and postcards were explicitly tested, the initial and replacement packets also included either a paper survey or an

instruction card for accessing the Internet survey depending on the condition. The cognitive testing was conducted (add dates), prior to the mailing of the materials for the CQS study.

. There were three panels in the CQS study, and each panel had slightly different messages on the mailing materials. The three panels were an Internet Only panel, a Mail Only panel, and an Internet/Mail Choice panel.

- All panels used the same advance letter.
- The introductory letter text in the initial mail package differed by panel.
- The reminder postcard text differed by panel.
- The text used in the letter in the replacement mail package differed by panel.

Each piece of mail was tested in the sequential order that respondents received them during the actual test. The materials can be found in Appendix A and the protocol used for testing these materials can be found in Appendix B.

Several research questions were raised before the testing took place, and most of them were addressed during the testing. Other findings about the materials are also included in the Results section. Major topics included:

- 1) Would participants respond to this survey if they received it at home?
- 2) Would there be confusion between the CQS and the Decennial Census?
- 3) Would participants understand what the term “apportionment” means in the replacement packet letter? It is a large word and does not occur frequently in colloquial speech.
- 4) Would participants in the Choice condition understand that there were two options for taking the survey?
- 5) Would participants (especially in the Choice condition) prefer to take the survey online or via postal mail on the paper form?
- 6) What implicit deadline do the mailing materials convey to respondents (e.g., how soon do they think the Census Bureau expects them to respond based on the latest mailing)?

Method

Only the mailing materials were tested during this study; the Internet interface was tested during two separate rounds of usability testing. Results from the usability testing of the CQS interface can be found in the associated usability report (Ashenfelter, Holland, Quach, & Nichols, 2010). In addition to the letters shown to participants and the protocol, participants also signed a consent form, which can be found in Appendix C.

Participants

Seven participants were recruited externally from the Census Bureau Usability Lab's participant database, except for the dry run participant, who was a Census Bureau employee. Non-Census Bureau participants were reimbursed \$40 for their participation in the study. None of the participants were familiar with the Census Quality Survey, although the timing of the study (April 2010) placed it very close to the time period when participants would have received their official 2010 Census form. Detailed demographic information was not collected for this study, but the respondents were roughly half male (P1, P5, P7, and dry run) and half female (P2, P3, P4, and P6) with an age range from 20-60 years old. The participants were randomly assigned to a condition as follows:

Internet Only: P1, P7

Mail/Internet Choice: Dry run, P3, P4, P6

Mail Only: P2, P5

Facilities and Equipment

Testing took place at the Usability Lab at the Census Bureau in Suitland, MD, Room 5K510 during April 2010.

Testing Facilities

The participant sat in a room, facing one-way glass and a wall camera. During the cognitive test, the test administrator sat in the same room as the participant.

Observers from the CQS sponsor team were invited to watch a live feed of the usability sessions in a separate room from the test participant and test administrator. At the end of each session, the test administrator and observers discussed the findings from that session and compared them to findings from other sessions.

Audio and Video Recording

Video recording was used in the CQS usability study. The wall-mounted camera recorded the participant's face and non-verbal behaviors. In addition, video of the participant was fed through a PC Video Hyperconverter Gold Scan

Converter, mixed in a picture-in-picture format with the camera video, and recorded with a Sony DSR-20 Digital Videocassette Recorder on 124-minute, Sony PDV metal-evaporated digital videocassette tape. Audio for the videotape was picked up from a desk microphone and a ceiling microphone. The audio sources were mixed in a Shure audio system to eliminate feedback and then fed to the videocassette recorder.

Testing Materials

All session materials were prepared beforehand and standardized to maintain consistency across sessions. In addition to the mailing materials in Appendix A and Protocol in Appendix B, the consent form can also be found in Appendix C.

Procedure

Participants were escorted to the usability lab and asked to read each piece of mail for only one of the three conditions and think aloud as they read them. They were then asked a series of questions about the materials (see the protocol in Appendix B). After reading all materials, they were asked debriefing questions.

Results

The usability team's overall finding was that the letters made sense to respondents and there were no obvious areas of confusion that would prevent them from being able to respond to the survey, although there were some adverse reactions to certain aspects of the letters. Overall, there may need to be a stronger explanation of how exactly taxpayer money will be allocated if that language is used in the materials. Some participants reacted adversely to the terser language used to encourage them to respond in the replacement packet letter. There were also many comments that the reason given for the CQS was different among the different letters and one participant found that to detract from the legitimacy of the survey. Another finding, which was out of scope for this project, was that participants frequently commented that there were too many pieces of mail being sent to them. This could be an artifact of lab testing where the test administrator handed them the pieces one after another in the same sitting, but there may be some legitimate translation to how people react to repeatedly receiving mail from the Census Bureau in a relatively short period of time.

Advance Letter

The main findings about this letter were:

- Two participants (P6 and dry run) thought that the purpose of the survey was to count people.
- One participant was very confused about whether the advance letter was the actual survey (CQS) or not.
- Participant 7 thought she received the letter because the Census Bureau did not receive her 2010 Census form. She stated, “They are sending out another 2010 Census. They want you to use the computer this time.”

Initial Mailing Packet Letter

- Three participants (P3, P5, P6) made overt comments that showed they were confusing the CQS with the 2010 Census and P3 said that the relationship between the Census and the CQS was confusing to her.
- One participant (P7) in the Internet Only condition commented that he was not sure how we were saving natural resources at all using the CQS because we were using paper mailing materials. He said, “They say this is conserving natural resources? How? With all these mailings?”
- In the Internet Only condition, both P1 and P7 understood that a form would come to them later if they could not respond online.
- All four participants in the Mail/Internet Choice condition understood that there were two options for completing the survey. Two participants mentioned that they thought that the online option was being more strongly encouraged. The dry run participant said, “It’s encouraging you to go with Option 1 [the online option], but it’s not mandatory.” Participant 3 said, “They make this the obvious part [referring to Option 1, the online option]. I noticed that they make that bigger to stand out because they want you to go online.”
- Participants 6 and 7 commented that the language in the letter sounded repetitive (referring to the advance letter).
- Both participants in the Internet Only condition and the participant in the Mail Only condition understood how to complete the survey using the mode offered to them.
- Participant 6 mentioned that the language used in the letter was inconsistent in tone, “You’re saying please, but you’re still demanding it.”
- Participant 6 suggested that respondents were not likely to give honest responses to the survey: “9 times out of 10, people aren’t going to tell you the truth anyway.”
- Participants 4 and 7 did not really believe the survey would save taxpayer money in any way.

- Participants 1, 2, 3, and the dry run said they would complete the survey at this point. Participant 6 said “no,” and Participant 4 said they would set the letter down and maybe take the survey later.
- Participant 7 said, “This has me kind of spooked. There may be something I didn’t do correctly [for the 2010 Census].”
- Although 7 of the 8 participants said that nothing was confusing about the letter when probed, Participant 3 did mention that she thought the letter was confusing because she didn’t know what it had to do with the Census she just took.

Reminder Postcard

- Many participants said that the repeated mailings were evoking some frustration or concern at the point of the postcard. Participant 3 said, “Oh my gosh, they’re stalking me. I think ‘stalker.’ I feel hounded at this point.” Participant 2 said, “This is way too many things you’re sending people.”
- Participants 3, 4, and 5 mentioned that they thought anyone in the household could complete the survey, while Participants 2 and 6 clearly stated that the same person who filled out the Census form should complete the survey.
- When probed, none of the participants said they found anything in the postcard confusing.
- When asked when the Census Bureau expected them to complete the survey, the participants gave the following responses:
 - Dry run: Within two weeks because they are going to send me another one.
 - Participant 1: Soon because they are pretty adamant about it
 - Participant 2: Today
 - Participant 3: Immediately because if they don’t get it in two weeks, they’re going to send me another one.
 - Participant 4: As soon as possible
 - Participant 5: Now
 - Participant 6: A week to a week and a half
 - Participant 7: Made comments about being frustrated with receiving the postcard at all and did not give a response.

Replacement Letter

- Participant 6 said, “[The Replacement Letter] does a better job of describing why you are doing this.” Participant 3 also mentioned that the replacement letter did a better job of making a convincing argument of

why someone should take the survey. They both pointed out that the message in the initial letter and the replacement letter gave different reasons for why they were being asked to take the survey.

- Participant 6 mentioned privacy concerns for taking the survey online, as did Participant 3, who said, “I know there is a direct link to your email account and things like that, so if I were to do it online, I wouldn’t do it from my home account. Does that sound paranoid?” Participant 5 said, “It isn’t reassuring me of anything. I’m not sure what it’s really for. I probably would not complete the survey because I wouldn’t feel sure about it.”
- Participants made comments about there being too many pieces of mail again at this point. Participant 7 said, “I’m getting tired of all of these things.”
- Four participants (5, 6, 7, and dry run) mentioned that the language in this letter had a much harsher tone than other pieces of mail. Participant 3 reiterated the stalking comment, “It really is stalking and it makes you feel like big brother is watching.”
- Participant 4 commented that the content of all of the pieces of mail was repetitive. When presented with the replacement letter, this participant exclaimed, “Again!”
- At this point, Participants 2, 3, 4, 6, and the dry run indicated that they would complete the survey. Participants 5 and 7 said they would not complete the survey.
- When probed about when the Census Bureau expected them to complete the survey, the participants gave the following response:
 - Dry run: As soon as possible
 - Participant 1: A week at most
 - Participant 2: Today
 - Participant 3: As soon as possible.
 - Participant 4: Yesterday
 - Participant 5: Now
 - Participant 6: Very soon, same day after you get the letter
 - Participant 7: Would refuse to take the survey

<http://www.google.com/search?q=%22spa+world%22+sleeping+va&hl=en&client=firefox-a&rls=org.mozilla:en-US:official&prmd=ivns&ei=5mGCTbuRKamR0QGw3pDWCA&start=10&sa=N>**Debriefing**

- When asked whether they would prefer to take the survey online or on paper after testing was complete, Participants 1, 2, 4, 6, 7, and the dry run said they would prefer to take it online. Participant 5 would not complete the survey and made a comment about not feeling sure about it. Participant 3 would prefer to take it on paper (and made the comment about not using her home account for internet surveys, as quoted above).
- Participant 4 said that the materials do not say exactly what the survey is trying to accomplish or what is going to be done with the money.
- Participant 1 commented on the lack of a signature for all of the pieces of mail and in the debriefing. (These were mock-up materials and not official production versions with the Census Bureau Director's signature that the actual respondents would get.)

Answers to Research Questions

Many of the original questions were addressed during this study:

1. Would participants respond to this survey if they received it at home?

The results were mixed, with some participants being enthusiastic about taking it and two saying that they would refuse to take it. Most participants said they would respond to the CQS, although a shortcoming of the study is that it is difficult to tell whether responses in the lab really reflect what respondents would actually do at home.

2. Would there be confusion between the CQS and the Decennial Census?

It did appear that there was much confusion between the CQS and the Decennial Census. This finding may have been related to the close timing of the Decennial Census and the cognitive testing of the CQS materials.

3. Would participants understand what the term "apportionment" means in the replacement packet letter? It is a large word and does not occur frequently in colloquial speech.

In this test, there did not appear to be an issue with comprehension of the term "apportionment."

4. Would participants in the Choice condition understand that there were two options for taking the survey?

Yes, they did show evidence that they understood that there were two options for taking the survey.

5. Would participants (especially in the Choice condition) prefer to take the survey online or via postal mail on the paper form?

Most participants in all of the conditions said they would prefer to take it online, but it is difficult to tell whether that is the choice they would make at home. In the Choice condition, Participants 4 and 6 said that they would prefer to take it online, and Participant 3 expressed a preference for taking it on paper.

6. What implicit deadline do the mailing materials convey to respondents (e.g., how soon do they think the Census Bureau expects them to respond based on the latest mailing)?

Participants understood that the Census Bureau expected them to respond within a short time period (e.g., soon).

Summary: Cognitive and Usability Issues

Overall, the cognitive testing showed that there were no major issues with participants understanding the mailing materials. Although a few issues were detected, the impact to the participants' interaction with the mailing materials was minimal. The list below represents a summary of the main issues that arose during testing.

1. Confusion with the 2010 Census

Several participants asked repeatedly whether this was the same as the Census. It was not clear that this was a separate survey. One participant repeatedly mentioned that the purpose of the mailing pieces was to "count people", which means that he thought the survey served the same purpose as the Census. Respondents in the field test might think that this is another mailing of the 2010 Census, especially in geographic areas that received replacement packets despite having returned the initial form. It is possible that a message in the letter that clearly states that this is a separate survey from the Decennial Census (and even though it looks similar, it is not the same thing) might help ameliorate potential confusion about this issue.

2. Unclear and Inconsistent Reasons Behind the Survey (different messages in different pieces of mail)

In general, participants were not sure why the study was being conducted. One participant pointed out that there were three different reasons stated among the different pieces of mail: to improve procedures, to increase the quality of the data in the initial letter, and also reapportionment in the replacement letter. One participant in the Internet/Mail choice condition mentioned that he was more motivated to complete the survey by the message about reapportionment in the replacement letter than he was by the vague purposes mentioned in the initial letter. One participant in the Mail Only condition commented that he thought that the survey was trying to get people to participate, but that it does not tell you much of anything about the program itself. He said, "It's not telling me how they're going to use the information...It just says they want my information – not what's going to be done with it." The text in the letters was ultimately changed by the sponsor team to only focus on measuring data accuracy and quality.

3. Similarity among the text of the different pieces of mail

Almost all of the participants remarked that the later pieces of mail were "saying the same thing" as the previous ones and a few mentioned that this repeated message made the Census Bureau sound "desperate." There was redundancy in the semantic meaning of the letters, and some participants believed that the initial package letter and the replacement package letter were actually the same thing. One participant in the Internet Only condition remarked, "Why do they keep sending me the same thing for no reason?" Another participant in the Mail Only (Participant 5) condition said, "Apparently, a lot of people aren't participating in this; it sounds like they're real desperate...sending out another letter

saying the same thing.” Participant 5 also mentioned that after receiving the third letter (referring to the reminder postcard) he would be irritated and probably wouldn’t even read it.

4. Similar appearance to “Junk Mail”

A few participants mentioned that the mailing materials looked like junk mail. One participant mentioned that the contents of the Internet Only mailing looked like the mortgage company advertisements that she receives in the mail all the time. Another participant specifically mentioned that the bar code on each piece of mail made it look like junk mail.

This may be an issue as Participant 7 stated that she opens all of the envelopes received at her address, unless they look like junk mail. She determines this by the return address label on the envelope. When discussing the initial cover letter, Participant 4 commented that if she was at home she would set it down and walk away because she would think it’s an advertisement. She also mentioned that she would do the same thing (i.e., sit it down and walk away) after receiving the reminder postcard in the mail because it looks like junk mail.

5. Confusion about what the Instruction card is

Although the Instruction card for accessing the CQS online was not explicitly tested as part of the cognitive test, the usability team noted a potential issue with respondents’ comprehension of what the piece of paper really was. One participant in the Internet Only condition read the letter and then thought that she could either take the survey online, or fill out the paper form. The problem was that she was mistaking the instruction card for the paper form. After looking at the card some more, she said, “I thought this was the questionnaire.” Although there is nothing to fill out on the instruction card, participants may set the mailing materials aside and expect to take a paper survey later, only to realize that there is no paper form when they read more carefully.

6. Too many pieces of mail

Several participants expressed an opinion that there were too many mailings. Several used the word “harassment” to describe their perception of the mail procedure. One said that she would think that “Big Brother” was definitely trying to force her to do the survey by the time she got the fourth piece of mail. One participant commented after the test administrator clarified what the purpose of the Census Quality Survey was, “After getting all the mail from the 2010 Census, they get this much more?”

Participant 7 questioned the intention of saving natural resources (as was mentioned in the mailing materials). She commented, “How is this conserving resources when they sent out four mailings?”

7. Participants were unsure about who can complete the Census Quality Survey

Although the mailing materials ask that the same person who completed the 2010 Census complete the CQS, Participants 3, 4, and 5 believed that it was acceptable for anyone in their household to answer the survey. However, Participants 2 and 6 said they understood that the same person who filled out the 2010 Census form should complete the CQS.

References

- Ashenfelter, K. T., Holland, T., Quach, V., and Nichols, E. (2010) Final report for Usability Testing for the 2010 Census Quality Survey. Report in preparation for submission to the CSM report series.
- Hill, J., Reiser, C., and Bentley, M. (2010), Study plan for the 2010 Census Quality Survey, *DSSD 2010 Census Program for Evaluations and Experiments Series #O-A-24*, U.S. Census Bureau.
- Smyth, J. D., Dillman, D. A., Christian, L. M., & O'Neill, A. C. (2010). Using the Internet to survey small towns and communities: Limitations and possibilities in the early 21st century. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 53, 1423–1448.

Appendix A: Mailing Materials Tested for the 2010 CQS Study



Figure 1: Advance Letter for All Conditions



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

August 2, 2010

Dear Resident:

I recently sent a letter to your household about participating in a short survey that will help ensure that the 2010 Census results are as accurate as possible.

Using the enclosed instructions, please complete the 2010 Census Quality Survey online as soon as possible at:

<https://respond.census.gov/quality>

This survey should be answered by the same person who completed the blue 2010 Census form that was mailed to your household in March.

The Census Bureau is using the Internet to collect this information in an effort to conserve natural resources, save taxpayers' money, and process your data more efficiently. If you are unable to complete the survey online, there is no need to contact us. We will mail you a paper questionnaire in a few weeks.

Your household is one of a small sample of households in the United States who are being asked to help us with this follow-up to the 2010 Census. Your participation will help us improve our procedures for the next Census in 2020.

Thank you for helping make sure our Census count is accurate.

Robert M. Groves
Director, U.S. Census Bureau

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

D-16(L) R1 (3-22-2010)

Figure 2: Internet Only- Introductory Letter; Page 1

Your Answers Are Confidential

We are conducting this survey under the authority of Title 13, United States Code, Section 182. Federal law protects your privacy and keeps your answers confidential (Title 13, United States Code, Sections 9 and 214).

Your participation in the 2010 Census Quality Survey is voluntary, but by answering these questions, you will help us be sure that the procedures we are using to conduct the Census produce the most accurate results possible.

Please visit our website at <www.census.gov> and click on "Data Protection & Privacy Policy" to learn more about how we protect your information.

D-16(L) R1 (3-22-2010)

Figure 3: Internet Only- Introductory Letter; Page 2



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

August 9, 2010

Dear Resident:

A few days ago, you should have received a request to complete the 2010 Census Quality Survey. If you have already responded, please accept our sincere thanks. If not, please complete the survey online at <https://respond.census.gov/quality>. You will need to provide your 9-digit access code, which is printed below the bar code on the other side of this postcard.

The survey should be completed by the same person who completed your household's 2010 Census form. Responding on the Internet helps us reduce costs and produce results quickly. However, if we do not receive your response, we will mail you a paper questionnaire in about two weeks.

We appreciate your participation in this follow-up, which will help us assess the accuracy of the procedures used to conduct the 2010 Census.

Sincerely,

Robert M. Groves
Director, U.S. Census Bureau

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

2010 Census Quality Survey

Figure 4: Internet Only – Reminder Postcard



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

August 23, 2010

Dear Resident:

A few weeks ago, I wrote to you about our effort to ensure we are using the best possible procedures for conducting the 2010 Census. I asked you to help us with this important effort by completing the 2010 Census Quality Survey online, but we have not yet received a response from your household.

If you have already completed the survey, thank you very much. If you have not, please complete the survey soon using ONE of the following options.

Option 1: Go to <https://respond.census.gov/quality> to complete the survey online. You will need your 9-digit access code, which is printed just below the bar code on the back of the enclosed questionnaire.

Option 2: Complete and mail back the enclosed questionnaire in the postage-paid envelope provided.

The information collected in the 2010 Census Quality Survey is important for assessing the quality of the Census count that is used for reapportioning Congress and allocating funds to cities and counties in every state. Please respond today.

Many thanks,

Robert M. Groves
Director, U.S. Census Bureau

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

D-17(L) R1 (3-24-2010)

Figure 5: Internet Only Replacement Letter; Page 1

Your Answers Are Confidential

We are conducting this survey under the authority of Title 13, United States Code, Section 182. Federal law protects your privacy and keeps your answers confidential (Title 13, United States Code, Sections 9 and 214).

Your participation in the 2010 Census Quality Survey is voluntary, but by answering these questions, you will help us be sure that the procedures we are using to conduct the Census produce the most accurate results possible. If you need help completing the survey, please call our toll-free number (1-866-208-7437).

Please visit our website at <www.census.gov> and click on "Data Protection & Privacy Policy" to learn more about how we protect your information.

D-17(L) R1 (3-24-2010)

Figure 6: Internet Only Replacement Letter; Page 2



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

August 2, 2010

Dear Resident:

I recently sent a letter to your household about participating in a short survey that will help ensure that the 2010 Census results are as accurate as possible.

Please complete the 2010 Census Quality Survey and return it in the enclosed postage-paid envelope. This survey should be answered by the same person who completed the blue 2010 Census form that was mailed to your household in March.

Your household is one of a small sample of households in the United States who are being asked to help us with this follow-up to the 2010 Census. Your participation will help us improve our procedures for the next Census in 2020.

Thank you for helping make sure our Census count is accurate.

Robert M. Groves
Director, U.S. Census Bureau

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

D-16(L) R2 (3-25-2010)

Figure 7: Mail Only Introductory Letter; Page 1

Your Answers Are Confidential

We are conducting this survey under the authority of Title 13, United States Code, Section 182. Federal law protects your privacy and keeps your answers confidential (Title 13, United States Code, Sections 9 and 214).

Your participation in the 2010 Census Quality Survey is voluntary, but by answering these questions, you will help us be sure that the procedures we are using to conduct the Census produce the most accurate results possible. If you need help completing the survey, please call our toll-free number (1-866-208-7437).

Please visit our website at <www.census.gov> and click on "Data Protection & Privacy Policy" to learn more about how we protect your information.

D-16(L) R2 (3-25-2010)

Figure 8: Mail Only Introductory Letter; Page 2



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

August 9, 2010

Dear Resident:

A few days ago, you should have received a request to complete the 2010 Census Quality Survey.

If you have already responded, please accept our sincere thanks. If not, please fill out and mail back the questionnaire as soon as possible. The questionnaire should be completed by the same person who completed your household's 2010 Census form.

We appreciate your participation in this follow-up, which will help us assess the accuracy of the procedures used to conduct the 2010 Census.

Sincerely,

Robert M. Groves
Director, U.S. Census Bureau

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

2010 Census Quality Survey

Figure 9: Mail Only Reminder Postcard



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

August 23, 2010

Dear Resident:

A few weeks ago, I wrote to you about our effort to ensure we are using the best possible procedures for conducting the 2010 Census. I asked you to help us with this important effort by completing the 2010 Census Quality Survey, but we have not yet received a response from your household.

If you have already completed the survey, thank you very much. If you have not, please complete the enclosed questionnaire and return it in the postage-paid envelope provided.

The information collected in the 2010 Census Quality Survey is important for assessing the quality of the Census count that is used for reapportioning Congress and allocating funds to cities and counties in every state. Please respond today.

Many thanks,

Robert M. Groves
Director, U.S. Census Bureau

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

D-17(L) R2 (3-23-2010)

Figure 10: Mail Only Replacement Letter; Page 1

Your Answers Are Confidential

We are conducting this survey under the authority of Title 13, United States Code, Section 182. Federal law protects your privacy and keeps your answers confidential (Title 13, United States Code, Sections 9 and 214).

Your participation in the 2010 Census Quality Survey is voluntary, but by answering these questions, you will help us be sure that the procedures we are using to conduct the Census produce the most accurate results possible. If you need help completing the survey, please call our toll-free number (1-866-208-7437).

Please visit our website at <www.census.gov> and click on "Data Protection & Privacy Policy" to learn more about how we protect your information.

D-17(L) R2 (3-23-2010)

Figure 11: Mail Only Replacement Letter; Page 2



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

August 2, 2010

Dear Resident:

I recently sent a letter to your household about participating in a short survey that will help ensure that the 2010 Census results are as accurate as possible.

Please complete the 2010 Census Quality Survey as soon as possible, using ONE of the following options.

Option 1: Go to <https://respond.census.gov/quality> to complete the survey online. You will need your 9-digit access code, which is printed below the bar code on the back of the enclosed questionnaire.

Option 2: Complete and mail back the enclosed questionnaire in the postage-paid envelope provided.

This survey should be answered by the same person who completed the blue 2010 Census form that was mailed to your household in March.

The Census Bureau is using the Internet to collect this information in an effort to conserve natural resources, save taxpayers' money, and process your data more efficiently. If you are unable to complete the survey online, please complete and mail back the enclosed questionnaire.

Your household is one of a small sample of households in the United States who are being asked to help us with this follow-up to the 2010 Census. Your participation will help us improve our procedures for the next Census in 2020.

Thank you for helping make sure our Census count is accurate.

Robert M. Groves
Director, U.S. Census Bureau

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

D-16(L) R3 (3-24-2010)

Figure 12: Mail/Internet Choice Introductory Letter; Page 1

Your Answers Are Confidential

We are conducting this survey under the authority of Title 13, United States Code, Section 182. Federal law protects your privacy and keeps your answers confidential (Title 13, United States Code, Sections 9 and 214).

Your participation in the 2010 Census Quality Survey is voluntary, but by answering these questions, you will help us be sure that the procedures we are using to conduct the Census produce the most accurate results possible. If you need help completing the survey, please call our toll-free number (1-866-208-7437).

Please visit our website at <www.census.gov> and click on "Data Protection & Privacy Policy" to learn more about how we protect your information.

D-17(L) R3 (3-24-2010)

Figure 13: Mail/Internet Choice Introductory Letter; Page 2



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

August 9, 2010

Dear Resident:

A few days ago, you should have received a request to complete the 2010 Census Quality Survey. If you have already responded, please accept our sincere thanks. If not, please complete the survey online at <https://respond.census.gov/quality> using your 9-digit access code, which is printed below the bar code on the other side of this postcard. If you are unable to complete the survey online, please fill out and mail back the questionnaire that we sent you.

The survey should be completed by the same person who completed your household's 2010 Census form. Responding on the Internet helps us reduce costs and produce results quickly. However, if we do not receive your response, we will mail you another paper questionnaire in about two weeks.

We appreciate your participation in this follow-up, which will help us assess the accuracy of the procedures used to conduct the 2010 Census.

Sincerely,

Robert M. Groves
Director, U.S. Census Bureau

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

2010 Census Quality Survey

Figure 14: Mail/Internet Choice Reminder Postcard



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

August 23, 2010

Dear Resident:

A few weeks ago, I wrote to you about our effort to ensure we are using the best possible procedures for conducting the 2010 Census. I asked you to help us with this important effort by completing the 2010 Census Quality Survey, but we have not yet received a response from your household.

If you have already completed the survey, thank you very much. If you have not, please complete the survey soon using ONE of the following options.

Option 1: Go to <https://respond.census.gov/quality> to complete the survey online. You will need your 9-digit access code, which is printed just below the bar code on the back of the enclosed questionnaire.

Option 2: Complete and mail back the enclosed questionnaire in the postage-paid envelope provided.

The information collected in the 2010 Census Quality Survey is important for assessing the quality of the Census count that is used for reapportioning Congress and allocating funds to cities and counties in every state. Please respond today.

Many thanks,

Robert M. Groves
Director, U.S. Census Bureau

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

D-17(L) R3 (3-24-2010)

Figure 15: Mail/Internet Choice Replacement Letter; Page 1

Your Answers Are Confidential

We are conducting this survey under the authority of Title 13, United States Code, Section 182. Federal law protects your privacy and keeps your answers confidential (Title 13, United States Code, Sections 9 and 214).

Your participation in the 2010 Census Quality Survey is voluntary, but by answering these questions, you will help us be sure that the procedures we are using to conduct the Census produce the most accurate results possible. If you need help completing the survey, please call our toll-free number (1-866-208-7437).

Please visit our website at <www.census.gov> and click on "Data Protection & Privacy Policy" to learn more about how we protect your information.

D-17(L) R2 (3-23-2010)

Figure 16: Mail/Internet Choice Replacement Letter; Page 2

Appendix B: Protocol for Testing the CQS Mailing Materials

1 General Introduction

Thank you for your time today. My name is XX, and I will be working with you today. We will be evaluating the design of the Census Quality Survey letters and postcard. We are going to use your comments to give feedback to the developers of these CQS materials. I did not create the materials or the survey to which they refer, so please share both your positive and negative reactions to them. We are not evaluating you or your skills, but rather you are helping us see how well the letters explain things.

First, I would like to ask you to read and sign this consent form. It explains the purpose of the session and informs you that we would like to videotape the session, with your permission. Only those of us connected with the project will review the tape. We will use it mainly as a memory aid. We may also use clips from the tape to illustrate key points about the design of the letters. We will also be using eye-tracking equipment to help us understand how you use the materials we will show you. Before we get started, I would also like you to complete this short background survey.

Hand the participant the mailing pieces consent form; give time to read and sign; sign own name and date if you have not already done so. Then, hand the participant the demographics and computer usage survey to complete.

Start the tape when the participant signs the consent form.

I would like you to tell me your impressions and thoughts about the letters as you read them. I would like you to “think aloud” and talk to me about your impressions. For the purposes of this study, I would like you to imagine that, 4-5 months ago, you received your U.S. Census Bureau questionnaire in the mail, filled it out, and mailed it back.

During the session, I may remind you to talk to me if you get quiet, not to interrupt your thought process, but simply to remind you to talk to me. You don’t have to read the letters or postcard aloud if that is not what you normally would do, but we do want you to tell us what you are thinking as you read.

Before we get started, let’s practice thinking aloud, since it’s not something that you would normally do while reading letters. Can you tell me how many windows are in your house or apartment? [PROBE as appropriate to the participant’s responses to this question.]

After think-aloud practice is complete:

Now I am going to calibrate your eyes for the eye-tracking.

Do Calibration. The eye tracker may need to be re-calibrated for each type of letter.

Now that we have your eyes calibrated, we are ready to begin. Please imagine that you have received each

of these letters in the mail at home and read them as you would normally read your mail.

Do you have any questions?

Start the eye-tracking software: Tobii Studio.

Hand them each letter, in order, for their assigned condition

1.1 Choice Mail/Internet

Advance Letter

A few days before the Census Quality Survey form comes in the mail, you would be sent the letter that I am going to show you now. Please read it as you would at home, and remember to think aloud as you go through it. *Give them the Advance Letter.*

After they are finished reading the letter:

In your own words, what is the purpose of this letter? Anything else? *Keep probing with “Anything else?” until the participant says “no.”*

Did you find any part of the letter that was confusing?

Initial Cover Letter

After a few days, you would receive this in the mail. This letter would be on top of the Census Quality Survey questionnaire. Please read it as you would at home and remember to think aloud as you go through it.

After they are finished reading the letter:

Can you tell me what this letter is about? What is the purpose of this letter?

Did you find any part of the letter that was confusing?

How does this letter say you should complete the CQS?

IF they say by the Internet, probe: Did you notice another way you could complete the CQS?

IF they say by the mail, probe: Did you also notice that you could complete the CQS online?

Was there any sentence in the letter that would encourage you to complete the survey?

How likely would you be to complete the CQS: Not likely at all, somewhat likely, or very likely?

IF Yes: Why would you complete the survey? Which method would you prefer? Why?

IF No: Why would you not complete the survey?

Did you see the message about saving taxpayers money by responding to the CQS online? Would that message encourage you to complete the survey online? Why or why not?

- **IF YES:** On a scale of 1 to 9 with one being not at all and nine being very strongly, how strongly would that sentence encourage you to complete the survey online?

Did you see the message about saving natural resources by responding to the CQS online? Would that message encourage you to complete the survey online? Why or why not?

- **IF YES:** On a scale of 1 to 9 with one being not at all and nine being very strongly, how strongly would that sentence encourage you to complete the survey online?

Reminder Postcard

After a few more days, you would receive this postcard in the mail. Please read it as you would at home and remember to think aloud as you go through it.

After they are finished reading the postcard:

Can you tell me what this postcard is about? What is the purpose of this postcard?

Based on this postcard, how soon did you think that the Census Bureau expects you to complete the survey?

Do you think that is a reasonable amount of time?

Did you find any part of the postcard that was confusing?

How does this postcard say you should complete the survey?

Replacement Cover Letter

After a few weeks, you would receive this in the mail if you had not yet responded to the survey. This letter would be on top of another copy of the Census Quality Survey questionnaire. Please read it as you would at home and remember to think aloud as you go through it.

After they are finished reading the letter:

Can you tell me what this letter is about? What is the purpose of this letter?

Based on this letter, how soon did you think that the Census Bureau expects you to complete the survey?

Do you think that is a reasonable amount of time?

Did you find any part of the letter that was confusing?

How does this letter say you should complete the CQS?

Did you notice another way you could complete the CQS? How do you feel about using the Internet to respond to the survey?

IF they say by mail, probe:

Did you also notice that you could complete the CQS online?

Was there any sentence in the letter that would encourage you to complete the survey?

Would you complete the CQS?

IF Yes: Was there anything in the letter that would change your preference for which method you would use to take the survey?

IF No: Why would you not complete the survey?

What does the term “reapportioning” mean to you when used in the sentence, “The information collected in the 2010 Census Quality Survey is important for... reapportioning Congress...?”

1.2 Push Internet

Advance Letter

Imagine that you are opening your mail at home and that you received the letter that I am going to show you now. Please read it as you would at home, and remember to think aloud as you go through it. *Give them the Advance Letter.*

After they are finished reading the letter:

Can you tell me what this letter is about? What is the purpose of this letter?

Did you find any part of the letter that was confusing?

Initial Cover Letter

After a few days, you would receive this in the mail. Please read it as you would at home and remember to think aloud as you go through it.

After they are finished reading the letter:

Can you tell me what this letter is about? What is the purpose of this letter?

Did you find any part of the letter that was confusing?

Was there any sentence in the letter that would encourage you to complete the survey?

Would you complete the CQS?

What would you do if you did not have Internet access?

Based on this letter, would you think that a paper form was eventually going to come in the mail?

Did you see the message about saving taxpayers money by responding to the CQS online? Would that message encourage you to complete the survey online? Why or why not?

- **IF YES:** On a scale of 1 to 9 with one being not at all and nine being very strongly, how strongly would that sentence encourage you to complete the survey online?

Did you see the message about saving natural resources by responding to the CQS online? Would that message encourage you to complete the survey online? Why or why not?

- **IF YES:** On a scale of 1 to 9 with one being not at all and nine being very strongly, how strongly would that sentence encourage you to complete the survey online?

Reminder Postcard

After a few more days, you would receive this postcard in the mail. Please read it as you would at home and remember to think aloud as you go through it.

After they are finished reading the postcard:

Can you tell me what this letter is about? What is the purpose of this letter?

Based on this postcard, how soon did you think that the Census Bureau expects you to complete the survey?

Do you think that is a reasonable amount of time?

Did you find any part of the postcard that was confusing?

How does this postcard say you should complete the CQS?

Replacement Cover Letter

After a few weeks, you would receive this in the mail if you had not yet responded to the survey. This letter would be on top of a copy of the Census Quality Survey questionnaire. Please read it as you would at home and remember to think aloud as you go through it.

After they are finished reading the letter:

What do you think the letter is telling you? Anything else? *Keeping probing with “Anything else?” until the participant says “no.”*

Based on this letter, how soon did you think that the Census Bureau expects you to complete the survey?

Do you think that is a reasonable amount of time?

Did you find any part of the letter that was confusing?

How does this letter say you should complete the CQS?

IF They say by the Internet here and did not say it for the Advance letter, probe: How do you feel about using the Internet to respond to the survey?

IF they say by the mail (or anything other than Internet), probe: What language in the letter led you to think that the Census Bureau would like you to respond by mail?

Would you complete the CQS?

IF Yes: Why would you complete the survey?

IF No: Why would you not complete the survey?

What does the term “reapportioning” mean to you when used in the sentence, “The information collected in the 2010 Census Quality Survey is important for... reapportioning Congress...?”

1.3 Push Mail

Advance Letter

Imagine that you are opening your mail at home and that you received the letter that I am going to show you now. Please read it as you would at home, and remember to think aloud as you go through it. *Give them the Advance Letter.*

After they are finished reading the letter:

Can you tell me what this letter is about? What is the purpose of this letter?

Did you find any part of the letter that was confusing?

Initial Cover Letter

After a few days, you would receive this in the mail. Please read it as you would at home and remember to think aloud as you go through it.

After they are finished reading the letter:

Can you tell me what this letter is about? What is the purpose of this letter?

Did you find any part of the letter that was confusing?

How does this letter say you should complete the CQS?

Was there any sentence in the letter that would encourage you to complete the survey?

Would you complete the CQS?

IF Yes: Why would you complete the survey?

IF No: Why would you not complete the survey?

Reminder Postcard

After a few more weeks, you would receive this postcard in the mail. Please read it as you would at home and remember to think aloud as you go through it.

After they are finished reading the postcard:

Can you tell me what this postcard is about? What is the purpose of this postcard?

Based on this postcard, how soon did you think that the Census Bureau expects you to complete the survey?

Do you think that is a reasonable amount of time?

Did you find any part of the postcard that was confusing?

How does this postcard say you should complete the CQS?

Replacement Letter

After a few weeks, you would receive this in the mail if you had not yet responded to the survey. This letter would be on top of another copy of the Census Quality Survey questionnaire. Please read it as you would at home and remember to think aloud as you go through it.

After they are finished reading the letter:

Can you tell me what this letter is about? What is the purpose of this letter?

How does this letter say you should complete the CQS?

Did you find any part of the letter that was confusing?

Was there any sentence in the letter that would encourage you to complete the survey?

Would you complete the CQS?

IF Yes: Why would you complete the survey?

IF No: Why would you not complete the survey?

What does the term “reapportioning” mean to you when used in the sentence, “The information collected in the 2010 Census Quality Survey is important for... reapportioning Congress...?”

Now that the session is complete, read this series of debriefing questions to the participant.

1.4 Debriefing Interview Questions

1. Who usually handles the mail in your household? Do all of the envelopes that are received get opened?
2. Who usually completes/fills out survey forms or other forms for your household?
3. When you receive surveys in the mail, do you always, sometimes, or never complete them?
4. How often do you complete surveys on the Internet?
5. Do you prefer online surveys, paper surveys, or having the option to do it either way?
6. Would you complete a [*the other kind from #5*] survey or questionnaire if you had to?
7. Do you usually complete paper surveys and questionnaires immediately after opening the mail, or do you wait until a later time to complete them?
 - **IF LATER:** How long do you usually have the survey before you complete it?
8. Do you usually complete online surveys and questionnaires immediately after being invited to take them, or do you wait until a later time to complete them?
 - **IF LATER:** How long do you usually have the survey before you complete it?
9. Other than what we have already talked about, did you have any other comments or suggestions about the letters or postcard?

Appendix C: Consent Form for the Mail Pieces



Usability Study of the Census Quality Survey Letters and Postcard

Each year, the Census Bureau conducts many different usability evaluations. For example, the Census Bureau routinely tests the wording, layout and behavior of products, such as Web sites, online surveys, and letters sent through the mail in order to obtain the best information possible from respondents.

You have volunteered to take part in a study to improve the usability of letters and postcard associated with the Census Quality Survey (CQS). In order to have a complete record of your comments, your usability session will be videotaped. We plan to use the tapes to improve the design of the product. Staff directly involved in the usable design research project will have access to the tapes. We also plan to perform an eye-tracking analysis of your session. Your participation is voluntary and your answers will remain strictly confidential.

This usability study is being conducted under the authority of Title 13 USC. The OMB control number for this study is 0607-0725. This valid approval number legally certifies this information collection.

I have volunteered to participate in this Census Bureau usability study, and I give permission for my tapes to be used for the purposes stated above.

Participant's Name: _____

Participant's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Researcher's Name: _____

Researcher's Signature: _____ Date: _____