

Blaise Audit Trail Data in Relational Database

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The Survey Research Center (SRC) uses Blaise for the majority of its computer assisted interviewing. Blaise creates an individual audit trail (ADT) of items encountered in each survey interview. In 2004, SRC created an application called ADTReport, which is currently used by both methodologists and project teams for the analysis of Blaise instrument item and section times, as well as analysis of interviewer keystrokes during the interview (e.g., backing up and changing answers, invoking help, switching languages, etc.). Data can be created for the entire interview, individual fields, or blocks of fields.

To better utilize the audit trail data, and to provide more security and efficiency, we are now enhancing this process by uploading all the individual audit trail files into a relational database format. We believe this effort will result in greater efficiency in obtaining information on questionnaire design and interviewer performance.

The paper and presentation will discuss the process and benefits of this new approach. For example:

- Users will not need direct access to the ADT files themselves, which are often located in protected server locations, but will have access only to the data of interest.
- Having a single relational database located on a secure server is more efficient, and specific user permissions could be granted as needed.
- We are processing the ADT files nightly through our automatic interview data merge. This will greatly reduce the time it takes to analyze data, since all of the ADT processing would already be complete.

- Users can connect to the database using familiar tools such as SAS or MS Access, creating their own queries. In a relational database format, these data could be easily joined to other paradata data or survey data housed in other databases, where other variables of interest could be queried.