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### ONS Web Development Project: Tackling the difficulties of social survey data collection

In the context of challenging UK public sector efficiency targets and the increasing cost of traditional survey data collection methods (such as face-to-face interviewing), there is considerable interest in developing a capability for internet data collection on the social surveys run by the Office for National Statistics (ONS).

ONS aims to be an innovative, cost effective and considerate (in terms of respondent burden) producer of official statistics. As such, we are placing increasing emphasis on developing mixed mode survey designs, including exploring the use of the internet for data collection, to improve efficiency and reduce the burden on households who respond to our surveys.

Building on some piloting work already conducted, we are investing in a project to test the feasibility of adding a web collection mode to the Labour Force Survey (LFS). The LFS, which has been running since 1973, is one of the UK's most important social surveys and a key ONS statistical source for economic and labour market measures. The survey currently uses face-to-face and telephone modes of collection, and, because of the large sample size, is expensive to run relative to other surveys in our portfolio. The project will build towards large scale testing of an internet mode on the LFS.

The paper will aim to update the Blaise user community about the project – what we've done, where we are now and where we are heading. The paper will include our analysis of Blaise Internet Services and discussion of issues associated with designing and implementing the wider IT system necessary to support internet data collection.