

# **Blaise 5 Paradata Requirements**

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Paradata are captured during the survey process (Couper, 1998) and are a valuable source of information in helping us understand the data collection process. Paradata which are linked directly to the administration of a survey instrument are usually collected automatically through the CAI software we use, such as Blaise. The source of this type of paradata are primarily audit trails but can also include server and client side data for web collection, specific details about CARI recordings and information about the mode of data collection. Another type of paradata are collected or stored in survey and sample management systems. This type of paradata describe the actions surrounding the actual data collection session(s) and often includes data about contact attempts, the interview, observations from the interviewer, the sampling frame and respondent-related administrative procedures, such as consent forms, payments, and so forth.

In 2011 a working group was formed with the purpose of specifying the Blaise community's paradata requirements for Blaise 5. The group included representatives from the Survey Research Center at the University of Michigan, Statistics Canada and Mathematica Policy Research. The main focus of this paper will be to detail the paradata requirements (mainly instrument paradata) as they are set out in the white paper this group produced. However, the paper will also provide some practical examples to illustrate how paradata can be used to inform decision making throughout the survey process and assist in fieldwork monitoring.