

Converting the Labour Force Survey to an electronic questionnaire using Blaise 5

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The initial EDC focus for social surveys is the LFS, a choice driven by the LFS's importance, size, cost, longitudinal design, and opportunities to collaborate with other countries that are also focusing on web data collection research on their LFS.

The aim is to introduce a self-completion web mode to cover part of the sample, thus moving to a mix of three data collection modes: web self-completion, face-to-face interview and telephone interview.

Potential benefits from introducing a web mode include:

- Reduce data collection costs, by decreasing the number of interviews
- Meet respondent expectations i.e. the demand for web / digital services
- Stem falling response rates e.g. by providing flexibility to respondents, who can self-complete the survey at a time convenient to them (within the survey period)
- Drive design improvements across all collection modes
- Reach groups who won't respond via other modes i.e. if specifically targeted via web (although research indicates untargeted web surveys generally achieve similar socio-demographic coverage to existing modes)

The extent to which these benefits can be delivered will be determined during the course of the research. It is unlikely that we can achieve a survey design that delivers all of these benefits i.e. reduce costs, change sample demographics and increase response – each would require a different design. Furthermore, the survey's complexity (operations, survey design, questionnaire length and convolution) plus the high profile nature of its outputs, makes this a significant challenge. This challenge requires major investment and a considered and logical research approach, with a high degree of caution to ensure that the quality of statistical outputs is controlled and managed and that operational stability is maintained.

The paper will also cover designing for the web, lessons learnt from cognitive interviewing and results from the pilot due to be carried out in March 2015.