
GEMINI DATA USERS IMPACT TEAM FINAL REPORT

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Gemini Data Users Impact Team was chartered in May to solicit feedback from the Consumer Expenditure Survey program (CE) user community about the features of the approved CE survey redesign, identifying serious impediments that would require major revisions to the new design. The team developed a series of outreach activities that had three objectives:

1. To obtain feedback from users on any serious issues they perceived in the redesign proposal that would warrant revision of the proposal
2. To make users aware of the structure and content of the new CE redesign proposal
3. To make users aware of the implementation timeline and plans to aid users in transitioning from the old design to the new.

The dedicated Gemini redesign webpage and the Federal Register notice contained information about the redesign proposal (with links for additional details) and invited users to provide comments via an email link. A series of outreach events consisting of presentations at conferences, professional meetings, and invited panels, and a focused Data Users' Impact Survey directly engaged data users to solicit feedback on their reactions to the proposal. The outreach events and the Impact Survey provided all the responses the team received from data users.

Users generally approved of both the design and the process by which it was constructed. These sentiments were expressed at many of the outreach events and in comments received in the users' impact survey. It was noted that the way the process was conducted lent confidence that the new CE would continue being a valuable tool for research. The two most common concerns raised by users were the elimination of the quarterly panels and the planned reduction in expenditure detail. Although there was some indication that the ability to compute year-over-year changes with the new design was an attractive feature, it was also noted that the lack of quarterly panel data would limit the utility of the data and guidance in adapting research to the new design would be of great help. More aggregated expenditure categories were viewed as a particular issue for those users who employed the granular data in micro-level analyses, such as sales tax incidence and poverty research.

Users generally agreed that one to two months prior to release of the data would be sufficient lead time to provide supporting materials, such as data dictionaries, sample programs, and webinars, to aid in the transition to the new data. At the same time, users expressed a desire to be informed about decisions on the structure and content of the final data sets, such as the final specification of expenditure detail, as soon as possible.

While there were concerns raised about the impact of the new design on the ability to conduct the types of research currently being undertaken, users did not view these concerns as "showstoppers" that would curtail their use of CE data. Users appeared willing to adapt their research to the new data and, to that end, asked that the CE provide resources and guidance to aid in that process.

BACKGROUND

Early in the redesign process, the Gemini Project team reached out to CE data users to solicit their input in designing the new survey. Following are four events at which users had the opportunity to express their wants and needs:

- CRIW-NBER Conference on Improving Consumption Measurement (July 2009)
- CE Data Users' Needs Forum (June 2010)
- Consumer Expenditure Survey Methods Workshop (December 2010)
- CE Survey Methods Symposium (July 2012)

These inputs were used when developing requirements for the redesigned CE survey and the subsequent design plan. The Gemini Data Users Impact Team was formed as a way to follow-up with data users after the new design was proposed and approved to assess how their use of the data would be affected by the new design.

PURPOSE

The Gemini Data Users Impact Team had two primary purposes. The first was to solicit feedback from users and compile their concerns pertaining to their use of the data. The second, which combined the latter two objectives of the team, was to educate the public on: 1) the features of the new design, 2) the scope of the data that would be available, 3) the timeline for implementation, and 4) the plans for aiding users in the transition to the new design. To achieve these goals, the team organized a number of outreach efforts including presentations at several conferences and meetings, a CE Redesign webpage describing the new design and providing a comparison of the current and new design, submission of a notice on the Federal Register, and fielding a web-based users' impact survey.

OUTREACH EFFORTS

GEMINI REDESIGN WEBPAGE

The Gemini homepage (<http://www.bls.gov/cex/geminiproject.htm>) was overhauled to more accurately reflect the details of the redesign. The page was designed as a two-way portal to allow the public to both access information from and provide feedback directly to the Gemini Users' Impact team. The webpage keeps an updated list of new and old outreach events, while providing users with a free flow of new information (documents, timelines, surveys, etc.) as it becomes available. In addition to these two dynamic features of the website are two static—but interactive—graphics that identify the key differences between the current design and the redesign, and describe the redesigned survey procedure step-by-step. The Gemini homepage is designed to be the hub of all Gemini-related information while providing a direct link between CE data users and CE Gemini staff.

FEDERAL REGISTER NOTICE

Another vehicle for getting feedback on the redesign was the posting of a notice on the Federal Register requesting comments. The notice included a background summary of the new design, a link to the Gemini webpage for further information about the design, and a section delineating the desired focus of comments. While the notice indicated comments were welcome on any aspect of the redesign, the BLS was especially interested in comments on:

- Enhancements or limitations the proposed new design will have on the use of the data.
- Features of the new design that are particularly appealing or problematic.
- Information and lead time that would be needed prior to the implementation of the new design to aid users in adapting to the new design.

The register notice was open for 90 days, with comments directed to BLS through April 1, 2014. No comments were received.

EVENTS

CE SURVEY METHODS SYMPOSIUM PRESENTATION

The first CE Survey Methods Symposium was held on July 17, 2012, the day before the start of the seventh annual CE Microdata Users' Workshop. It provided a day-long forum to discuss the recommendations of the CNSTAT Expert Panel on the Redesign of the Consumer Expenditure Survey with an invited audience of interested local data users as well as attendees of the users' workshop. The success of that event led to its formal integration into the schedule as a joint event with the users' workshop in 2013.

The 2013 Symposium took place on the afternoon of July 16, 2013 and drew an attendance of 47. It covered two major agenda topics – small-scale redesign changes and the Gemini Project. One of the three presentations at the latter was "Overview of the Proposed CE Redesign". The other presentations focused on measurement errors in the CE and a comparison of international consumer expenditure surveys. The symposium concluded with a question-and-answer session whose comments are summarized below.

One concern was raised about expenditures with a longer transaction time, for example healthcare expenditures, where the expenditure and reimbursement might occur over more than the 3-month reference period and subsequently what assistance CE would provide researchers in those cases.

Another issue concerned the distribution of healthcare expenditures. Under the proposed design, one could not distinguish a reported expenditure of \$25,000 in an interview as coming from a household that spends \$25K every quarter, or a household that is reporting a catastrophic, one-time expense.

There was a request that CE be proactive in describing how weighting will be affected by the new design as this had been an issue in using data when the survey transitioned to a continuing quarterly design.

There was also a worry about seasonality when looking at households over time, because the two observations for a household will come from the same month of the year, one year apart. While this could be dealt with using dummy variables, this would still be a big concern for academic users.

A number of comments were made on features of the design itself, such as the use of incentives and the two-wave survey procedure. As these were not related to data use, they are not being expounded upon here.

On the positive side, approval was expressed for the new survey design, including the logical grouping of questions and the incorporation of records. Additionally the classification of all expenditures in 3 groups: easily recalled, frequent, and efficient to collect with records, was approved of.

HOUSING STATISTICS USERS GROUP (HSUG) MEETING

The primary purpose of HSUG is to serve as a forum for members and the public for the exchange of views and information on all aspects of housing-related statistics, from their funding and collection, to their processing, analysis, and availability. Aside from an interest in current, past, and potential sources for housing data, a significant focus of HSUG is communicating the future data needs of the housing research community to data providers. HSUG holds regular meetings about every three months that include formal presentations and informal announcements and updates from members and individuals representing agencies involved in the compilation of housing data, especially the Census Bureau and HUD.

Steve Henderson offered a presentation entitled “Redesigning the Consumer Expenditure Survey” to the group at its meeting on November 1, 2013. Approximately 40 people attended the presentation. The only comments received after the presentation were about the incentives being offered in the design and what research CE had drawn upon with respect to the levels and relative effectiveness of incentives. There were no comments on the impact of the new design or expenditure classifications on the use of the data.

After the meeting, a Census attendee approached us with concerns about the amount of expenditure detail that would be available on property construction, repairs, alterations, and maintenance jobs (Section 5). These mirrored the potential concerns of the Manufacturing and Construction Division (MCD) at Census who use the current CE data in estimating the value of residential construction put in place. To find out more of their concerns, MCD was invited to and participated in the second Federal data users meeting on January 23, 2014.

In addition, an attendee from Housing and Urban Development (HUD) suggested that a meeting to discuss the CE redesign in light of work they were doing to redesign the American Housing Survey (AHS). At that meeting, it seemed clear that AHS was further along in the redesign process, and HUD was more interested in the process itself rather than from the prospective of the redesign on a CE data user, and thus, did not have anything to contribute vis-a vis the impact of the CE redesign on data users.

ASSOCIATION OF PUBLIC DATA USERS (APDU) WEBINAR

On November 14, 2013, Laura Erhard and Adam Safir presented a 1-hour webinar overview of the Gemini redesign to an audience of 35 Association of Public Data Users (APDU) virtual attendees.

The following questions were posed to attendees at the end of the webinar:

1. What are the positive impacts on research?
2. What are the negative impacts on your research?
3. Do you have any concerns about these specific design changes:
 - a. 12-month change instead of 12 months consecutive data (assuming no attrition)
 - b. Fewer, more aggregated expenditure categories
 - c. Diary reference period not aligned with Visit 1 and Visit 2 reference periods
4. What information/training do you need prior to implementation?
5. What amount of lead time do you need prior to implementation?

Although these question were not directly addressed by attendees, there was some helpful discussion about the redesign’s timetable, and overall attendees expressed positive feedback on the redesign.

A couple of questions were asked by the audience that may provide insight into customer needs/impacts. One participant was interested in what level of geographic detail the redesign would be able to provide. Another participant asked whether the new design would be using administrative records.

FEDERAL COMMITTEE ON STATISTICAL METHODOLOGY (FCSM) CONFERENCE

FCSM is a committee sponsored by the Office of Management Budget which holds an annual conference highlighting current research and methodological topics relevant to federal government statistical programs. The conference is open to researchers in the statistical community from the government, private sector, and academia. A presentation on the CE's redesign plan, "The Consumer Expenditure Survey's New Design and Implementation Plans" was part of a larger session "New Approaches to Survey Design, Implementation, and Use" at the 2013 conference held November 4-6. The presentation gave a brief background of the Gemini project, briefly described the current design, and then detailed its components. The presentation closed with a brief comparison of features in the current design to the redesign, a mention of the recommendations being implemented in the redesign, and a look at the road ahead towards implementation.

There were roughly 75-80 members in the audience for the presentation; however, only 35-40 remained for the Q & A portion at the end of the session. A question was posed regarding the continuity of the time-series data, how the break in the series would be handled, and how users will be prepared for the break. A break in the series is inevitable because of the change in survey design. The CE will need to provide users with as much documentation on the effects of the change in design as possible.

FEDERAL DATA USERS MEETING PART 1

The first organized data users meeting targeted a group of known federal agencies that use CE products either in tabular or microdata form. The group included representatives from the Bureau of Economic Analysis' National Income and Wealth Division who use our data in analyses of personal consumption expenditures; from Health and Human Services' Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (HHS) who use a special tabulation of health care insurance expenditures to make comparisons of out of pocket medical spending across government sources, from the Internal Revenue Service's Office of Research (IRS) who use a specially prepared dataset to calculate sales tax tables for IRS forms; from Census Bureau's Housing and Household Economics Division (Census) who use our data for supplemental poverty measures.

In general, the users were happy that the quality would be better with the new design; however, there were some specific concerns raised by each agency about how the design would affect its work. The IRS was concerned with the level of detail that would be collected because it needs the detailed level of expenditures that is now provided in order to assign the appropriate sales tax. Census was concerned that the survey would no longer capture assets, durables, and gifts data which are used for consumption measures. Census was also interested in how reimbursement for health expenditures would be handled as well as the new subsidies for health insurance as a result of the Affordable Care Act.

The general consensus was that new design could work, but each agency would need as much time as possible to prepare for the change. For example, as soon as the level of detail becomes available, IRS would want to work with that information. HHS wanted a crosswalk between the current design and new design, concerned about the continuity of the time series and how the years could be linked. It was recommended that we provide sample programs for the transition and detailed instruction at the users' workshop.

FEDERAL DATA USERS MEETING PART 2

The second federal data users meeting was held to accommodate federal data users that had missed the previous meeting and other users that had provided input early on in the redesign process. Attendees included representatives from the Federal Reserve Board, the Bureau of Economic Analysis' National Income and Wealth Division, the Census Bureau's Manufacturing and Construction Division, the Department of the Treasury's Office of Tax Analysis, and the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation. The new design was well received with very few concerns. BEA noted that it currently uses four consecutive quarters of data from each CU, despite the limitations and biases this causes. For its purposes, it needs to continue to have four quarters of consecutive data or the ability to simulate four quarters of consecutive data. Given the new design would not have the panel component that it needs, it requested that BLS provided guidance on how to create a synthetic panel.

CENSUS SPONSORS MEETING

The Census Survey Sponsors' Meeting was held at the Bureau of the Census on January 28, 2014. Approximately 100 Federal Agency staff attended, drawing from the Bureau of the Census and other Federal statistical agencies which sponsor Census-conducted surveys. A presentation, entitled "The Consumer Expenditure Survey Gemini Redesign and Road Ahead," included background of the redesign, an overview of the redesign itself, a comparison of design features, and comments on next steps for the road ahead. While there was limited opportunity for interchange during the meeting, several high-level Bureau of the Census staff approached CE staff following the meeting to express generally positive comments about CE's redesign progress and plans.

DATA USERS' IMPACT SURVEY

As an additional way to solicit feedback from users on the impact of the new CE survey design proposal on their use of the data, the team agreed to design and field a web-based users' survey. The team began work on the survey in September 2013. It was agreed that the survey should consist of a combination of open-ended and multinomial questions. More detailed questions would also be required to measure factors, such as the respondent reaction to individual diaries. An initial set of questions was drafted and revised.

The focus was refined to ascertain whether the redesign would allow users to do the type of research they generally perform, rather than their current specific research, given the time interval before implementation. To facilitate obtaining respondents' reactions to the new design vis-a-vis the current design, a Venn diagram comparing features of the two designs was added as a reference point for specific questions. A question was added to find out what kind of CE data products the respondent used. The universe of the survey consisted of members of the Gemini email blast list, the Users Needs Conference attendees, and the members of the CEX update email list. The former two groups would get direct invitations to complete the survey; the latter group would be informed that the survey was on the Gemini web page in the form of a new update.

The team received and incorporated feedback from the Office of Survey Methods Research (OSMR) on the survey questions. With the guidance of BLS' Division of Management Services (DMS), the team prepared the required material necessary for obtaining Office of Management and Budget (OMB) clearance to administer the survey. The user's impact survey fell under the umbrella of a "customer satisfaction survey." OMB's approval of the package was received in January 2014.

The survey was programmed and the direct invitations were delivered through Survey Monkey, which included a cover letter explaining the purpose of the survey as well as the required text from OMB explaining the

voluntary nature of the survey. The survey was released on February 6, 2014 and was available to users until February 24, at which point it was taken down and the results were analyzed.

During the time that the survey was open, 22 respondents accessed and answered at least one question. The respondents were evenly split three ways among Publication-tables users (7), Microdata users (7), and Other¹ (8).²

The sample size is admittedly small, but there are a few things of note within the data. Of the five options for most appealing design feature, answers varied across users, but microdata users were much less interested in the Shorter Interviews than were table users and other respondents. None of the “Other” respondents were interested in the 12-month interval between waves, but table and microdata users found this feature favorable. Incentives were the least frequently identified category as the most appealing feature of the redesigned survey.

Table and Microdata users both indicated the new features would support their current research. Those that indicated they were unsure if it would support their current research identified the level of expenditure detail as the cause for concern. Respondents for which the question was applicable were split between whether the new design would allow them to perform new analyses. Table users were split between the affirmative and unsure. Half of the microdata users indicated that the new design would support new analysis that could not previously be done including analysis of a twelve month change and having results from a single sample design in place of a two sample design. The remaining microdata users indicated no new analysis that could be done under the new design.

As far as limitations that may stem from the new design, none of the publication table-users expected the new design to limit their current research. Microdata users, however, were quite the opposite. Five of the seven microdata users outwardly expect this new design to pose limitations on their current research. Their concerns included lack of quarterly data/multiple points in time measuring spending of a CU and less expenditure detail. Most of the respondents (regardless of which type of user they are) did not indicate that their analysis would be limited by the Interview collecting Diary items at a broad level.

As expected from earlier conversations during the design phase with users, the switch from 12 consecutive months of data to two points in time 12 months apart was polarizing among respondents. Table users were not concerned with the lack of 12 consecutive months of data, while 1 microdata user felt the same. Five microdata users admitted the 12-consecutive months of data was important to their current analysis, and another wasn't sure. Of the two other-user respondents who felt the question was applicable both answered yes, the 12-consecutive months of data was important. However, while the majority of microdata and other users admitted this importance, only a couple thought the change to two data points 12 months apart would pose a problem.

Regarding the information needed by users to transition to the new design, most users did not identify any additional supporting resources they would need outside of what was listed: data dictionaries, listings of available expenditure, demographic, and socioeconomic variables, sample programs to produce statistical measures, and prerelease workshops/webinars. The only additional recommendation was to provide a test dataset with at least a handful of records. Users of all backgrounds generally agreed that one to two months in advance was enough time to receive various materials to aid them in the transition to the new survey.

The number of respondents was very small which clearly limits any analysis that may be done. However, within this small sample we see trends amongst the different types of data users. Publication-tables Users and Microdata Users have varying if not opposite concerns with the features of the new design, however, very few, if any, respondents found these concerns to be too problematic to overcome. An additional goal in the survey was to conduct outreach to users and give them the opportunity to provide feedback. One positive piece of feedback

¹ “Other” includes all respondents who answered “Other outputs that rely on CE data (reports, internal analysis),” “None,” or “Don’t know” to the request: “Please indicate what type of CE data products you use most frequently.”

² This report mostly discusses the Publication-table users and Microdata users, as most of the other users didn't answer most of the questions, or found them not applicable to their research.

received was: “I appreciate the way the redesign process has been conducted, and believe the new CE will keep being a valuable tool for research.”³

OVERALL EVALUATION OF THE REDESIGN

All input from data users came from the outreach events and the web-based Data Users’ Impact Survey as no responses were received through the Gemini Redesign webpage or the Federal Register notice. The general tenor of users was positive toward the redesign. That improved data quality was a goal of the redesign was a point in its favor.

Two features of the redesign proposal drew most of the critical comments. The first was the elimination of four quarterly panels of data. While some users found appealing the new design’s capability for conducting year-over-year analyses at the micro level, the replacement of the quarterly panels was more often cited as a limitation for using the data. The lack of continuous panel data was also cited as a potential problem for accurately recording expenditures where reimbursements occur.

For the most part, however, the elimination of panel data was not considered serious enough to prohibit use of the new data. Rather users asked for guidance, in terms of documentation, sample programs and other aids, to navigate the transition in going from the quarterly files to the new file structure. The suggestion was also made that CE consider the creation of synthetic panel data from the new files.

The second feature raising the most concerns was the reduction in the overall number of expenditure categories that would be available in the new data. This was a particular concern for users engaged in sales tax incidence and poverty/well-being analysis at the micro level. Another concern raised was that the new expenditure categories may become more difficult to compare to other sources used in validation studies (e.g., PCE).

Users often cited a desire for support from the CE program office in preparing for the introduction of the new data. Besides the regular forms of documentation and sample programs, hands-on sessions at the microdata users’ workshop were also suggested.

CONCLUSION

The data user’s impact team successfully reached its two primary goals of educating the public on all facets of the features and implementation plans of the new design and soliciting feedback from users. In the short period of time that the team was active, the team was able to reach out to a wide array of users in multiple venues including conferences, organized meetings, and the internet, providing details of the new design and an avenue for raising concerns. The redesign of the Gemini webpage will continue to serve as a mode of providing up-to-date information about the redesign to CE’s users and stakeholders. It will also continue to accept any feedback and questions from the public. Feedback on the transition to the new design will be passed on to the Branch of Information and Analysis as they prepare documentation, users guides, and workshop materials as the redesign date approaches.

³ If you are interested in more detail on Data Users Impact Survey results, please contact GeminiOutreach@bls.gov

APPENDIX 1. DATA USERS IMPACT SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

Data Users Impact Survey on Redesign of Consumer Expenditure Survey

Thank you for participating in this survey. An integral part of the process of redesigning the Consumer Expenditure Survey (CE) is obtaining feedback from data users and other interested parties on the methodology of the new survey design and the utility of the data products it would produce. As such, your views are important to consider as the redesign process unfolds.

Responses to this survey will be compiled in a report for the Gemini Project management team, highlighting both the concerns and advantages respondents express in examining the new design. These may lead to recommendations to revise the design accordingly.

Your participation in this survey is voluntary. We estimate that it will take you 15 minutes to complete this survey. We are collecting this information under OMB Number 1225-0059. Without this currently approved number, we could not conduct this survey. (Expiration: March 31, 2014).

Please complete the survey by February 20, 2014.

This survey is being administered by SurveyMonkey.com and resides on a server outside of the BLS domain. Since the BLS cannot guarantee the protection of survey responses, we advise against including any sensitive or personal information.

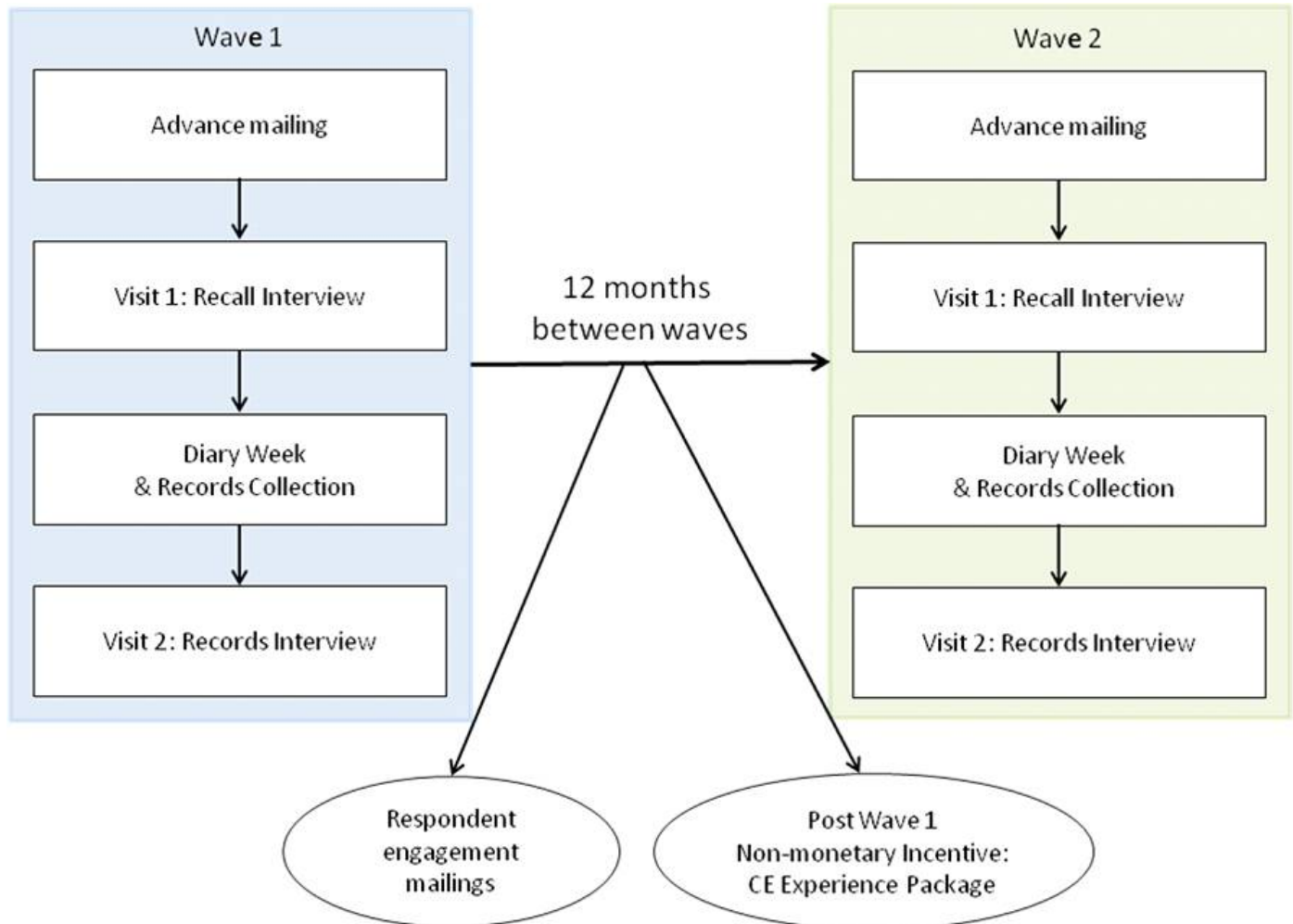
Thank you for your time and help.

This survey is being administered by surveymonkey.com and resides on a server outside of the BLS domain. BLS cannot guarantee the protection of survey responses and advises against the inclusion of sensitive personal information in any response.

Data Users Impact Survey on Redesign of Consumer Expenditure Survey

REDESIGN OVERVIEW

The new Consumer Expenditure Survey (CE) design includes two waves of data collection set 12 months apart. Prior to the start of each wave, an advance letter will be mailed with information about the survey and its importance, a token incentive of \$2, and additional information on promised incentives throughout the interview (detailed below). Each wave contains the same interview structure consisting of two personal visits and a one-week diary.



Data Users Impact Survey on Redesign of Consumer Expenditure Survey

Visit 1

- In-person recall interview
- Collects large, easily-recalled household expenditures
- Includes global questions covering expenditure categories to be collected from diary. Global questions will be at higher level (e.g., expenditures on clothing) than detailed questions (e.g., expenditures on pants).
- Includes Instructions to collect relevant expenditure records for Visit 2
- Trains respondents on using the electronic web-based diary.
- Upon completion, the respondent receives a \$20 incentive.

Diary Week

- Each household member aged 15+ maintains an individual diary
- Individual diary is web-based (accessible via PC, smartphone, or other mobile device)
- Paper option available based on respondents' preference
- Upon completion, each eligible member completing an individual diary receives a \$20 incentive.

Visit 2

- In-person records interview
- Collects expenditures that can reasonably be found in records such as receipts, utility bills, and bank statements.
- Upon completion, respondents that use records receive a \$30 incentive, respondents that don't use records receive a \$20 incentive.

Each of the components of the new design has been developed to address factors identified as potentially contributing to measurement error in the current CE survey:

- Web and mobile-based diary surveys will encourage real-time data capture reducing underreporting by respondents.
- Individual diaries should also reduce underreporting due to proxy reporting.
- Shortened interview length should reduce burden, which is linked to data quality.
- Emphasis on record use should lead to more accuracy in the reporting of expenditures.
- Incentives should address respondent motivation, leading to higher quality of data reported.

Redesigning the CE survey is a long term project. The data from this redesign will become available after development and testing, which are expected to take approximately ten years to complete. The full proposal can be found here: [Redesign Proposal Report](#).

Data Users Impact Survey on Redesign of Consumer Expenditure Survey

1. Please indicate what type of CE data products you use most frequently:

- Public-use microdata
- Publication tables
- Other outputs that rely on CE data (reports, internal analysis)
- None
- Don't know

2. In particular, what design features are most appealing to you? (mark all that apply)

- 12-month interval between waves to facilitate analysis of year over year change
- Incentives to increase participation and engagement
- Shorter interviews to lower burden and increase accuracy
- Use of technology for diary keeping (web, smartphones)
- Individual diaries to increase accuracy

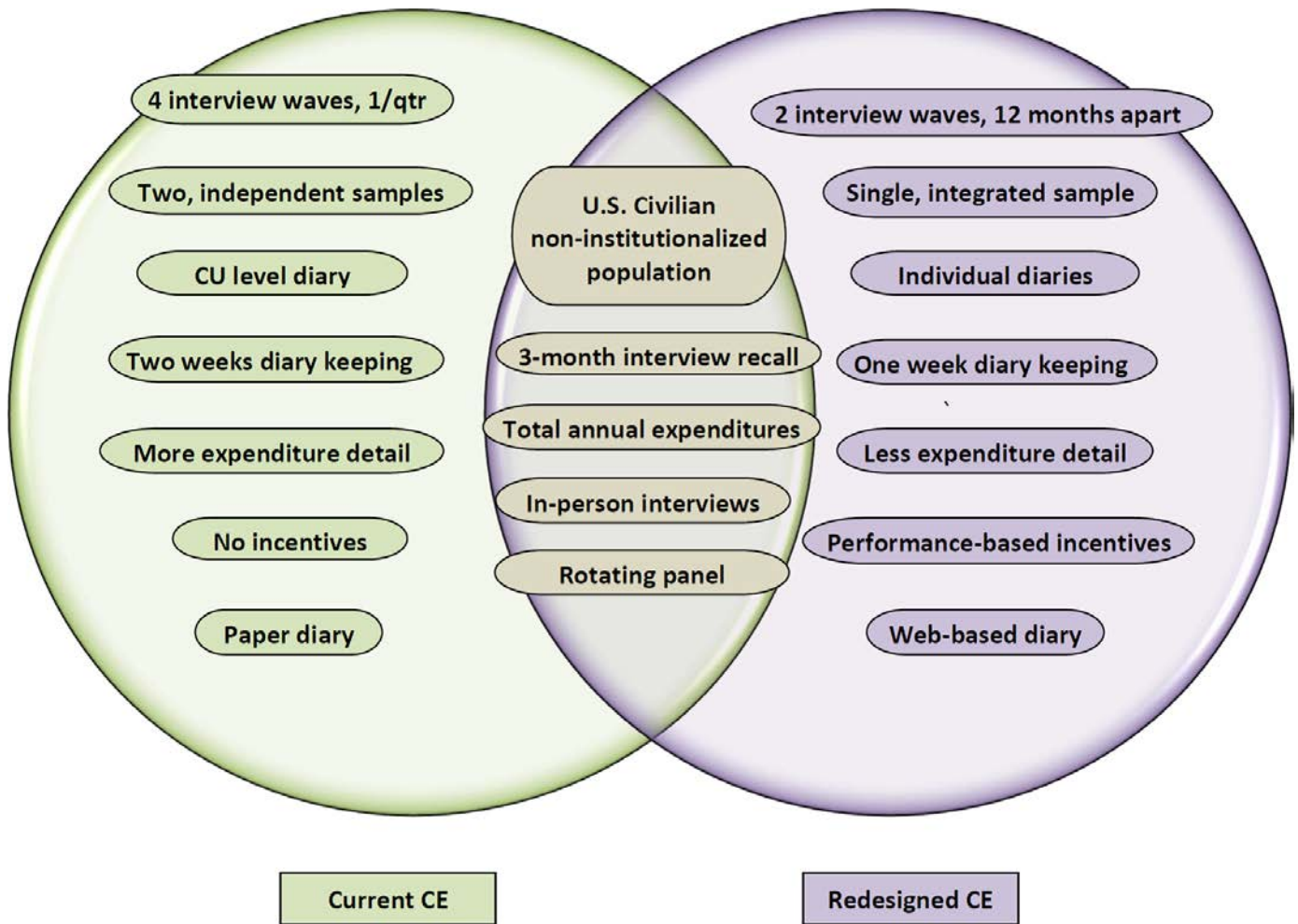
Other (please specify)

Data Users Impact Survey on Redesign of Consumer Expenditure Survey

The following set of questions ask about the impact of the redesign on the types of analyses you generally perform.

Below is a comparison of the current design features to the redesign features for your reference:

Comparison of current design features to new design features:



Data Users Impact Survey on Redesign of Consumer Expenditure Survey

3. Does the new CE design retain or include new features that support the type of analyses you generally perform using CE data?

- Yes
- No
- Not applicable
- Don't know

Please elaborate

4. Does the new design include features that would allow you to perform desired analyses that are not possible with the current design?

- Yes
- No
- Not applicable
- Don't know

Please elaborate

5. Does the new CE design as shown in the figure above include changes that will limit your use of the data, as compared to the current design?

- Yes
- No
- Not applicable
- Don't know

If yes, what design features will limit the type of analyses you generally perform using CE data?

Data Users Impact Survey on Redesign of Consumer Expenditure Survey

The following set of questions ask about the impact of specific design changes. These design changes may pose limitations for some types of analyses.

6. To provide data for expenditures reported in the Diary (e.g., food and clothing) for the past three months, broad questions about these items are included in the Interview. In this way, data for items currently reported on in detail in the Diary are included in the Interview microdata files, though in less detail. Will this change limit the type of analyses you generally perform using CE data?

- Yes
- No
- Not applicable
- Don't know

Please elaborate

7. The new design collects data from 2 waves conducted 12 months apart, which will enable data users to assess year over year change. However, this means that data users will no longer have 12 consecutive months of expenditure data (assuming no attrition) through a quarterly panel design. Is the availability of 12 consecutive months of data from each CU important for your analysis needs?

- Yes
- No
- Not applicable
- Don't know

Please elaborate

Data Users Impact Survey on Redesign of Consumer Expenditure Survey

The new design will not provide data to satisfy the same level of detail in expenditure categories as the current design. It will instead provide data at a level that satisfies the requirements of the CE, CPI, and Price and Index Number Research Divisions at BLS. For a full description of the proposed expenditure categories in the new design, see [Appendix A of the OPLC Requirements document](#). As an example:

Current Design	New Design
Apples Bananas Oranges Citrus Fruits Excl. Oranges Other Fresh Fruits	Fresh fruits
Laundry And Cleaning Equip. Soaps And Detergents Other Laundry /Cleaning Prods. Paper Towels/Napkins/Toilet Tissue Misc Household Products	Housekeeping supplies

8. Will this change adversely affect the type of research you generally perform using CE data?

- Yes
- No
- Not applicable
- Don't know

Please elaborate

Data Users Impact Survey on Redesign of Consumer Expenditure Survey

9. Prior to the release of data from the new design, supporting materials, such as data dictionaries, microdata users' documentation, listings of available expenditure, demographic, and socioeconomic variables, sample programs to produce statistical measures, and pre-release workshops/webinars, will be available.

If you use the data, what other information would you need in preparation for the new data?

10. If you use the data, how much lead time do you think you will need to receive this information, prior to the release of data from the new design?

- Less than one week
- More than one week but less than one month
- One to two months
- Three to six months
- More than six months

Other (please specify)

11. Do you have any additional comments on any aspect of the redesign not covered by previous questions?

Thank you for taking time to complete this survey on the new CE design. If you have any questions or additional comments, please send an email to GeminiOutreach or call Bill Passero at 202-691-5126.

APPENDIX 2. FEDERAL REGISTER NOTICE

DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

Bureau of Labor Statistics

Comment Request

AGENCY: Bureau of Labor Statistics

ACTION: Notice of solicitation of comments.

Summary: In 2009, the Consumer Expenditure Surveys Division started the Gemini Project for the purpose of researching, developing, and implementing an improved survey design for the Consumer Expenditure Survey (CE). The objective of the redesign is to improve the quality of the survey estimates through a verifiable reduction in measurement error, with a particular focus on underreporting. While reducing measurement error, the new survey design would also combat the decline in response rates seen in recent years. In June 2013, a comprehensive redesign proposal was completed. As development, testing, and evaluation of the new CE survey proceeds, BLS would like feedback on the new survey design and the data that would be available from the survey from current data users and other interested parties.

DATES: Written comments must be submitted to the office listed in the **ADDRESSES** section of this notice on or before [INSERT 60 DAYS FROM DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER].

ADDRESSES: Send comments to Bill Passero, Division of Consumer Expenditure Surveys, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Room 3985, 2 Massachusetts Avenue, NE, Washington, DC 20212 or by email to: GeminiOutreach@bls.gov.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Bill Passero, Division of Consumer Expenditure Surveys, Bureau of Labor Statistics, telephone number 202–691–5126 (this is not a toll-free number), or by email to: GeminiOutreach@bls.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Background

The proposed CE redesign includes two waves of data collection set 12 months apart. Each wave contains the same interview structure consisting of two visits and a 1-week diary. Visit 1 is an in-person interview made up of two parts. The first part identifies the roster of the household, while the second is a recall interview that collects large, easily-recalled household expenditures. Additionally, Visit 1 incorporates instructions to collect relevant expenditure records for the Visit 2 records-based interview, as well as training for and placement of the electronic, individual diaries. Following Visit 1, an electronic web-based diary (accessible via PC, smartphone, or other mobile device) is maintained for one week by each household member 15 years old and older. Visit 2 is an in-person, records-based interview on household expenditures that can reasonably be found in records such as receipts, utility bills, and bank statements.

Incentives are provided to respondents to encourage participation in the CE. The proposed incentive structure for the new design includes a \$2 prepaid cash incentive per household sent with an advance letter, a \$20 household incentive (debit card) provided after Visit 1, a \$20 individual incentive (debit card) for each member who completes the diary, and a \$20 or \$30 household incentive (debit card) after Visit 2. Pending further research and discussion, the Visit 1 \$20 household incentive may be provided with the advance letter and activated upon completion of the Visit 1 interview.

With this redesign, the CE aims to create a survey that uses technology to encourage real-time data capture, individual diaries to reduce proxy reporting, shortened interview length to reduce respondent burden, record use to improve data quality, and incentives to address respondent motivation.

II. Further information

For further information about the proposed new CE design, please visit <http://www.bls.gov/cex/geminiproject.htm>. This Web page provides information on the history of the Gemini project, including vision and scope, an overview of the redesign, and links to presentations and papers related to the redesign.

III. Desired focus of comments

Comments and recommendations are requested from the public on the proposed CE redesign. The proposed new design described here may change based on input from the public.

The BLS welcomes comments on any aspect of the CE redesign but is especially interested in comments on:

- Enhancements or limitations the proposed new design will have on the use of the data.
- Features of the new design that are particularly appealing or problematic.
- Information and lead time that would be needed prior to the implementation of the new design to aid users in adapting to the new design.

Signed at Washington, DC, this 28th day of January 2014.

Kimberley Hill

Chief, Division of Management Systems, Bureau of Labor Statistics.

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