

BLS Response to CNSTAT Recommendations: The Road Ahead

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Presentation Goals

1. Gemini Project Overview
2. BLS Response to CNSTAT Recommendations
3. The Road Ahead

GEMINI OVERVIEW

Redesign Objectives

- Why redesign:
 - ▶ Evidence of measurement error
 - ▶ Changes in technology and spending behaviors
 - ▶ Need for greater flexibility
- Stated objective:
 - ▶ Verifiable reduction in measurement error, with a particular focus on underreporting

Redesign Process

- Stage 1: Gather
 - ▶ Identify user needs
 - ▶ Gather external input
 - ▶ Define data quality
- Stage 2: Decide
 - ▶ Data requirements, design decisions
 - ▶ Develop research roadmap
- Stage 3: Implement
 - ▶ Test
 - ▶ Implement
 - ▶ Evaluate

Redesign Constraints

- Final survey has to meet Office of Prices and Living Conditions (OPLC) requirements
 - ▶ Provide required data for CPI
 - ▶ Address other user needs as possible
- No increase in survey data collection and processing costs
- Maintain or improve response rates

Redesign Challenges

- Defining survey requirements
 - ▶ Identifying varied user needs
 - ▶ Balancing requirements with respondent task
- Maintaining ongoing research efforts while making redesign decisions
- Keeping up with technology
- Funding uncertainties

BLS RESPONSE TO CNSTAT RECOMMENDATIONS

Key Inputs

- Recognizing there was much we needed to decide but not unlimited time or money for empirical evidence, CE looked to several sources for inputs
- Expert panels
- External events
 - ▶ Outreach for redesign
 - ▶ Data users forum
 - ▶ Collecting information and advice
- Ongoing research on key topics
- CNSTAT

CNSTAT Panel

- CNSTAT Consensus Panel contracted to conduct workshops, evaluate CE and come up with design recommendations
- Tasked with:
 - ▶ Synthesizing information
 - ▶ Creating a menu of comprehensive design options with flexibility to allow for variations in budget and resources
 - ▶ Recommend future research
 - ▶ Evaluate the benefits, costs, and risks

CNSTAT Report

- Concurrence on main issues facing CE, validation of past work and future plans
- Three design proposals
- Cost estimates
- Twelve recommendations, specific ideas that will be useful throughout the redesign, including
 - ▶ Prioritize CE data uses for redesign trade-offs
 - ▶ Pursue a long-term research agenda and research sample
 - ▶ Engage outside experts in app development
- Support for additional resources

Concurrence with Panel's Recommendations

- 6-01 Prioritize CE Data Uses for Redesign Trade-offs
- 6-02 Implement a Major Redesign (\$)
- 6-03 Fund Several Major Feasibility Studies (\$)
- 6-04 Sync Reference Periods for Exp & Non-Exp Items
- 6-05 Use Tablet for Self-Administration (w/Paper) (\$)
- 6-06 Develop a Redesign Roadmap within 6 Months
- 6-07 Use Incentives (\$)
- 6-08 Pursue a Long-Term Research Agenda
- 6-09 Increase Size & Capability of Research Staff (\$)
- 6-10 Engage Outside Experts in App Dev (\$)
- 6-11 Target Research on CNSTAT Recommended Topics
- 6-12 Fund a Methods Panel (or Research Sample) (\$)

Promising Design Features

- One sample design
- Flexible recall periods & interview structure
- Increased use of technology, e.g., tablets
- Use of tech to encourage ‘in the moment’ reporting
- Increased reliance on self-administration
- Increased use of records
- Reduce proxy reporting
- Mixed mode data collection
- Large incentives
- Modular design, with a core survey

THE ROAD AHEAD

Gemini Design Team

- Interagency team
- Review and synthesize existing research
- Evaluating multiple inputs
 - ▶ CNSTAT report
 - ▶ Westat redesign proposals
 - ▶ Staff input
- Final output is single redesign recommendation
- Team has begun making preliminary decisions
 - ▶ High level decisions to be completed in January

Decision Process

- Making decisions
 - ▶ Requires facilitation and organization, e.g., identifying what we can decide based on what we know now, versus what we need more information about
- Arriving at consensus and staying there
 - ▶ Documenting the *what* and *why* crucial
- Deciding on data priorities has been critical
 - ▶ 1st version of CE priorities released in May, 2011
 - ▶ 2nd version forthcoming
 - ▶ Cannot do everything for everyone

Guiding Principles

- Keep it simple
- Make it work for all types of respondents
- Reduce measurement error
- Keep costs neutral & do not harm response rates
- Increase flexibility
 - ▶ Content
 - ▶ Mixed-mode
 - ▶ Technology
- Seek “proactive” data keeping
- Allow for “future enhancements”

Select Consensus Design Decisions

- No:
 - ▶ Administrative data to replace survey data
 - ▶ Event history calendar
 - ▶ Large-scale matrix sampling (in the initial iteration)
- Yes:
 - ▶ Census Bureau as data collection provider
 - ▶ Multi-mode surveying
 - ▶ Individual surveying
- Upcoming issues TBD:
 - ▶ Technology
 - ▶ Proactive vs. retrospective recall

Design Team Timeline

- Jul 2012 – Kick-off
 - Oct 2012 – Data collection recommendations, by quex group
 - Nov 2012 – Redesign proposal outline (i.e., table shell)
 - Nov 2012 – Summarize independent design proposals
 - Dec 2012 – Census, BLS staff redesign ideas
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- Jan 2013 – High level decisions re: survey redesign elements
 - Feb 2013 – Present update at CE Annual Meeting
 - Feb 2013 – Detailed view of proposed redesign elements
 - Mar 2013 – Draft redesign proposal report
 - Jun 2013 – Final redesign proposal report

Redesign Timeline

Year	Major Tasks
2009-2010	Research database Define user needs Define data quality
2010 – 2012	Information gathering - Events, outreach, CNSTAT Panel
2013	Deliver redesign proposal Develop research roadmap Assess user impact
2014 - 2018	Feasibility testing (FY13-15) Pilot testing (FY16-17)
2019 – 2023	Development, training, implementation Evaluation

Concluding Thoughts

- A major survey redesign is time consuming, expensive, and stressful, but also very exciting
- Clear objectives, careful planning, and constant communication can really help the process
- CNSTAT's report and recommendations are a key part of the redesign development process and have added much value
- CE has come a long way, and still has a long way to go, but we're optimistic about concluding with a much improved survey design

Questions for FESAC

- Feedback on CE's redesign progress and plans?
- Advice or suggestions for prioritizing and addressing multiple design decisions (e.g. incentives, mode, content) within the same research series?
- If only able to do one major field test of the final design, how to make decisions based on smaller scale tests?

THANK YOU