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RESPONDENTS CHOOSE

Participation in the Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics is getting easier. This is due to a major operational change in the income interview, starting now in Wave 2.

Just prior to interview time, respondents are receiving, as usual, a newsletter on the importance of the survey and their participation. But this time we are asking each adult in the household to make a choice. In fact, Statistics Canada is requesting respondents' permission to access their tax records for income information in SLID.

As the regional director's cover-page letter sent to all respondents explains: *"Much of the information we need is found on your income tax return. Last year, we asked if you would prefer us to use your tax records from a Revenue Canada computer file instead of asking income questions in an interview. More than half of you said "Yes." As a result, we are offering you a choice. With your permission, we could use your tax records from Revenue Canada. This new option would reduce costs and save you time and effort. Otherwise, you can decide to give your income information over the phone. The newsletter gives you more details to help you choose an option."*

As a result, many people will no longer complete income interviews,

Editor's Note

A very important goal for the SLID team has been achieved, and we hope that you also regard it as an important achievement. The first SLID data have been released, the data collected in the 1993 preliminary interview, in the form of a catalogued publication. If you have not already purchased your copy, an order form is provided in this issue of *Dynamics*. The publication generated a significant amount of media attention, an indication of its relevance. I would welcome any comments you have, on any aspect of the publication. We intend to release a publication of

this type annually, so all comments and suggestions will be carefully considered.

With this issue of *Dynamics*, we've enclosed a short, up-to-date description of the survey. This may be the closest we'll come to putting it all in a nutshell. I hope it's useful.

Philip Giles

Non-farm self-employment net income

Interest

Dividends

Taxable Capital Gains

Other investment income

Child Tax Benefit

Old Age Security pension, Guaranteed Income Supplement,
Spouse's Allowance

Canada or Quebec Pension Plan benefits

Unemployment Insurance benefits

Social Assistance and Provincial Income Supplements

Workers' Compensation benefits

Goods and Services Tax Credit

Provincial Tax Credits

Veterans' Pensions and Civilian War Pensions and
Allowances

Other income from government sources

Retirement Pensions, superannuation and annuities

RRSP annuities received and RRIF withdrawals

RRSP withdrawals

Alimony, separation allowance, child support

Money (from persons outside this household)

Other money income

- a) **Wages and Salaries** now include fringe benefits, as on the tax return, while tips and commissions are reported separately under Other money income.
- b) **Interest** includes dividends from life insurance policies and interest and dividends from outside Canada. Previously, the first source was under Other investment income and the second was under Dividends.
- c) **Dividends (taxable amount)** replaces Dividends (total amount received, not taxable amount).
- d) **Taxable Capital Gains** have replaced Net capital gains.
- e) **Other investment income** no longer includes interest from loans and mortgages or regular income from an estate or trust fund (both moved to Other money income) or dividends from life insurance policies (moved to Interest).
- f) **Other money income** now includes some income sources that were removed from other headings, as stated above.

Listed categories under “Specify”

A simple but important change has been made to the computerized questionnaire to assist interviewers and reduce processing. Previously, when respondents indicated “Other sources of government income” or “Other money income”, interviewers had to completely type in the responses. Now, when they ask respondents to specify these sources, a list of other sources will appear. Some of the categories were reported by a large number of people, so the reduction of interview time and manual processing will be substantial. The presence of these income categories on the screen will also make it easier for interviewers to know where to enter them. This is useful given the changes in income items described above.

Total Income

Interviewers will not always ask respondents to estimate their total income at the end of the interview. The amount will be calculated by the computer and displayed for the interviewer’s use, for example to help in spotting typing errors. However, if any or all amounts have been omitted, which may happen when reporting for another household member, the interviewer can still ask the respondent to confirm the total given by the computer or give an estimate of total income.

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SLID ON THE INTERNET

Statistics Canada has been an active member of the Internet community since February 1994. The TALON Internet service is named after Jean Talon (1625-1672), Canada’s first official statistician. The information on TALON is provided free as a public good. Among the more popular offerings are *The Daily* which provides data and analysis on major data releases every working day, the Statistics Canada *Catalogue of Products and Services*, and now, SLID research papers.

Currently only the 1992 research papers are available. Soon the 1993 documents and *Dynamics* newsletters will be added.

TALON currently provides five services. The service with the SLID research papers is GOPHER: an Internet tool that allows users to browse through an easy-to-navigate, text-based, hierarchical menu system. To link to the gopher server, type: **gopher talon.statcan.ca 70**. You will need a gopher client (ask your system administrator or service provider).

Another TALON service in which you may be interested is the order service. Type **order@statcan.ca**. You can easily order data products or request additional information about these products. The following SLID products can be ordered through this service:

- Product number 75-201XPE: This is an annual English catalogued publication, *Dynamics of Labour and Income*. The (first) 1994 report is now available.
- Product number 75-002XPB: This is the free *Dynamics* newsletter (bilingual), for new subscribers.
- Product number 75F0002MPE: These are the print versions of the SLID research papers in English.
- Product number 75F0002MDE: These are the WordPerfect diskette versions of the SLID research papers in English.
- Product number 75F0011XPE: This is a short survey overview (bilingual).

All products available in English are also available in French. The product number is the same for the French equivalents with the exception of the last character (E for English versions and F for French versions).

If you have specific questions relating to the Statistics Canada TALON service, please contact Michael Thoen at thoemic@statcan.ca, or by telephone at (613) 951-1208.

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PROCESSING OF FIRST WAVE

The processing of the first wave of SLID data has been underway for several months now -- a major undertaking since the design of the system is taking into account what the dataset will look like once all six years have been collected. This design phase, which is now complete, was a major task but it will pay off in the long run as the database will be designed to facilitate longitudinal analysis. For example, spells and transitions will be easier to handle.

Once processing has been completed, a microdata file will be available on CD-ROM, including the first wave of labour and income data and the results from the preliminary interview. Among the interesting features on this file will be the capacity to look at detailed income sources in the light of labour market activities, and data on family dynamics -- changes in family composition that occurred during 1993, along with reasons for changes. The next issue of *Dynamics* will contain more information on processing and the CD-ROM microdata file.

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DISCUSSION ON SLID DATA

Interested in research using SLID data? On June 1 1995 from 16:00 to 19:00, the Institute for Research on Public Policy (IRPP) is organizing an informal meeting of researchers interested in carrying out such work. The meeting will be held in Montreal to coincide with the Learned Societies Conference, just before the meeting of the Canadian

Economics Association (CEA). At this session, you will be able to interact with other researchers and with Statistics Canada staff. To participate or for more information, please contact François Vaillancourt, Senior Fellow IRPP, 1470 rue Peel, Suite 200, Montreal, Quebec, H3A 1T1. (Fax: (514) 985-2559)

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RESEARCH PAPERS

The following are recently released Research Papers which can be ordered individually (\$5) or by annual subscription (\$15 on diskette or \$50 for paper versions). For more information, contact Anne Palmer by phone at (613) 951-2903, by fax at (613) 951-3253, or by mail at 11-D8 Jean Talon Building, Tunney's Pasture, Ottawa, K1A 0T6. Internet users: GILES@STATCAN.CA.

95-03 *SLID Labour Interview Questionnaire - January 1995*

Alison Hale, Debbie Lutz, Matthew Edgar

95-04 *SLID Questionnaire for Demographics and Contact: 1995*

Alison Hale, Debbie Lutz, François Simard

95-05 *1995 Preliminary Interview Questionnaire*

Alison Hale, Debbie Lutz, Matthew Edgar

Three similar research papers are highlighted. The data are collected for SLID using computer-assisted interviewing (CAI). A major implication of using this technology is that no questionnaire on paper is needed for data collection. Traditionally, a copy of the questionnaire has been used as an information tool on survey content and outputs. These research papers provide a print version of the CAI questionnaire for three of the four SLID questionnaires used in 1995. (The "questionnaire" for collecting income data will be the focus of a future 1995 research paper.) These 1995 "questionnaires" are updates of their 1994 equivalents (research papers 94-05, 94-09 and 94-10, respectively), and contain a description of changes incorporated between 1994 and 1995.