Catalogue No. 93-12

SUMMARY OF OBSERVATIONS: HEAD OFFICE OBSERVERS AND INTERVIEWERS

May 1993 Test

July 1993

Dahna Deslauriers, Survey Operations Division

Mary Allen, Household Surveys Division

The SLID Research Paper Series is intended to document detailed studies and important decisions for the Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics. These research papers are available in English and French, at no charge. To obtain a summary description of available documents or to obtain a copy of any, please contact Philip Giles, Manager, SLID Research Paper Series, by mail at 11-D8 Jean Talon Building, Statistics Canada, Ottawa, Ontario, CANADA K1A 0T6, by INTERNET (GILES@STATCAN.CA), by telephone (613) 951-2891, or by fax (613) 951-3253.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In May 1993, a field test of the Income and Wealth content proposed for the Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics was conducted. This report is a composite of several documents; the report comprises two parts:

- Part A contains general observations of the test, as reported by members of the SLID head office project team who observed the interviewer training and data collection;
- Part B contains a summary of responses by a subset of interviewers in the test who were asked to complete a debriefing questionnaire after completing the test.

An in-depth knowledge of the survey is required to a good understanding of this document.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS (continued)

INTRODUCTION

Between April 30 and May 14 1993, the Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics (SLID) conducted a field test of the income and wealth interview and the generalized Case Management system using computer-assisted interviewing (CAI). The test was conducted from the Toronto and St. John's Regional Offices with a sample of 916 households in Toronto and 476 households in St. John's. These households had rotated out of the Labour Force Survey in May 1992, and had formed the sample for the previous SLID field test in January 1993. The same interviewers were used in both SLID field tests.

Head Office staff conducted a two day training course during the last week of April. Two classes were held consecutively in Toronto, and one in St. John's with about 10 trainees in each class. On April 30 some interviewing was carried out from each Regional Office. The test used AST PowerExec notebook computers and ZYXEL U-1496E modems.

This was the second field test of the generic Case Management (CM) system and it was integrated with a rather complex survey application (the SLID application for the May test was quite different from that in January, in terms of data collection approach, and by extension, the collection software needed). As a longitudinal survey, SLID has special requirements such as functions to trace households that had moved, and has a large variety of question types and special features. Case Management was programmed in Clipper, and the SLID questionnaire used mainly FoxPro and a very small portion in CHRR (software from Ohio State University).

The May interview asked questions about sources of income, assets, and debts. A questionnaire, called the "SLID Notebook", was sent out beforehand to respondents to help them prepare for the interview. With computer assisted interviewing (CAI), the data were collected differently depending on whether this notebook had been filled out. If it was, the respondent simply read off the responses and the interviewer entered them. If the notebook had not been completed, the interviewer asked a series of questions to get the information. If the respondent had an income tax form available, the interviewer was able to refer to tax line numbers for the amount requested. At the end of the interview, a series of debriefing questions was also asked. The questions asked in the test and collection procedures used are detailed in SLID Research Paper 93-04 **SLID Income Interview - May 1993: Questionnaire and Data Collection Procedures**.

This report is a composite of several documents; the report comprises two, somewhat independent, parts:

- Part A contains general observations of the test, as reported by members of the SLID head office project team who observed the interviewer training and data collection;

- Part B contains a summary of responses by a subset of interviewers in the test who were asked to complete a debriefing questionnaire after completing the test.

PART A: HEAD OFFICE OBSERVATION

1. INTRODUCTION

This report is a consolidation of several reports based on observation of both training and interviewing for the income component (Test 3B) of the Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics (SLID) conducted in May 1993. This was the second SLID test conducted from the St. John's and Toronto Regional Offices using the generalized Case Management system and computer-assisted interviewing (CAI).

Comments from observers have not been edited.

2. GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

In the training classes, the interviewers appeared much more comfortable with using a computer and with the SLID application than in January. They seemed to be more a part of the SLID team and were making suggestions to improve procedures and wording. However, they were concerned that some of the problems they had identified in January had not been resolved.

In general, the interviewers felt that the content was sensitive, especially when they found out that wealth information was also being collected. They also felt that the term "long term survey" gave no clear indication of what the survey would really involve. Maybe some explanation should be given. There was also some confusion over content which resulted from the fact that SLID was conducted directly after the Survey of Consumer Finances (SCF) which asks similar questions, but uses different concepts.

The interviewers liked the notebook route and would often ask respondents who had not previously completed the notebook to do it. They would contact them again later. This may have increased the notebook response, but there is some concern that it may also have led to more refusals if respondents then reacted unfavourably to the notebook, or if they used the appointment to know when not to be at home. We may want to stress that interviewers should only make appointments to call back if they are sure the person will provide better data.

Interviewers made considerable use of scratch pads. A lot of notes were taken, and entered after the telephone call had been completed. This was especially true when the respondent was confused or reluctant. In certain situations, this benefited the survey in the sense that deviating from the software probably resulted in more information being collected than would have been the case if the interviewer had followed the strict order of questioning. These were cases when the interviewer simply chatted to the respondent about his/her sources of income and things that he/she owned and owed. One interviewer even asked the contact and debriefing questions "off the cuff" so she would have all she needed after hanging up the phone.

3. SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. For the first waves of any CAI survey, keep all features simple; add complexity as experience with laptops and with the survey grows.

2. Simplify and shorten wording of questions and interviewer instructions on the screen. What looks acceptable on paper does not necessarily work in a telephone interview. Similarly interviewers do not have time to read long instructions while interviewing.

3. Clarify coverage concepts to deal with movers and joiners e.g.,
   - ! What are reasonable procedures when someone moves to a collective, e.g. a monastery or a university residence (in terms of adding cohabitants)? In one case, a priest was in the SLID sample, and was interviewed in January. Between then and May, he moved to a monastery with 175 other priests. According to our current definition, all these other

priests should be treated as joiners and receive the Preliminary Long interview.

- ! What is the definition of an institutional collective, particularly nursing homes and other care facilities for the elderly? If a care facility is not an institutional collective, who do we want to include as joiners (cohabitants)?

- ! Explain to interviewers why we want to collect the preliminary interview for foster parents of a longitudinal child.

- ! Clarify the procedures for children in joint-custody arrangements.

4. Re-examine the way tracing is conducted and recorded.

5. Send respondents a thank you letter (suggestion from the interviewers).They also suggested giving even a small incentive such as a pencil saying "You count".

6. Exiting income component - need a confirmation to prevent unintended exits. Also interviewers want to be able to get back into a respondent's file to make changes which might arise from interviews with other family members.

4. TRAINING

The training went very well and the time of two days seemed appropriate to cover the content. The practice session of conducting interviews in pairs worked well in Toronto. The interviewers developed realistic and challenging scenarios. In addition, because there were four floaters, there was the opportunity to provide almost one-on-one assistance where needed, and deal with problem situations that we had not anticipated. There was a suggestion from Newfoundland, however, that the mock interviews be more directed to ensure that the interviewers see the full scope of the program with situations which might create problems.

As compared with the January survey, the interviewers relied more on the computer to guide them through the interview. It takes a lot more time for them to have a feeling of the different flows that can happen in the interview, and flow diagrams could be provided to give them some kind of idea of what is coming next. They would also like concise directions about what to do under certain specific circumstances (a how-to recipe approach).

More training could be devoted to SLID itself rather than to case management. It would be preferable for interviewers to have had another survey before SLID, especially if we are talking about a two level training. Also, more emphasis needs to be given to explaining the differences between SCF and SLID. Interviewers were well versed in SCF concepts and tended to apply these to SLID. For example, income from NCARP (fishing moratorium pay) was often placed under Other Government Income (as SCF requires) rather than under Other Income or Fishing Income according to SLID requirements. For collection purposes, it is important that SCF and SLID eventually agree on common content definitions.

There was some concern from interviewers about asking questions which probably did not apply to the respondent. They wondered if some of these questions could be skipped. For example, it may not seem necessary to ask someone over 65 if they received Family Allowance. [There were, however, 13,740 seniors who reported it on their tax forms in 1990.] Similarly, even if there are no children in the household, there may have been in the previous year. In other cases such as asking a 20 year old about Old Age Security, we may want to do a skip. However, OAS is the only clear case for this. There are, for example, young people who receive Canada Pension. It should be stressed to the interviewers that such counter-intuitive information is exactly what we do want to know. There needs to be a way to make it easier for interviewers to ask questions and include all the necessary content.

5. EQUIPMENT

5.1 AST POWEREXEC

Interviewers reacted favourably to the AST PowerExec, especially the carrying case. However, there has been some concern about the quality control of the machines that have been purchased, on the basis of their performance with Test 3B.

- 3 had keys mixed up although they were wired correctly.
- 1 had a hinge on the lid broken in Ottawa at time of setup.
- 1 in Toronto and 1 in Nfld. died during training, had to be replaced.
- 1 in Toronto had a horizontal line across the screen, somewhat irritating to the interviewer.
- the brightness and contrast buttons did not seem to work in one machine.

(In setup for the machines, how can we ensure that the arrows showing changes in brightness always display. Some machines did and others did not).

There were some problems with the battery on several machines in the Regional Office. One computer, although it was plugged in, died. It turns out the plug was not inserted properly in the back of the machine. It seems there is no indicator light to show that this unit is plugged in.

The potential quality problems imply care is needed in preparing the machines for distribution to interviewers, and ensuring the Canada-wide servicing is satisfactory. Another issue to consider is the confidentiality of data on broken machines and whether PCDACS has an impact on whether the people who are servicing the machines are able to identify a problem?

5.2 ZYXEL MODEMS

These seemed to be satisfactory except for problems with the small screws on the cables for connections. The type of cable used in January, with screws that could be tightened with fingers, was much preferable.

In spite of clear diagrams in the manual, there was some confusion on how to connect the lines and cables. A very helpful technique suggested by the Toronto Project Supervisor was to use coloured dot-to-dot stickers to mark the correct way to connect the modem.

5.3 TRANSMISSION

In Toronto, only three or four of the interviewers were successful with the automatic dialling in to collect their assignments. All the links in the chain, the personal computers, cables, modems and lines to Ottawa, had been tested in the Regional Office before the training sessions. The problems lay with minor details that had not been understood and we were able to solve most of the situations by walking them through the correct procedures on the telephone and also by using the CM modem test. Only two persons needed help right at the Regional Office.

This experience suggests that there will have to be a lot of individual help available for interviewers at the beginning of their exposure to CAI when they first transmit and pick up cases.

6. COMPUTER ENVIRONMENT

It is important that the features that are put in the program are consistent and easy to use, otherwise they will not be used, and training on them tends to confuse the interviewers and detract from other items they need to know.

There were many complexities introduced because of two main ways of completing the interview, the Notebook and the block route (including the tax form options). Features such as F1 help, and the F3 options did not work consistently in both routes. Interviewers tended to use paper instead of the F3 options. For example, they would copy out the demographic information from the household before they started the case instead of using the F3 option. The different tools that were programmed (such as the calculator, the view form, the view others) were interesting to interviewers but will not be used in practice because of the difficulty in accessing the information.

7. INCOME AND WEALTH INTERVIEW

There are two areas which had a general influence on Income Data. First, interviewers preferred the notebook approach because of the flexibility to move through the form. When respondents had not completed the notebook, interviewers would try to set an appointment and get respondents to fill in the notebook, when they had not completed it. Also, SCF had just been completed. In fact, some SCF interviews were still outstanding. Because some definitions are different in SLID and SCF, there may have been some confusion for interviewers; likely they used SCF definitions.

Some of the interviews observed were of poor and elderly persons. Many of these people commented that they were not able to complete the Notebook as they did not understand it. Some stated that they were afraid of making a mistake. Some respondents, and some interviewers too, felt that they were doing something wrong since they had so many zero amounts.

The training on the different routes for completion of the income questions was thorough and well understood. However, because of some operational problems, errors may have been introduced during the collection of the data.

8. SPECIFIC PROBLEMS

NOTE: Some of these problems were mentioned by several observers. Others are from observations of individual interviews.

8.1 TRAINING

! Some interviewers requested more detail in the manuals. One thing that would be useful is to refer to the "screen id" found in the top left corner of the screen in addition to describing the screen or giving its title.

! F3 change name option- instructions missing or incomplete; Interviewers have to make the change, then ESC, ESC, then cursor down to display the change

! Page 19 Operators manual

(1) battery light always seems to be on

(2) Power mode function light is on, contrary to manual. What is this light anyway?

! Making appointments- stress that you have to press <Enter> as well as F10 to save an appointment

! Backup was not successful for all persons in the first Toronto training class - perhaps have to emphasize in training not to remove diskette before acknowledgements were complete; also explain what to expect in the acknowledgements.

! Training cases - These required more detail in order to explain various facets of the program or situations which might arise.

! Tracing case - The complex case of 3 unrelated persons moving different places seemed confusing (partly because the header showed only the name and address of the last contact, who was not the person being traced).

Perhaps a simple case of whole household moving would be an easier way to convey the basic tracing procedures.

8.2 COMPUTER ENVIRONMENT

! Some interviewers were getting flustered by the total income message, or any other message, popping up on the screen. They were surprised and did not know how to react. Hopefully they will get used to this. Maybe supplying them with a list of the item numbers where this is likely to happen would help.

! The "view others" to be able to see what other household members reported for an item was not always present and interviewers are not likely to use it.

! The "Change Name" function was never used. There were some situations where the name was wrong (it was either a spelling error or an adult female changing her surname), but the interviewer noted it on paper for the interview, and sometimes entered the change as a Permanent Note.

! When entering a telephone number, there is no edit to ensure that all entries are numeric. In a few instances where the interviewer entered a blank between the area code and number, and then between the third and fourth digit of the number. Thus 613-951-2891 was entered as 613-_95-1_28, and the last two digits are lost. One way to improve this would be to limit the number of digits permitted so that the interviewer notices that the last two cannot be entered and to disallow blanks or other non-numeric values.

! Sometimes, interviewers had difficulty activating the Yes/No box. They had to hit the keys repeatedly before it would kick in. One option would be for them to be able to hit 'Y' or 'N' key in addition to the current method of using the Arrows & Enter. The same could apply to the choices pop-up, we could show a Capital letter in each Option to indicate that they can hit that letter to make a choice. Some people like to use the cursor, some like to type, maybe they could have a choice.

! DD-MM-YY - Tried to enter only 1 digit in the day or month field, could not do it.
Also on one particular screen, the interviewer wanted to change the date but did not know which one was the day or the month DD-MM or MM-DD, it was not indicated on that screen.

! Unless it changes in the route, interviewers were not planning to use the SLIDE function in the interview, because the questionnaire is very small and they found it confusing. They will instead use the <pageup>. However, only on occasion did interviewers "back up" to correct errors. If something was missed, then we lost it.

! The "hot key" which allows interviewers to go to an item by hitting the number caused problems when interviewers forgot to press enter at an amount. As a result, there may be data entered in unintended places. This caused a great deal of frustration.

! Calculator - After the January test, interviewers thought it would be nice to have the calculator as an option. However because it can only be accessed from certain places in the questionnaire (like on the line but not in the amount), and because the calculated amount could not automatically be transferred in the amount field, interviewers did not use it.

! Total income - it was calculated, but not automatically entered in that item. It was too difficult to get the amount verified and remember what to enter, so interviewers tended to continue with the questions, knowing it could be recalculated. As a result, the income tax range edit displayed frequently because, in effect, the computer was calculating 50% of zero income.

The time between the demographics and the income questionnaires was judged to be very long by interviewers (the time between applications). Every interface is actually very long (between the case management and the contact, between the component screen and the income questionnaire, between the different members and between the last respondent and the debriefing questions).

8.3 CASE MANAGEMENT

Although SLID production will use an updated version of CM, some observations are recorded here as potential input to the CM improvements. Most areas that caused problems were in tracing, mainly because the interviewers had not understood this in January.

! Before beginning a household (either for an interview or for tracing), interviewers often used the F3 Demographics Option in the View and Select Screen.

! We need to clarify how to update the telephone number when a recording states that the number has changed? How can the new number show in the current wave in case the interviewer has to make additional callbacks? More generally, how should one respond to this situation in Contact Q2. *As clarified in training, go to trace folder and proceed from there.*

- Contact name should be available in the Telephone folder, otherwise interviewers may make a lot of unproductive calls before they send the case to trace. *Solution: Send a case to trace earlier than in LFS procedures, perhaps after 5 RNAs (Ring - No Answer) at different times and days.*

- View and Select cases screen should have displayed changes in the last contact from 1992 to the SLID January contact, i.e. update between waves.

- Appointments did not show up on the View and Select Screen until after the next household had been completed or until the machine was turned off and on. Since the interviewers were still feeling their way, this caused much consternation, even when they knew the appointment would not show up right away. It seems logical that when something is entered, the result should be immediately obvious.

- The workload report - There needs to be more explanation that as soon as a case is touched and left, it is considered suspended and "in progress". Some confusion about the meaning of the column headers.

- The interviewers frequently used the appointment function. However, they had to keep track manually of when they were. One interviewer missed an appointment since she got busy with other things. Some type of warning message or "beep" would be useful.

- Interviewers are not clear when "doors are closed", and sometimes not given a chance to keep it open. At the end of an interview, the software immediately closes the door. They would like to have a confirmation screen: Has all the information for *Respondent* been entered?

- At the senior, the PM level and the Regional Office tracing level, there should be a way to indicate who sent the case.

- We should also provide somewhere on the screen the response code from the last time.

8.4 TRACING

Source list - Proxy/ contact labels very confusing, need new terms.

Results list - Needs an explanation, especially where to use "End" and "Traced". Interviewers wanted to be able to enter more than one result for the same call, for example, "End tracing, but the contact had heard of the traced person".

"Language difficulty" should be added to the list of tracing outcomes.

Interviewers would like to see a "Review" or "Trace" window showing all the attempts made on one screen. This would help the tracers that take over someone else's trace cases. They would like to see "Tel Dir" added to the choices and would like to have an option added. When entering names, same surname as previous person would be a nice option.

Appointments - When an appointment was made by a tracer, the system always crashed and took them straight to the C-prompt. Although they knew this was going to happen, they were extremely frustrated by it.

City, town or municipality - It is important to have this displayed. Tracers did not even know what directory assistance to call for a case they were tracing from an old telephone number. Many towns have an area code of 416 or 519. Old address information did not include City. The tracers had to determine the City from the telephone number. The inclusion of City in the future would greatly help the tracers.

Addresses - When the Notebooks were returned by the Post Office as "undeliverable", the cases were sent for tracing. There were several instances where the tracer telephoned and found that the household had not moved and the street address was correct. The only reasonable explanation that I heard was that the Postal Code was incorrect and the postman did not have the street address on his route. We did not verify the Postal Code, but I suggest that this should be done.

When tracing reveals that the telephone number had changed but the address had not, the address information cannot be seen by the tracer. Unless they had written the address on a sheet of paper, they had to ask for the information as if they did not have it.

Notes - Generally, tracers made handwritten notes and entered information onto the screen only when they had figured things out. It is not clear whether this would improve with experience or whether the software requires changes.

All were unsure what tracing notes to add, and whether to make them permanent or temporary notes. A common sentiment was "I know what would be useful to me as I would remember what I had done with just a few details. But if someone else will be picking up this case, I do not know what is important and what is not."

There may be a long list of tracing notes. Some of the leads may have turned out to be dead ends. Others require more work. The "dead" leads may be mixed with the "live" ones. It would be nice to have some method of moving "dead" leads to another spot; not delete them as there may still be some useful information on what has been tried.

Things like drivers license might help in tracing people.

Interviewing traced respondents - The transition from the point in the interview when a person is successfully traced to the start of the "real" questions is very slow.

When someone moves out and is traced, we should have the senior visit the household or at least send an information package before the actual interview. They feel that this would result in a better response.

Contact and Demographics after tracing

CON-Q3 Tracers need a different introduction because the households they reached were not contacted in January. Clarify instructions on how to go to the Yes/No list. e.g. Press 9, then <Enter> (It is the first time they need to initialize).

CON-Q8 Wording does not make sense for traced household that has also had a leaver. Suggested a variant of: “Why did Myrna leave the home where she lived in January?”

When person is traced, blank out the header with the previous contact name and address; very confusing to see a different name and address, especially if it is a household of unrelated persons. Generally, it would be desirable to have a different set of contact questions for a household that has been traced. The questions need to be different. For example, interviewers may not need to get name and address.

8.5 CONTACT AND DEMOGRAPHICS

When a telephone call is made, and there is no answer, the interviewer must enter a status code. A possible mistake could be made, such as assigning a FINAL status. It should be possible to go straight from the screen where the interviewer responds "No" to "Did someone answer?" to the View and Select Screen.

CON-Q4 We need an introduction that can be accessed at any point in the survey because there are a variety of situations when an interviewer is contacting the household again or speaking to someone else and are past the contact section. It was suggested that this be put on a function key so it is optional, and not programmed at any specific place.

Updating the address in the contact portion should be a formal process: we should confirm the city and the postal code for example.

CON-Q11A Updated wording not liked, suggest: "Are there any new babies born since our last contact with you?"

CON-Q11O "DOES ANYBODY ELSE LIVE OR STAY IN YOUR HOUSEHOLD? sounds repetitive if the first new person is not a ghost. If no returner/ghost in CON-Q11GH, should be a skip to CON-Q11C

In one situation, the interviewer received a "yes" to the question about "anyone else living here", but accidentally entered "no". She realized this but did not return to change the answer, so this person was never identified. We could never completely prevent errors such as these. However, one possibility might be the facility to add persons at the very last screen of household members, where the composition is confirmed before closing the door.

CON-Q11B Instruction on pressing <Enter> twice, is actually three times because you use <Enter> for the name. (Interviewers are trained to use <Tab> to enter names, but not all do).

CON-Q11D Wording inappropriate if "joiner" has always lived there and it is the longitudinal person who has moved in. The assumption about joiners is that they are the ones who move.

<u>CON-Q11RET</u> Wording ambiguous: we want the most recent date that the respondent returned to the household.

<u>CON-Q11E</u> Shortcut hotkeys to select the province of a joiner (e.g. "O" for Ontario) are good but do not apply in CHRR - should be programmed consistently .

<u>ROSTER</u> A few problems with selecting a new person to complete the demographics. Cursor must be on the space where a check mark would be; otherwise screen seems to be locked. Separate the instruction about selecting a person for demographics and changing information (Tab) with a blank line.

For production, do we want to use the January or May approach to completing demographics? In January, interviewers were able to go on to the component screen without completing demographics; in May they could not. The disadvantage with May was that lack of information on a joiner could prevent us from getting income information on another respondent in the household.

<u>END-CONTACT</u> One observer found this question too long. This could be one question where interviewers could ask the information in a conversational way instead of reading the question word of word. I think this would be an advantage because it would sound more friendly and may increase respondent confidence.

8.6 INCOME AND WEALTH INTERVIEW

Mark all that apply questions - The answer to these will often be missing. In FoxPro (the software used for the income portion of the interview) there is no error message (as in CHRR) instructing the interviewer to use the spacebar to toggle on. Many interviewers highlighted the first item and then hit <Enter>. Because this does not "mark" the item, the response will not be recorded.

Items and amount windows - In the Notebook route, people forgot they had to enter amounts in the amount window. They started to enter a response on the item line and the number keys shot them around. Because some often were looking at the keyboard rather than the screen, they went ahead and entered amounts which were in a totally different item line.

> *We must examine strange response patterns in the data. It is very important that this feature is corrected for production. (A beep has been suggested). The Senior also felt if the cents (.00) had not been displayed in the item line, the interviewers would have been less likely to try to enter an amount there.*

Form route: possible loss of wealth data - Pressing Ctrl-End twice ends the component for that person. Some people did this to get out of the Total Income edit, lost wealth (sometimes got it on paper and entered it in a temporary note).

> *We may get a biased view of the frequencies of the wealth items because of this operational problem.*

Tax form block - Don't Knows do not register on the screen at the item level.

Tax line numbers - Often tax line numbers were not shown on the screen. This may lead to missing some items. This assumption may be verified during the micro match to income tax records.

The income tax line numbers are needed on the block question and on the amount screen. Interviewers never used the tax line numbers. They never referred respondents to the appropriate number on their tax form. Also they did not understand the n/a for the questions which were not applicable to that tax form and asked the respondent anyway. We need to filter the questions out. Ideally, we need to have four separate routes for the tax forms. Interviewers will not find this confusing. It was more confusing for them the way it was for test 3B. They did not make the connection that once they said yes to the block question what they were seeing was a part of the form approach.

Tax Forms - Interviewers frequently referred to copies of the Income Tax forms in their manuals. They would have liked copies of the information slips as well, since some questions referred to boxes on the information slips.

Notice of Assessment should be added to the list of tax forms. Some respondents had only this.

Help - This was not available in one-item blocks. Also, there is a need to put on line help for the different definitions. Right now it was difficult for interviewers because the help was not accessible from everywhere on the questionnaire. There is also a need to be able to know where a specific source of income belongs. We should probably have provided another kind of help function.

The interviewers like to know the usual amounts for different social programs in order to assist the respondent in recalling how much they received from a particular program. Some of them asked that the amounts be listed in "help". There is some concern, however, that this influences responses. We should explain to interviewers that, although quality is important, in the case of social programs we would like the best response the respondent can give. In many cases, people do not receive the "usual" amount and sometimes if the interviewer suggests $xxx the person assumes that the interviewer (being the government) is right and does not try to recall exactly. We prefer imputing an answer to getting a "conditioned" one.

<u>Joint ownership</u> - For some, it was not clear it applied to anything except Item 43 (home ownership). What kind of share is acceptable, only 50/50 or others, including 0/100? “Report your share only” was not on help screens for other applicable items. The training explained well that what was expected was to ensure as much as possible that there was not duplication, but we do not know what kind of quality we will have, especially since the answers from one person could not be corrected, once the interview is completed. Two suggestions to improve this were to allow interviewers to get back in to closed files or allow the program to either hold the amount or move it to the spouse's file. We might also have a way to switch answers from one file to another when there has been confusion between spouses.

Wording of Block questions - These questions were too wordy for a telephone interview. Respondents tended to reply "Yes" or "No" after hearing the first few words. Interviewers often did not get the opportunity to read the last item in the question.

INC-Q1A - Indicator of who is responding. Interviewers were confused by the double instruction (on selecting the respondent, and what to do when the respondent did not live in the household). They tended to use F6 to continue because it was the last item in the instruction, incorrectly indicating a proxy respondent.

The number of proxy respondents may show a surprising number of persons not living in the household, and in fact it may not even have been a proxy interview.

In production we should separate the instruction in parenthesis from the main instruction with a blank line, and more generally keep instructions on the screen short.

INC-Q5 - (Flow) Nos to Q4 should skip Q5.

INC-Q4(Blocks) All questions too long and wordy; were shortened or paraphrased.

Total Income - Q4A - Recalculations after corrections do not consistently display e.g., did not show in Block O, did display in View current form, did not display after a review led to corrections.

Q4E - CPP and OAS were reported by a respondent to be received on the same cheque. This does happen for some people. For some others, they only knew the total of all their cheques. Sometimes this was noted in the comments.

Q4O edit - The change in wording to work around the programming problems was confusing. Interviewers tended to say "Does this sound about right", press <Enter> and be surprised to get the amount window.

The total income question needs to be reworded. "Total income is calculated as $X. Would you like to change it?" brought several responses of "Yes. I would like it to be a lot more." At least two observers felt that this had value as humour to lighten the interview and should be left as is.

INC Item 14 Interviewers pointed out that the amount on the T5007 tax information slip includes subsidized rent. Respondents using this form would therefore include subsidized rent in their answer, while those not using it would not. People not using a T5007 know their rent is subsidized but they may not know by how much. Interviewers said that if they knew how much people are getting they could ask if the answer given to Social Assistance includes subsidized rent. Unfortunately, there is nothing we can do to help.

INC Item 31 (typo) Should say "Mark one", not "Mark all that apply". Some respondents wondered if they should include back support payments for a child.

INC item 50 Range edit too low in at least one case.

INC Item 53 - We may be getting last year's contribution instead of total accumulated contributions.

INC Item 57 Short wording "Loans or mortgages owed to you" seemed to be misleading or too specific, interpreted to mean only mortgages. Clarify that it is any money owing to respondent that is to be reported in this item.

Wealth Some interviewers did not read the intro to the wealth section, "the next few questions are about things that ... owns or things that ... owes". Maybe they would prefer not to have it.

8.7 GENERAL SUGGESTIONS

Interviewers found it threatening to ask in the debriefing whether people would be willing to give their social insurance number. It was difficult to get a good response when interviewers had to make clear that they were not really collecting it.

One observer thought that the interviewers should not be doing the calculation, they should enter the amounts given to them, the computer should do all the calculations. Once the amount is entered, the program could go one step further and ask if this is "Annual", "Monthly","Quarterly","...", annual could be the default. A choice could be added like "Other" or "Multiply", at this point they would enter a number like 10 for someone who received 10 checks of something.

8.8 PRELIMINARY INTERVIEW

DEMPRE-Q18 - Add "Ever" to question, "DID . . . EVER IMMIGRATE TO CANADA?"

DEMPRE-Q18B - There was a problem with the range permitted for year of immigration. Is this caused by age being calculated as of January 1? If so, mention in training or manual.

DEMPRE-Q18,19 - Continuing complaints about the order of these questions, i.e. asking anyone born outside Canada if they are registered Indians.

EXPRE-Q1A - Better to say "Has" . . . ever worked full-time, not "Did" . . . ever work full-time.

PART B: RESULTS OF INTERVIEWER DEBRIEFING

A subset of interviewers were asked to complete a debriefing questionnaire after completing the data collection for the test. This part of the document details the comments made by these interviewers, and provides a summary of the results.

1. SUMMARY OVERVIEW

This table provides a quick overview of the interviewers' responses. The questions have been altered slightly to reflect the opinion of the majority. A "Yes" response does not always indicate a positive condition. Due to their nature, certain questions cannot be summarized for this table. They are included, however, in the subsequent sections.

QUESTION	St. John's		Toronto	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
PART I - Preparation for the Interview				
1-1 Did the survey manuals provide all the information you needed?	X		X	
1-2 Did the training you received adequately prepare you to do your work?	X		X	
1-4 Did you like working with the AST PowerExec Notebook computer?	X		X	
1-5 How long did it take you to feel comfortable with:				
a) the hardware 1-3 days	X		X	
b) the software 2-3 days	X		X	
1-6 Was the time allowed for self-study of the manuals adequate?		X	X	

QUESTION	St. John's Yes	St. John's No	Toronto Yes	Toronto No
PART II - The Interview				
2-1 Was the respondent's reaction to the income interview favourable? (12 out of 18 Interviewers reported > 49% with no complaints)	X		X	
2-2 What effect did the Notebook have on the response rate? No Effect / Don't Know	X		X	
2-3 Do you think that direct reference to the income tax form helped attain a higher response rate?	X		X	
2-4 In your opinion, how did your respondents react to the Notebook? **6 The majority didn't like it and didn't use it . . .**	X		X	
2-5 Did you have to encourage the respondent to fill out the Notebook and then reschedule the interview for a later date?	X		X	

QUESTION	St. John's Yes	St. John's No	Toronto Yes	Toronto No
2-6 When the Notebooks were not completed, was the respondent you contacted capable of providing information for the other members of the household (by proxy)?	X		X	
2-7 Did you find the instructions on the computer screen concerning the flow of the questionnaire clear and helpful?	X		X	
2-8 Did you get many error messages?		X		X
2-9 Was your skill level the main reason causing the error messages?	X		X	
2-10 Did you find the information displayed on the screen informative, presenting no problems?	X		X	
2-11 a) Was the calculator tool useful?		X		X
b) Were the tax reference cards useful?	X		X	
c) Was the F1 Help text useful?	X		X	
2-13 As an interviewer, did you prefer the **Notebook Approach** method of collecting the income, assets and debt information?	X		X	

QUESTION	St. John's Yes	St. John's No	Toronto Yes	Toronto No
PART III - Content				
3-1 Did you find that the questions were clear and direct for Income, Pensions, Assets and Debts?	X		X	
3-2 Did the questions flow in a logical manner?	X		X	
3-3 Did you have to reword any questions?	X		X	
3-4 If you asked the questions as shown on the screen, did you have to provide explanations so that the questions could be understood?	X		X	
3-5 Did you have enough information to provide additional commentary about the survey?	X		X	
3-6 Were there problems reporting joint assets some of the time?	X		X	
3-7 Were you able to easily identify and indicate "Ghosts"?	X		X	

2. PREPARATION FOR THE INTERVIEW

1-1 <u>Did the survey manuals provide all the information you needed?</u>

a) <u>Computer Operating Manual:</u>

St. John's: **Yes: 7** No: 1

Toronto: **Yes: 7** No: 3

<u>If No, where was it lacking</u>?

! I would have liked to have had a diagram when trying to connect the modem.

! There were some areas but I can't remember now. My computer wasn't set up to transfer any of my uncompleted work to my senior. We tried together on the phone and it just wouldn't work. I got C:\> and it wouldn't work.

b) <u>Interviewer's Guide:</u>

St. John's: **Yes: 6** No: 2 N/A: --

Toronto: **Yes: 5** No: 4 N/A: 1

<u>If No, where was it lacking</u>?

! More examples and more detailed information.

! The manual seemed to be a guide on to how to operate the computer - not how to conduct the survey. We are more accustomed to manuals that clarify each question, give examples etc. Something we could use as a reference.

! Needed more explanation for each question. For example: Where do farm assets and machinery go? Should they all go in Q49?

! I read the manuals at least twice, but reading instructions of this sort is not something a person can commit to memory. The Interviewer's Guide was good to look up problems when they arose as the indexing was good. "Back-up" did not give the full information about having to enter "Yes" twice before being told back-up was a success.

- Description of Tracing: It took me a lot of reading of that section and trial and error before I finally discovered how to use each stage of the process. Perhaps we just did not have enough practice in the training.
- Too long and complicated. I only referred to it for back-up and transmission. Even with the back-up instructions, I had to write in my own instructions. The way to learn tracing for example is by hands-on, not by following a guide.

1-2 Did the training you received adequately prepare you to do your work?

St. John's:	**Yes: 5**	No: 2	Somewhat: 1
Toronto:	Yes: 3	No: --	**Somewhat: 7**

1-3 How could the training be improved?

- More emphasis on the operation of the computer (the mechanics).
- When we started interviewing I was still awkward and nervous using the computer, not used to using the options, being very slow. More time spent in interviewing with different situations would have been helpful.
- More class participation and mock interviews.
- More time allotted in the classroom for doing test cases by yourself or in pairs. The only way to get comfortable using household lists, the calculator, name changes, etc., is to practice. It helps to have an instructor to guide you over the rough spots. Then you go home with the machine and practice more.

- More training cases with "confused" respondents and difficult finances.
- More emphasis on the functions and operation of the computer and less on actual interviewing.
- More time for training needed. Training is absolutely essential to feel comfortable with all the circumstances that crop-up. Perhaps more practice in making appointments at different stages of the interview could be done, or the actual procedure if there is a refusal, or if work must be transferred to tracing, (both our own tracing and R.O. tracing). These are real-life situations and I felt unprepared.
- Maybe more practice time with training staff available for reference.
- More time to go through the survey at our own speed to identify our personal problems.
- By providing more actual case training while under close supervision and allowing more time for actual training.
- More practice with all the steps in the training. The pressure of time made us hurry through several important concepts which were hard to figure out later.

1-4 <u>How did you like working with the AST POWEREXEC NOTEBOOK computer?</u>

St. John's:	**Very good: 5**	Good: 2	Not good: 1
Toronto:	Very good: 3	**Good: 6**	Not good: 1

If Not good, what was the problem?

- Very slow when having a large family and going from one form to another; a lot of dead time.
- On four separate occasions the machine froze. The first time it happened I had an interview almost completed. When I turned off the machine and went in again, the form was blank. I had lost all the information. I didn't press the wrong buttons either. Susan was sitting next to me helping me.
- Too long loading and unloading files then waiting for debriefing questions. Get rid of those hard to handle screws when hooking up the modem.
- Didn't like the legs at the back. It was very awkward for my fingers to engage. The screen seemed to become blotchy on the last day and I couldn't adjust it.
- It doesn't seem to be very versatile when a correction has to be made, especially if it's a correction to a portion already completed. I wish we could go back and correct the previous person's portion, e.g., the spelling of names, etc. Sometimes these items are corrected by the respondent towards the end. One hesitates to stop the flow at that point and it would be good to be able to complete the correction after speaking with the person rather than keep them on the line while going through the changing.

1-5 **<u>After the training session, how long did it take you to feel comfortable with</u> . . .**

! **<u>the hardware</u>** <u>(the computer)</u>?

St. John's:	1 day: 3	**2-3 days: 5**	4-5 days: --
Toronto:	**1 day: 5**	2-3 days: 3	4-5 days: 2

! **<u>the software</u>** <u>(the programs)</u>?

St. John's:	1 day: 2	**2-3 days: 5**	4-5 days: 1
Toronto:	1 day: 1	**2-3 days: 5**	4-5 days: 2

1-6 **<u>Was the time allowed for self-study of the manuals</u> . . .**

St. John's:	Too much? --	**Too little? 8**	Just right? --
Toronto:	Too much? 1	Too little? 2	**Just right? 7**

3. THE INTERVIEW

2-1 What was the respondent's reaction to the income interview?

ST. JOHN'S		TORONTO	
No Complaints	**Complaints**	**No Complaints**	**Complaints**
60 %	40 %	90 %	10 %
75 %	15 %	34 %	66 %
60 %	40 %	20 %	80 %
60 %	40 %	55 %	45 %
70 %	30 %	60 %	40 %
65 %	35 %	75 %	25 %
40 %	60 %	25 %	75 %
20 %	80 %	50 %	50 %
		30 %	70 %
		50 %	50 %

2-2 What effect did the Notebook have on the response rate for your assignment?

St. John's:

Improved: 2 Lowered: 1 **No effect: 3** Don't know: 2

Toronto:

Improved: 1 Lowered: 2 No effect: 3 **Don't know: 4**

2-3 **<u>Do you think that direct reference to the income tax form led to higher or lower response rates or did it not make a difference?</u>**

St. John's: **Helped: 4** No difference: **4** Hindered: -- Don't know: --

Toronto: **Helped: 5** No difference: 2 Hindered: -- Don't know: 3

2-4 **<u>In your opinion, how did your respondents react to the Notebook?</u>**

		St. John's	Toronto
6	The majority liked it and found it useful:	2	2
6	**The majority didn't like it and didn't use it:**	**4**	**7**
6	No impact either way:	2	1

2-5 **<u>Did you have to encourage the respondent to fill out the Notebook and then reschedule the interview for a later date?</u>**

6 **YES:** St. John's: **6**
Toronto: **7**

<u>% of respondents:</u> St. John's: 60% 20% 90% 80% 20% 50%
Toronto: 12% 5% 10% 5% 25% 80% 10%

6 **NO:** St. John's: 1
Toronto: 3

<u>% that had it filled out:</u> St. John's: 10%
Toronto: --

6 **Other:** St. John's: 1 Refusal

2-6 <u>When the Notebooks were not completed, was the respondent you contacted capable of providing information for the other members of the household (by proxy)?</u>

St. John's:	**Yes: 7**	No: 1
Toronto:	**Yes: 8**	No: 2

2-7 <u>Did you find the instructions on the computer screen concerning the flow of the questionnaire clear and helpful?</u>

St. John's:	**Yes: 5**	No: --	Sometimes: 3
Toronto:	Yes: 4	No: --	**Sometimes: 6**

2-8 <u>Did you get many error messages?</u>

St. John's:	Yes: 2	**No: 6**
Toronto:	Yes: 2	**No: 8**

2-9 <u>What was the main reason causing the error messages?</u>

		St. John's	Toronto
6	**Respondent gave inaccurate information?**	**4**	**4**
6	Program set-up?	2	3
6	**Your skill level?**	**4**	**7**
6	Other: Refusal	1	--
6	Question not answered	--	2

2-10 <u>Did you find the information displayed on the screen:</u>

		St. John's	Toronto
6	**Informative**	--	**5**
6	Confusing	--	--
6	Prefer one question at a time	1	1
6	**No problem**	**5**	2
6	Question not answered	2	2

2-11 <u>How did you find</u> . . .

a) <u>the calculator tool</u> <u>(F3 Option) ?</u>

Useful	St. John's:	**No: 5**	Yes: 1	N/A: 2
	Toronto:	**No: 8**	Yes: --	N/A: 1
Too complicated:				
	St. John's:	No: 1	**Yes: 5**	N/A: --
	Toronto:	No: 1	**Yes: 9**	N/A: --

<u>If yes, for too complicated:</u>

(Mark all that apply)

		St. John's	Toronto
6	Need more practice using it:	4	4
6	It needs to be simplified:	3	3
6	**It's too time consuming to use:**	**6**	**9**

b) **the "Reference for SLID Line Numbers to Tax Forms" (yellow card) and the "Block Approach" (blue card)?**

St. John's:	**Useful: 6**	Not useful: 2
Toronto:	**Useful: 8**	Not useful: 2

c) **the F1 Help Text?**

St. John's:	**Useful: 5**
Toronto:	**Useful: 6**

Not useful because:	St. John's	Toronto
6 Not enough information:	1	1
6 Too time consuming to use	--	2
6 Question not answered:	2	--
6 Other: didn't have the information needed	1	--

2-12 What features would you have liked to have had available?

! I would like to have a telephone number on the "Component" screen. After you got to that point in the interview, you have to suspend it. Then when you started that case again you had to jot down the telephone number somewhere or else you had to go back again to the "View and Select Cases" screen.

! The feature that I would have liked was the contact person for the previous survey displayed on the screen or the option to see it.

- More control over the finalizing of the forms and a place to enter Interviewer's comments to explain certain answers.
- The ability to go back into a person's notebook after it had been completed. Errors I experienced were mainly due to my failure to "Enter", and subsequently the program jumping the cursor to another question number.
- It was impossible to remember what is on a form after it is completed. You should be able to check the first form for certain questions, when doing the second one.

  e.g., Q43, 46, 47, 48, 49: all those items on the spouses form. When calling back a couple of days later you can't remember if you split these items or not. We are supposed to accept their answers if the Notebook is complete.
- The calculator would have been a definite help, but it was too time consuming to use.
- I felt comfortable with what we had, except for the pauses and the time waiting to get into cases and waiting between respondents.
- The employment history or unemployment status which would give an idea of what to expect from the respondent.
- The telephone number always displayed. When the call is interrupted and you need to call back, the telephone number is not on the screen.
- Would like to call-up a docket by number or name instead of hitting [9]. When making appointments for future days, it would help if I knew what other appointments I had for the same time and day, without viewing the entire telephone folder.
- I would have liked another reference card with quick descriptions of unusual situations, e.g. appointments to be made at different

times, comments to be made, refusals, tracing, all sorts of "How To's".

! A card with the most often used information for quick thinking during the interview.

2-12 <u>What features would you have liked to have had available</u> . . .

! I believe a hard copy of the survey should be available. That would have helped at the beginning. Later it's not necessary, but at the beginning, it's a terrible feeling to not know where you are in the survey.

! Possibly a little strip of paper over the F keys explaining their use. Though if it were on a reference card that would be fine.

! The name of the respondent automatically displayed as you went along.

! The phone number when you come back in to the interview to do the second member of the household. Also another introduction to the survey for this second member. I tried to dream-up one but it was not very convincing. Sometimes several days had passed and a smoother introduction was necessary.

2-13 <u>As an interviewer, which method of collecting the income, assets and debt information did you prefer?</u>

		St. John's	Toronto
6	**Notebook approach**	**5**	**7**
6	Tax form	2	2
6	Block questions	2	--
6	Question not answered	--	1

2-14 <u>What changes or additions would you like to see for the computer-based SLID income component?</u>

! No Notebooks, just a letter introducing the survey.

! Less time spent on demographics. It takes forever to get to the income questions. With checking and rechecking household members, I feel there could be less questions.

! One addition I would like to see is the display of the respondent's previous work history.

! I would like to speed up the interview and reduce respondent burden. Being efficient and fast in an interview helps gain their confidence.

! Speed-up the loading and unloading of files. Is there any way of having a telephone call recorded on the "View and Select" screen without having to go into the program every time you phoned?

! No changes except for "Total Tax Payable" Line 435. Many respondents were confused. Some were reporting Quebec tax (#37 and #38) because they didn't read the form properly.

- I would like the respondents to be better informed. Most said that they didn't get the Notebook and others said that they had refused and we were still bothering them.
- Do not ask how RRSP's are invested. Forget the other assets. Almost no one knew the value of their car. Somehow it has be shorter. There is a limit of how long you can keep people on the phone.
- A much better introduction. People want to know why all this information is necessary. Some reference to the many different circumstances people find themselves in just now with no jobs, lower incomes, etc. I felt that the poorer wage earner did not want to admit to a low income and therefore refused.
- People were sometimes offended by Q43-61, but not the purely income part. I think more explanation should go to the respondents about why we ask such personal questions.

4. CONTENT

3-1 Did you find that the questions were clear and direct for:

	St. John's		Toronto	
	Yes	**No**	**Yes**	**No**
Income	7	1	9	1
Pensions	7	1	5	5
Assets	6	2	6	4
Debts	6	2	10	0

3-2 **<u>Did the questions flow in a logical manner?</u>**

St. John's:	**Yes: 6**	No: 1	N/A: 1
Toronto:	**Yes: 8**	No: 2	N/A: --

If No, where was it awkward?

- ! Some respondents thought it was repetitious to ask interest first and later to question amounts in Bank Accounts etc.
- ! The first questions, the introduction, were repetitive and the language preference question disruptive.
- ! On ownership of the house, car, etc., with spouses especially, why could they not be done as a single unit, i.e. income separate but joint questions for assets?

3-3 **Did you have to reword any questions?**

St. John's:	**Yes: 4**	No: **4**
Toronto:	**Yes: 8**	No: 2

3-4 **<u>If you asked the questions as shown on the screen, did you have to provide explanations so that the questions could be understood?</u>**

St. John's:	**Yes: 5**	No: 3
Toronto:	**Yes: 5**	No: **5**

If yes, did the "F1 Help" text provide the information you needed?

St. John's:	**Yes: 3**	No: 2
Toronto:	Yes: 1	**No: 4**

3-5 <u>Did you have enough information to provide additional commentary about the survey?</u>

St. John's:	**Yes: 5**	No: 3
Toronto:	**Yes: 6**	No: 4

a) <u>If No, what would you find suitable?</u>

		St. John's	Toronto
6	Survey overview	2	1
6	Reason for the questions	3	2
6	Flowcharts	1	1
6	Questionnaire outline	1	2
6	Other: (i, ii, iii)	--	3

(i) Respondents wanted to feel that their co-operation would be helpful to Canada. They wanted verification.

(ii) How this survey will benefit the country.

(iii) Some of these financial details really require the knowledge of an accountant. I don't know how that is overcome.

b) <u>How would you like this additional information presented?</u>

		St. John's	Toronto
6	Computer-based	1	2
6	Fact sheet	2	3
6	Interviewer's Manual	2	3
6	Other: (i)	1	--

(i) Whatever we have available always adds to our information and is helpful.

3-6 **Were there problems reporting joint assets?** For example: Did spouses each report the total value of their house, or did they divide the total value between the two of them?

St. John's:	Yes: 3	No: --
	Sometimes: 5	Don't know: --
Toronto:	Yes: 3	No: 2
	Sometimes: 5	Don't know: --

3-7 **Were you able to easily identify and indicate "Ghosts" (returners to the household).**

St. John's:	Yes: 3	No: --	**N/A: 5**
Toronto:	**Yes: 4**	No: 2	**N/A: 4**

N/A here means that the Interviewers did not find any "Ghosts" in their assignment. (Or as one Interviewer stated, maybe she just didn't see them.)

5. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

! Reword your information to the respondents to make them feel they are truly helping, how will this benefit them, their families, and their future. I feel that when an Interviewer has completed a household, the Interviewer should be the one to assign the final code, not the computer. And there should not be "locked doors", it is very frustrating not to be able to review your work, correct errors and add comments.

! When the computer had gathered a lot of information, say five days into the survey, it seemed to slow up even more and was unpredictable. At that time I got C:\> a lot of times and had to call a couple of respondents back because I got locked out. I had a real problem with the computer freezing and had to turn it off. It made me a little uneasy and nervous at times.

! A lot of respondents were truly fed up with us for calling so often. A fresh group of respondents should be picked and only those who want to co-operate should be expected to the do the survey for seven years. Some people seemed to enjoy it, but some were outright hostile.

! For the most part things became easier this time around. The complaints and refusals were mostly because of the debts and assets, not because of the income. Respondents who had participated in January now refused in May because they felt the survey was much too personal.

! When we used the notebook approach, it was assumed that the respondent had completed the Notebook. However once we got into this approach, we often had to help the respondents with questions and provide guidance in completing the forms, because the respondents had only partially completed their notebooks. Also we needed to be able to move around between persons.

! I did not like the wording of the question "What is the reason you chose not to complete the Notebook?" It put people on the defensive. Perhaps it could be reworded, softened.

! I expect some of my problems were because I did not start the survey directly after training and I only worked on it for two days. I was actually surprised at how positive most people were and how many had filled out the notebook. Perhaps if I had taken the training on the computer in January I wouldn't have found that I had problems. However, I'm probably a good example of what you'll run into when everyone will have to be trained for computer use.

- Lots of training time on the computer with everyday examples, several of them, should be done.
- A concise, clear fact-sheet of F keys, control keys, etc., would help. Even the procedures of making appointments, accepting refusals, making corrections, getting out of the income part after it's done, etc., could be on the card.
- The manual is quite good, but more for looking up specific situations, not for study and retention beforehand. The survey itself usually flowed quite well until some major correction or change was attempted.
- The computer will accept a negative as a net loss, but will not compute the total income correctly.
- For American respondents the computer will not accept the ZIP CODE. Also, they (Americans) want to know if their household will continue to be surveyed in the future.
- Once the first person in the household is finished, there is no way to know what figures were given (often a guess re value of the house, car, etc.) It becomes almost impossible to be accurate with the second person whose interview may be a week later. It is impossible for the Interviewer to recall these figures after doing many others.
- I found that lack of experience with the computer meant that I concentrated so hard on the screen that I couldn't always process what was there. Consequently, if I made an error I wasn't fast enough to correct it. I couldn't go back to make corrections so had to use the notes.
- I felt that the Income Interview asked too many questions.
- The whole survey is long, extremely personal and very definitely aimed at the middle-class (or better) working, consumer population. There could be skip patterns put in for students, retirees, etc., and/or the whole thing revamped to save embarrassment for the poor, deprived, etc. Maybe a screening question at the beginning like:

"Did your 199x income fall into one of these ranges:

$0 - $15,000; $15,000 - 25,000; $25,000 - $40,000;

$40,000 - $60,000; over $60,000 ?

Then, having established the income range, the questions could be more typical of that particular bracket.

- The majority of respondents on my list, even the ones that participated, felt the SLID survey was way too private and really none of the Government's business. Some of them participated because they did not want me to lose my job. Others thought they had to. Quite a few compared it to Communism, especially people who emigrated from the Eastern Block.
- I feel badly that I have such a low response rate. All I can say is that I explained why the survey was done, that it was confidential and that I tried my best to convert them. One other thing, most respondents asked why they were being surveyed over and over again. They felt it was someone else's turn. Some of them would have done it on a person-to-person basis.
- **CMSSTAT2 - Select Case Status**. I didn't know there were any more than what was on the screen. It wasn't until the last day of the survey that I happened to find out. You need a **"MORE"** sign or a **[9]** to prompt you to look for more.
- **CMSLIDI**. Can you get the city of the respondent added to the address on this screen. Even if you are lucky enough to find it when you **[6 6]** (and that is seldom), you need the city <u>in the address</u>, especially if Head Office gives out large assignments which cover different Ontario cities. Also when checking the address, "Are you still living at .....?" I think the postal code should be there as well, since it is very easy to have entered it incorrectly the first time.
- I enjoyed working on the computer, once I felt comfortable with it. I could see great advantages with this method of data collection. It was a difficult survey to sell to respondents generally. Households who didn't have much

income or assets were mostly very co-operative but with households with greater income and more assets there were may comments about why the Government needs this information. Even the confidential nature of the survey didn't help.

! Almost all of my respondents thought the information they were giving would not change anything having to do with our economy. They seemed to feel that we should be asking more questions about how they feel our country is running. More questions to help us discover solutions to some of the real underlying problems, such as welfare, immigration and how our children can be employed in the future.

! Personally, I had problems with screen freeze. I don't know if it was due to my amateur abilities, or computer problems. Another main problem was using **[CNTL F10]** to end certain screens and not others. I ended up finalizing when I did not mean to. Refusals were another problem, until I got used to using notes.

! Speed, or lack of it, is the main disadvantage to using the computer. Time lag between screens, plus redundancy (i.e. who am I speaking with, repeated between household members) was an added strain.

! I was more comfortable with using another calculator instead of the computer's.

! Basically, I felt that lack of sufficient computer training was my biggest drawback. This, ultimately added to the "Time Drag" and put pressure on both respondent and Interviewer.

6. RESPONSE FROM REGIONAL OFFICE TRACERS

T-1 <u>Did you find the tracing?</u>

St. John's:	**Easy: 3**	Somewhat difficult: 1
	Difficult: --	N/A: --
Toronto:	Easy: --	**Somewhat difficult: 1**
	Difficult: 1	N/A: 1

<u>If difficult, please explain why?</u>

- Hard to visualize what is meant by windows. The one figure with the up and down arrows really confused me until I suddenly remembered our training. Too much is covered in the training to remember all the details. We need to work more on the tracing, at least I need to.
- For many cases, there is simply not enough resources. If you are serious about tracing, do it 1-2 months before the survey and give us authority to access records for Driver's Licence, Old Age Pension, Family Benefits, Death Registry etc., as resources, all arranged by you in advance. Tracers during the survey would trace the "Newly Found" cases which are at least sometimes easier.

T-2 <u>How could we improve our procedures?</u>

- We were told in training (I think) that those people from the January Survey who had not been contacted and were now traced, would be interviewed in the Preliminary Long. However, when I started one such case, there was no introduction on the screen, and I was shocked to discover that I had to do the income survey.

Better and more introductions are needed for different cases, e.g. various respondents doing their own income survey.

- ! We need a screen where everything that has been done is displayed at once. The whole process of entering and leaving trace procedures is difficult. We need to be able to record and see what we have. For example, "Looked in Bowers and found nothing". "Not Tried" is no help. There has to be a better word for "proxy". I would also suggest that people who are traced should have a few words of explanation and then have a packet mailed to them. Once more, tracing 1-2 months in advance.

7. RESPONSE FROM SENIOR INTERVIEWERS

1. <u>How would you rate the transfer function?</u>

St. John's:	Very Good: **1**	Good: --
	Poor: --	
Toronto:	Very Good: --	Good: --
	Poor: --	N/A: **1**

<u>If Poor, please state the problem:</u>

- ! No problems in performing the procedures for transferring. However, it didn't always work. The guide was very clear on this. Not enough time was spent at the training (for the transfer function), the interviewers felt.

2. <u>What would you do to improve the Transfer function?</u>

- ! The function itself is o.k.

3. <u>Please comment on the "View Workload Status Report".</u>

<u>Was it useful? Did it provide enough information? If this report did not satisfy your requirements, where was it lacking?</u>

- ! Very useful. I would have liked to have known the numbers of refusals or other non-interview situations on a daily basis, however. Also, the reports I got manually each morning from the Interviewers didn't always match the computer's (at the very end of the survey).