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TEST RESULTS

\$ SLID conducted two major field tests this year, in January and in May (referred to as Tests 3A and 3B, respectively). The two primary objectives of these tests were: to test the proposed survey questions; and, to test all aspects of the computer-assisted interviewing.

The January and May dates mirrored the future plans for SLID data collection: labour content will be collected in January, directly after the end of the reference year; and, income content in May, following closely the completion of income tax forms (when respondents are likely to be the most knowledgeable about their income sources).

Several evaluation studies have been undertaken to examine the 1993 test results and to make recommendations for the first SLID "production" surveys in 1994. These studies will be documented as part of the SLID Research Paper Series. Some highlights of the test results are presented in this issue of *Dynamics*, with more to follow in the next one. Those interested in more details are referred to the appropriate Research Paper.

Editor's Note

Some *Dynamics* readers now have another means of communicating with us. Statistics Canada has joined the INTERNET world. Among those with accounts are three members of the SLID staff: Maryanne Webber, the project manager, Alison Hale, the SLID labour survey manager, and myself, SLID analysis and dissemination manager. I can be contacted at GILES@STATCAN.CA. Similarly, Maryanne and Alison can be reached at WEBBER@STATCAN.CA and HALE@STATCAN.CA respectively.

Any of us would be pleased to forward a message to another SLID team member. A copy of an initial proposal for SLID longitudinal microdata files was sent to all persons on the *Dynamics* mailing list. This is an opportunity for you to influence SLID data products; your comments and suggestions will be seriously considered. If you are also interested in Part B of this report, please contact me.

Philip Giles

Response Rates

Household Response Rates		
	Test 3A	Test 3B
Response	75.2	67.3
Refusal	11.9	19.2
Unable to trace	8.2	7.4
Other non-response	4.8	6.2

The non-response rates are higher than anticipated. Many factors contributed, but we believe that non-response can be reduced in future.

Interview Times

Average Household Interview Duration (minutes)		
	Test 3A	Test 3B
Complete response only	27.4	28.6
All households	24.3	24.4

Average Household Interview Duration (minutes) by Household Size (all households)		
Number of Persons	Test 3A	Test 3B
1	18.1	21.1
2	23.2	25.1
3	29.1	25.3
4	33.8	28.1
5 or more	39.2	31.4

One can see that the interview time is greatly affected by the number of persons in the household, since data is collected for all household members. On the other hand, additional household members do not take as much time as the first person, because some questions are asked at the household level and there is less need to repeat introductions or to answer general questions about the survey.

Test 3B - Data Collection Route

The data for the income and wealth test were collected using one of three approaches:

- **Notebook** - the respondent completed the questionnaire (called the SLID Notebook), received by mail prior to the interview, and needed only to read the responses over the telephone;
- **Tax Form** - the respondent did not complete the Notebook, but had his/her tax form for reference during the interview;
- **Block** - the respondent had not completed the Notebook, and did not use his/her tax form for reference during the interview. (This was called the "block approach" because the questions were grouped into blocks.)

Test 3B Data Collection Route (persons)		
	Number	Percentage
Notebook	714	36.5
Tax Form	339	17.3
Block	904	46.2

Slightly more than one-third of the respondents completed the Notebook prior to being called by the interviewer. The purpose of mailing a questionnaire prior to the interview was to increase the quality of the reported data.

Feedback / Dependent Interviewing

One of the benefits of computer-assisted interviewing is that it allows the interviewer to access key information previously reported by a respondent. This can be used to aid the respondent when answering the survey questions, or to identify inconsistent responses, which can be rectified by the respondent immediately. SLID uses both these types of feedback.

The January survey asks questions about a person's labour market activity during the previous calendar year. The respondents for the SLID test had been in the Labour Force Survey in January 1992. Therefore, it was possible to use dependent interviewing in Test 3A to aid recall, particularly of activities and events that occurred early in the year. Various ways of feeding back information were discussed. A certain technique with three basic elements was chosen:

- "Based on our interview of a year ago ..."
This indicates where we obtained the information we are about to feed back.
- "... you were working for ABC Company ..."
This is the crucial piece of information being fed back. Apart from employer name, other pieces of information fed back, where appropriate, were: an unpaid absence from work of four weeks duration or longer, in progress at the beginning of the reference year; occupation; class of worker, in the case of the self-employed and unpaid family workers; and, whether or not the person was looking for work as of last January.
- "... Is this correct?"
A respondent may dispute the accuracy of information being fed back. If the respondent does not agree that the information is correct, it is adjusted accordingly and the interview proceeds. (Later, in processing, a decision is taken as to how such conflicts are to be handled.)

The following results were obtained:

- employed in January 1992 and either at work, on a paid absence, or on an unpaid absence of less than 4 weeks -- the employer name was fed back and 99% confirmed it;

- employed in January 1992, but absent without pay from work for 4 or more weeks -- employer confirmed in 96% of cases, absence confirmed in 85% of cases;
- for respondents with a confirmed employer, we fed back occupation in January 1992 -- 97% confirmed;
- for self-employed or unpaid family workers with a confirmed January 1992 employer, we fed back January 1992 class of worker -- 94% confirmed;
- for respondents who were jobless in January 1992, we fed back "search status" -- confirmation rate was 96% for those whose status in January 1992 was "looking" and 93% for those whose status was "not looking".

Some information was collected during Test 3A indicating whether income had been received from a particular source. This was used to check that income was actually reported from these sources in Test 3B. If not, a message was displayed to the interviewer to attempt to resolve the inconsistency with the respondent. Five such checks were implemented for Test 3B.

Test 3A / 3B Consistency		
Edit	Checks Made	Unresolved
Wages and salaries	1067	38
Old Age Security	231	10
Unemployment Insurance	321	25
Workers' Compensation	20	4
Social Assistance	104	27

Unfortunately, it is not possible to determine the frequency of failure of each check. However, one can see that, in general, data consistency has been achieved.

More test results will be presented in the next issue.

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SLID'S FIRST RESPONDENTS

§ In January 1993, SLID's first panel of respondents were contacted for the survey for the first time. The first panel of SLID respondents is comprised of those persons in the Labour Force Survey in January 1993 in LFS rotation groups introduced in August and September 1992. Two primary reasons led to the decision to use former LFS respondents:

- It was a cost-efficient way to select a sample.
- It permitted a cost-effective way of collecting some information on the sample (SLID Preliminary Interview) at the beginning of the first reference year. This is important for weighting and estimation purposes, as well as for dependent interviewing (discussed elsewhere in this issue).

When contacting the first panel of SLID respondents, Statistics Canada pursued a balance between informing respondents of what would be asked of them, and providing information which might negatively affect response rates to the LFS. The SLID Preliminary Interview was conducted in January 1993 as a supplement to the LFS interview. Another supplement (Canadian Travel Survey) was also conducted that month. Of persons responding to the LFS in January 1993, 88% also responded to the SLID Preliminary Interview. Since some persons were nonrespondents to the LFS, the overall SLID response rate was 84%. The following table provides some basic results from the Preliminary Interview. No decisions have yet been made about recontacting nonrespondents for future SLID interviews.

SLID plans to follow all persons in the first panel for six years, even if they move. As such, SLID differs from other household cross-sectional surveys, such as the LFS. SLID intends to provide information on the survey to respondents from time to time. Last year, a brochure was sent to all households in our test panel (approximately 1300). The brochure contained some summary information on the survey, and contained a reply card for those interested in more information. In all, 46 replies were received. These people were sent a four-page document, describing the objectives and origins of the survey, the survey content and a basic description of the methodology employed.

SLID Preliminary Interview (January 1993)				
Province	Response Rates (%)		Number in Sample	
	Households	Persons	Households	Persons
Newfoundland	95.1	93.3	918	2313
P.E.I.	88.2	87.2	374	933
Nova Scotia	91.1	89.0	1250	2772
New Brunswick	86.8	85.9	1074	2686
Québec	92.7	90.9	3413	7460
Ontario	87.0	85.4	4770	11274
Manitoba	88.6	86.2	1256	2836
Saskatchewan	90.0	88.8	1400	2994
Alberta	91.5	89.2	1656	3612
British Columbia	86.6	84.9	1598	3662
TOTAL	89.5	87.8	17709	40542

- Notes: 1. Response rates are calculated on the basis of LFS respondents.
2. No verification of response codes was done. Some errors may be present due to miscoding.
3. Persons eligible for the preliminary interview were those aged 15 years and over.

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ALTERNATIVE APPROACH TO COLLECTING INCOME INFORMATION

§ For many years, Statistics Canada has collected income statistics by asking respondents to declare the income they have received in the past calendar year from various sources. As an alternative, we would like to examine the possibility of obtaining income information on survey respondents directly from the income tax file. Not only would this reduce respondent burden, but it would also reduce costs and improve data quality. To do this, we would seek respondents' permission to access their tax information. If this approach were adopted, SLID would be included.

There are numerous implications to changing our methods of gathering income data. A committee, involving the major areas that currently produce income statistics, has been formed to study these implications. Clearly, respondent acceptance is one critical factor, perhaps the most important one. Thus a test was conducted in August to give us an initial reading on this aspect.

The test consisted of one question and was conducted as an LFS supplement. Some respondents were part of the sample in April 1993 when the Survey of Consumer Finances (the survey from which annual income statistics are produced) was conducted. Others did not receive the SCF. This gives us the opportunity to analyze the reactions of respondents who are knowledgeable about the burden associated with answering income surveys versus those who are not.

Other options for analysis include:

- (1) demographic profiles of persons who "agree" or "disagree" to provide permission;
- (2) income characteristics;
- (3) labour force characteristics;
- (4) geographic variables (i.e. urban/rural).

The LFS is often done by proxy. As we were interested in the views of all household members, the "household" respondent and another, randomly selected, person aged 15 or over were asked the question. (One call-back was allowed to reach this other person.)

The question asked was the following:

"We would like your opinion about a new way of getting some of the information that Statistics Canada collects. We are looking for ways to reduce the cost, as well as your time and effort.

Statistics Canada now gets income information by asking up to 25 questions on wages, pensions and other kinds of income.

If you were in a Statistics Canada income survey, would you give us permission to get your information directly from Revenue Canada?"

For more information on this test, contact Susan Poulin, Manager, SLID Income and Wealth Survey, at 613-951-9480 and 613-951-0086, respectively. Stay tuned for test results in a future issue of *Dynamics*.

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RESEARCH PAPER SERIES

§ Each issue of *Dynamics* contains a short description of new Research Papers. You may request individual documents or you may be placed on the mailing list to receive all, as they become available. For more information contact Anne Palmer at (613) 951-2903, or by fax or mail at our office location given in the *Editor's Note* on the first page.

- **92-08 Self/Proxy Respondent Rules and Data Quality**
Brian Biggs

The results of a literature search are presented. Accepting proxy responses from an "informed" member of the household reduces data collection costs. However, it is generally accepted that proxy responses are poorer in quality than those provided by self-reporters. No strong supporting evidence of this assumption was revealed in the literature. However, this may largely be due to survey designers carefully eliminating questions perceived to be difficult for proxy respondents to answer.

- **92-09 Focus Groups with Respondents and Non-respondents to the Survey of Consumer Finances**
Nancy Staisey, Price Waterhouse

As part of SLID content development, focus groups were held in June 1992 to help with the design of the income component. Focus group participants were chosen from persons in the 1992 Survey of Consumer Finances sample. The objective of the focus groups was to identify methods to best collect income data from individuals. Suggestions were considered in the development of the field test conducted in May 1993.

- **93-03A SLID Microdata Files - Content Proposal Part A - Overview**
- **93-03B SLID Microdata Files - Content Proposal**

Part B - Detailed Specifications

Jamie Brunet, Philip Giles

As part of SLID content development, a proposal for survey content was widely distributed. Extensive consultation resulted in revisions to the survey content. A similar approach to SLID output products is planned. These documents are the first such proposal. Part A, to be distributed to everyone on the *Dynamics* mailing list, provides an overview of the strategy proposed for longitudinal files, as well as discussing output issues of a more general nature. Part B, available upon request only, provides details on all data variables.

- **93-05 Summary of Observations: Head Office Observers and Interviewers -- January 1993 Test**

Dahna Deslauriers, Ruth Dibbs, Michael Egan,
Alison Hale, Sylvie Michaud

This document contains detailed reporting of observations made by interviewers and Head Office observers to the January 1993 field test of SLID labour content. Due to its great detail, it would likely be of interest primarily to those with both a high level of knowledge of SLID and a concern about the data collection operation. Thus, it will only be distributed upon request.

- **93-06 SLID Preliminary Interview -- January 1993 Interviewer Debriefing Summary**

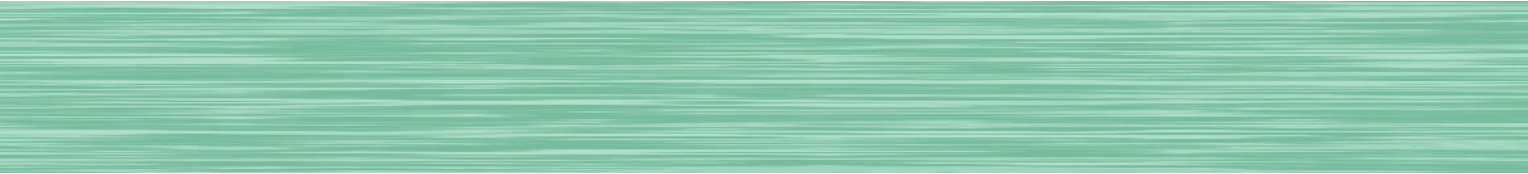
Dahna Deslauriers

Similar to 93-05, this document details the interviewers' comments and reactions to the SLID Preliminary Interview, conducted in January 1993. This was the first SLID data collected from the first panel of respondents. Distributed upon request.

- **93-07 Qualitative Aspects of SLID Test 3A Data Collection**

Sylvie Michaud, Christel Le Petit, Mylène
Lavigne

A summary evaluation of the SLID test of labour content, conducted in January 1993, is presented. The report includes information on: response rates, interview times, results of interactive edits and feedback



of previously- collected information. It also serves as a prototype of data quality information to be produced following each survey.

- **93-08 Questionnaire Design in a Paperless Society**
Ruth Dibbs, Alison Hale

Presented at ARC 1993 (the annual research conference sponsored by the U.S. Bureau of the Census), discusses differences in the questionnaire design process necessitated by the use of decentralized computer-assisted interviewing.

- **93-09 SLID Content Evaluation - The Authority Series: Supervision and Management**
David Coish
- **93-10 Activity Limitation Questions in SLID) Results from the January 1993 Test**
Yves Saint-Pierre

Similar in nature, these documents report on the results of different topics covered by questions in the January 1993 field test; the topics being supervision and management, and disability respectively. They provide survey results and outline revised question sets, including a rationale for the new proposed questions.