

### Survey Updates

In the first year of the current funding period, we have added a substantial volume of material to the website. 50 sets of questionnaires and associated methodological materials, amounting to around 12,000 pages of PDFs have been added representing an expansion of about 33% on what was available before. At the same time we have been working to improve the presentation of the existing materials.

We have added questionnaires for 8 surveys that are wholly new to the Qb:

- [English Longitudinal Study of Ageing](#)
- [National Adult Learning Survey](#)
- [Scottish School Leavers Survey](#)
- [Youth Cohort Study of England & Wales](#)
- [Young People's Social Attitudes Survey](#)
- [Survey of Public Attitudes to Quality of Life and the Environment](#)
- [Young Life and Times Survey](#)
- [Community Attitudes Survey](#)

### Topic Updates

3 new expert commentaries have now been added to the Topics pages:

1. [Article on the measurement of Ethnicity and Race](#) produced by the Office for National Statistics
2. [Commentary on the measurement of Crime](#) by Mike Hough
3. [Article on measurement of Health and Disability](#) by Roger Thomas (for NatCen's Survey Methods Centre Newsletter).

We have broken down each topic into several themes that are displayed in tabular format on each topic page. Links to questions on each of these themes are provided, making questions easier to find and questionnaires more browsable.

A new topic area – [Social Capital](#) - has been added to the Qb site, taking the number of areas to 22. Links to questions and references can be found here.

### Development Work

Our ambition for the next 6 months is to broaden the scope of the surveys which we feature in order to include a greater variety of questions and topics.

Our main focus at present is on creating a new user interface for the web site, especially in response to user feedback mentioned below.

The structure of the site will remain intact, with a user friendly and accessible interface, however there will be more resources:

- Redesigned main menus
- Further information on survey research process
- Factsheets on Survey Methods
- Development of a teaching questionnaire
- Further information on survey timescales and release dates

The new website will be live in early Spring 2007.

### User Feedback

User feedback is extremely important to any web resource, although it is frequently difficult to get users to give their opinions of one that is free. The Qb has run successful user focus groups in the past, and will be doing so again in the Spring once the new web interface is live. Until then we wanted to take a snapshot view of what users think of the resource. The difficulties of collecting survey information online, whatever its nature, are well documented (See [Don Dillman](#)). It is not just the fact that people are unwilling to spend time filling in forms online, it is also that technical issues have to be overcome in collecting the data and storing it safely and effectively.

For the Qb survey we looked at six types of software, SPSS Data Entry Builder, BFormMail, Nsurvey, UCCASS, bignosebird, and the possibility of the creation of an ASP application writing data to an Access database.

Of the six available options, 2 needed financing, one did not gather and present information automatically, another was reasonably untried and the fifth option would have taken too long to develop. NSurvey met all our needs, it is freely available within the University of Surrey, it has been tried and tested, it gathers and presents results automatically and most importantly is quick and easy to use.

The survey is offered on the Qb website and was publicised by the Qb email list.

So far, results have shown that over half of all users have found what they were looking for on the Qb while a further third were just browsing. The new Qb search facility is used by a quarter of users and nearly 60% think the website is easy to use.

The results of the survey will help us to further improve not only website content but the way in which the Question Bank website presents its vast amount of information.

The survey will continue to run until the end of 2006, so if you would like to take part and be involved in the future development of the Qb resource, click on this link <http://staff.soc.surrey.ac.uk/Nsurvey/survey.aspx?surveyid=6>

We also welcome feedback and comments in text format and encourage users to e-mail [qb@surrey.ac.uk](mailto:qb@surrey.ac.uk) with any ideas / comments / thoughts that they may have.

Measuring Ethnicity	Conferences	Link Checking
<p>In June the Qb hosted an introductory workshop conducted jointly by the <a href="#">Economic and Social Data Service</a> (Government service), Question bank and <a href="#">Samples of Anonymised Records</a> Support team.</p> <p>The workshop provided around 20 participants with a general introduction to the microdata which are available for use by secondary analysts and the services that provide support for researchers who are focusing on ethnicity. The afternoon provided the opportunity to focus on data on ethnicity, to learn about the measurement of ethnicity and a hands-on lab session using Government microdata.</p> <p>Slides are available from <a href="#">ESDS Government</a>.</p>	<p>The Qb was represented at the <a href="#">European Conference on Quality in Survey Statistics</a> at Cardiff's City Hall in April 2006. A paper entitled '<i>The Use of Pre-Existing Survey Questions: Implications for Data Quality</i>' was presented; this included an overview of the Qb resource, information on how it works and discussion of how its questions can be re-used in one's own surveys. The impact that this question 'recycling' may have on survey data was considered.</p> <p>The Qb also participated fully in the <a href="#">Research Methods Festival</a> in Oxford in July 2006 presenting a paper on the Qb resource, participating in a number of workshops, and running an information stand.</p>	<p>The Qb team regularly spend time checking links within the Qb website using Web Link Validator (<a href="http://www.relsoftware.com">http://www.relsoftware.com</a>). This is a powerful link checker which we use to check links for accuracy and availability, find broken links and links containing syntactic errors.</p> <p>We are aware that the Link and Bibliography pages need updating and are currently working on updating these. Part of the problem is that there are few resources that deal exclusively with survey measurement, and any resources that we do find have to be properly checked for quality and usefulness.</p>

### Making Material Easier to Use

As it is now ten years since the Qb was first set up we have been thinking about how to make the materials on the Qb more accessible to users. The earliest questionnaires were put onto the site at a time when download speeds were much slower than they are today and so, in order to help users at that time, the big PDF files were broken down into small "chunks". Now that the huge majority of our users connect via broadband these multiple files represent a potential source of frustration and so we are trying to recombine them into larger files with better navigation links between them.

We are also putting more information about the topics covered and data collection processes involved with each year for the annually repeated survey series in the hope of helping secondary analysts to locate the data of most use to them.

Feedback is welcomed on these ideas.

### News from the ESRC Survey Link Scheme



**The ESRC Survey Link Scheme webpages have been redesigned and updated with the addition of an online application form: see <http://qb.soc.surrey.ac.uk/sls.htm>**

### Upcoming Workshops

*There are just two workshops left in 2006:*

20th October, Families and Children Study, Manchester University (THIS WORKSHOP IS FULL - STANDBY PLACES ONLY)

22nd November, Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey, Queens University, Belfast (THIS WORKSHOP IS FULL - STANDBY PLACES ONLY)

*We are now taking bookings for 2007:*

10th January, Health Survey for England, City University, London

14th February, Labour Force Survey, Edinburgh University

21st March, English Longitudinal Study of Ageing, Plymouth University

18th April, British Crime Survey, Leeds University

16th May, General Household Survey, Lancaster University

**For further information, to apply online and to see dates for late 2007 please visit the new [SLS web pages](#).**

### **Report from the 13th Survey Link Scheme Workshop: What happens on a SLS Workshop?!**

On the 21st July 2006, 27 people attended a workshop on the Family Resources Survey at Oxford University, designed to coincide with the Research Methods Festival held in St Catherine's College. The 27 participants were from a wide range of backgrounds including researchers and postgraduate students interested in issues as diverse as education, employment, consumer debt and employment and health.

The morning of the workshop introduced participants to the Question bank resource, the problems and issues resulting from CAPI methods and issues of data collection from an interviewer perspective. After lunch representatives from the Office for National Statistics focused on the FRS itself, particularly how data is collected and the problems associated with data collection for that survey. Participants took part in dummy interviews with each other to get a feel of how CAPI and BLAISE are used in the field.

Feedback from the workshop showed that both quantitative and qualitative researchers commented on how the workshop had given them a useful insight into how surveys can assist them in their future research work.

### **Other Web news.....**

#### **Launch of Intute web site**

The new web resource which used to be known as SOSIG has been launched. Intute is a free online service providing access to the very best web resources for education and research. The service is created by a network of UK universities and partners. Subject specialists select and evaluate the websites in the database and write high quality descriptions of the resources. The database contains 113,437 records.

<http://www.intute.ac.uk>

#### **Survey of UK University/College Staff and Students**

JISC ([Joint Information Systems Committee](#)) is conducting a review of national internet search and training services for UK Universities and Colleges.

To ensure that views from the Higher and Further education community are heard you are encouraged to fill in this short online survey. There is also a chance to win a £50 Amazon voucher.

<http://www.survey.bris.ac.uk/intute/survey/>

#### **ESDS web site re-launch**

ESDS have redesigned and re-launched their comprehensive website. The web site provides information about ESDS; links to finding and accessing data; support for users; creating and depositing data; and news, training, and forthcoming events. A search website and search for data facility is available from the top of each web page. A site map and an A-Z index are also provided to aid navigation.

<http://www.esds.ac.uk>

*The next edition of the Qb newsletter will be available Spring 2007. Feedback or queries should be addressed to:*

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