

Issue 4: October 2007

Surrey Organises two survey research conferences

The [University of Surrey](#) is organising two survey research events to highlight the challenges and their possible solutions for survey researchers.

'Survey Research in the 21st Century: Challenges and Opportunities' **[The Royal Statistical Society, Errol Street, London](#)**

An [ESRC](#) Research Methods Programme One Day Conference

Wednesday 24th October 2007

This one day conference will bring together leading international experts from different areas of survey methodology to consider the challenges and opportunities that the new century offers to producers and users of survey research.

Chair: [Dr Patrick Sturgis](#), University of Surrey

Speakers: [Professor Jon Krosnick](#) (Stanford University), [Professor Roger Jowell](#) (City University); [Professor Mick Couper](#) (University of Michigan), [Professor Nick Buck](#) (University of Essex)

Places at this event are free and will be allocated on a first come, first served basis. Please contact Sarah Bulloch (s.bulloch@surrey.ac.uk) to reserve a place.



'Survey Measurement: Assessing the Reliability and Validity of Contemporary Questionnaire Items' **[The Royal Statistical Society, Errol Street, London](#)**

An [ESRC](#) Question Bank One Day Conference

Thursday 10th April 2008

This one day conference is the second in the series and will bring together international experts who will consider issues in survey measurement, in particular assessment of the validity and reliability of contemporary questionnaire items.

Chair: [Professor Martin Bulmer](#), University of Surrey

Speakers: [Professor Janet Harkness](#) (University of Nebraska-Lincoln and ZUMA, Germany), [Dr Pamela Campanelli](#) (Independent Survey Consultant), [Dr Edith De Leeuw](#) (Utrecht University), [Dr Patrick Sturgis](#) (University of Surrey)

Places at this event are free and will be allocated on a first come, first served basis. To register your interest please visit the web page (see below) or e-mail z.tenger@surrey.ac.uk



Please see the web page for further details: <http://qb.soc.surrey.ac.uk/qbworkshop.html>

For other events and day courses organised by the Sociology Department please visit: <http://www.soc.surrey.ac.uk>

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Qb launches factsheet series on data collection methods

A brand new area of the Qb website, entitled [Social Survey Data Collection Methods](#), was launched in April 2007. The content of this area is intended to supplement the information provided by the existing [Questionnaires](#), [Topics](#) and [Resources](#) sections of the site.

Information is presented thematically, in the form of six 'factsheets', each having a different focus. These factsheets provide a basic introduction to quantitative data collection using questionnaires, those new to survey research will find this to be of particular use.

The six current themes are as follows:

- [Methods of data collection](#)
- [Questions and answers in surveys](#)
- [Evaluating survey questions](#)
- [Survey interviewing](#)
- [Mode effects](#)
- [Computer Assisted Interviewing introduction](#)

Qb users who are collecting their own survey data will benefit from these factsheets by utilising them to enhance the process of questionnaire design. Where relevant these include examples taken from the materials on the Qb website. Further factsheets will be added throughout the coming year.

European Surveys are coming to the Qb!

We have now added general information and links to the questionnaires, and data sets where possible, for a number of European surveys to the Qb collection and this will continue to grow in the coming year.

The new [European Surveys](#) menu currently contains information for the :

- [EU Labour Force Survey](#)
- [European Survey of Income and Living Conditions \(EU-SILC\)](#)
- [European Social Survey](#)
- [European Community Household Panel Survey](#)

We are currently working on adding the International Social Survey Programme, and the Eurobarometer.

We will be continuing to develop ideas to better represent European surveys, including attending a key conference in June 2008 on [Survey Methods in Multinational, Multiregional and Multicultural Contexts \(3MC\)](#) being held in Berlin, Germany.



Surrey Day Courses In Social Research Autumn 2007

These one-day courses for social researchers allow you to update your skills and learn about new techniques with one or more of practical high quality courses, taught by staff from the leading social research methods academic centre in the UK. For further details of the programme visit the web pages: <http://www.shs.surrey.ac.uk/sociology/daycourses/>

Qb work with the Data Documentation Initiative



Whilst the Qb currently shows the questionnaire documentation produced by survey organisations in a linear format, we have been concerned for some time about the difficulties inherent in these formats over displaying the variety of routes through a [CAPI](#) interview that may have been experienced by respondents. We see scope for considerable developments with the prospect of the [Data Documentation Initiative](#) (DDI) being adopted as an international standard. The Qb has been a member of the DDI Alliance Expert Committee for the past 3 years.

The latest release of DDI 3.0, which currently has the status of 'Candidate Draft', has a considerable section on questionnaire documentation (previous releases did not address this area in detail). At present the main effort of interested parties is directed towards developing tools to help users to create documentation in the format defined by DDI 3.0. The Qb interest is directed towards the development of tools for extracting specific information from DDI files as this is the task which we believe will be most useful to our users.

Two main advantages of the DDI approach have been identified by Qb staff:

1. The possibility of presenting whole questionnaires in a standard layout and format so that users will no longer need to learn the particular presentational tricks of each different survey they want to examine.
2. The possibility of extracting certain questionnaire elements only (such as question text, response category set and interviewer prompts) without unwanted elements, and possibly limited to those addressing relevant concepts.

As the routing instructions are also identifiable elements of DDI 3.0 it is hoped that tools may also be developed to help users identify the extent and complexity of routing in a questionnaire. If these matters can be brought to fruition, there will be fundamental effects on the way the Qb can present its materials to users. This is seen as presenting exciting opportunities which the Qb would like to grasp.

Questionnaire Contentment...

We continue to expand the breadth of coverage achieved in the Qb by looking for survey series not previously included on the site. Since June 2007 we have added [questionnaires](#) from two more new surveys – the [Poverty and Social Exclusion in Northern Ireland](#) survey of 2002/3 and the first wave of the [Longitudinal Study of Young People in England](#). This has brought the total number of different survey series covered up to 67, a 26% increase on the number when the current Qb grant was renewed in November 2005.



There is also a steady flow of additions to the series already covered, so that there are now 267 sets of questionnaires available to view or search. This represents an increase of 63% over the last 2 years. Recent additions are highlighted in information boxes on the left side of the [Questionnaires](#) index page and also in the [News page](#) (in the Resources section) on the site.

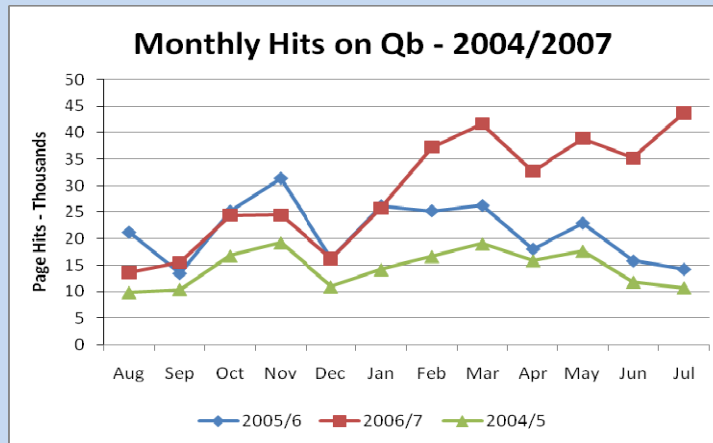
Amongst others we have recently updated the following:

- [British Cohort Study](#)
- [British Household Panel Survey](#)
- [Family Expenditure Survey](#)
- [Expenditure and Food Survey](#)
- [Continuous Household Survey \(Northern Ireland\)](#)
- [European Social Survey](#)
- [General Household Survey](#)
- [Family Resources Survey](#)
- [Families and Children Study](#)
- [Scottish Health Survey](#)



Qb User Statistics

The launch of the new Qb web design in January 2007 has triggered a substantial increase in use of the site. As the graph below shows, in 2004/5 the number of hits on the site per month fluctuated between 10,000 and 20,000, there was modest growth above this in 2005/6 where the hits were mostly between 15,000 and 25,000 per month, but since February 2007 the range has been 33,000 to 44,000 with an average of 38,327 hits over the last 6 months. This latest period shows an increase of 151% over the equivalent period 2 years before.



All areas of the Qb site have experienced growth in use during the past 3 years, with the [search](#) function page receiving around 3 times as many hits in 2006/7 as it did in 2004/5. This appears to result from the work done to enhance its functionality in early 2006.

The heart of the Qb is the [Questionnaires](#) area (previously called “Surveys” before the new design was launched) and with more than 265 sets of questionnaires, covering over 65 different survey series, users have a wide choice of materials to view. The most ‘popular’ questionnaires vary between different periods of analysis. For example, in the last 6 quarters we have observed the [National Diet and Nutrition Survey of 1997](#), the [Smoking Drinking and Drug Use Amongst Young People survey of 2003](#), the [Workplace Employment Relations Survey of 2004](#), and the [European Social Survey of 2004](#) occasionally joining the more expected [British Social Attitudes Survey](#), [General Household Survey](#) and [British Crime Survey](#) in the top ten hits tables.

In the [Topics](#) area the most popular subject recently has been [Health](#), closely followed by [Social Attitudes](#) and [Ethnicity](#).

Survey Link Scheme Workshops

There are two remaining workshops for 2007:

- 17th October, University of Southampton, Expenditure and Food Survey
- 21st November, Queens University, Belfast, Continuous Household Survey

If you would like further details, and to apply, please go to the SLS web pages:

<http://qb.soc.surrey.ac.uk/sls.htm>



Presenters & some of the participants at the SLS Workshop, Manchester, July 2007

ESDS Government Events

[ESDS Government Annual Research Conference: All Consuming: Consumption research findings from government surveys](#)

Thursday 1 November 2007, British Academy, London

[Introduction to government microdata: focus on consumption](#)

Wednesday 7 November 2007, Graduate School of Education, Queen's University, Belfast

[British Crime Survey User Meeting](#)

Tuesday 11 December 2007, Royal Statistical Society, London

[ESDS Government meeting on changes in access to the government surveys and Labour Force Survey/Annual Population Survey user meeting](#)

Thursday 17 January 2008, Royal Statistical Society, London

To find out more or to book a place:

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



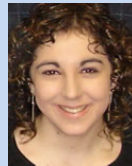
Qb Staff Changes

Two members of the Qb team have left this Autumn. We would like to thank them for their hard work and efforts over the past two years.



Jenny Rains has been the Qb Documentation Assistant and has assisted greatly with the redesign of the Qb interface. Jenny has also worked to get the PDF documents fully searchable by the Qb search engine, enhancing the usability of the questionnaires on the site.

Jenny will remain as the SLS Administrator until December 2007.



Laura Hyman has been the Qb Research officer and has been working on the Topics area of the site. Laura has added the tables in the Topics pages making it easier to find questionnaires on that topic and has also added links and references for further reading.

Laura will continue to be in the [Department of Sociology](#) at Surrey as she undertakes a full time PhD.

Other Events of Interest

[2007 Statistics User Forum Conference](#)

15th November, 2007
The Royal Society, London



“Statistics on Income, earnings and wealth. Where do they come from and why do we need them?”

[CASS](#) at the University of Southampton provides short courses for academic social scientists and applied researchers in government, market research and the independent and voluntary sectors.

The [2007/08 programme](#) covers topics in survey design and implementation, survey sampling, data collection and data analysis methods.

Stay informed - Qb survey news and updates!

There are several ways to keep up to date with Qb developments. All survey updates are added to the side box of the main [Questionnaires](#) menu. We have a separate page with details of all [Updates and Events](#).

The Qb also has a well established mailing list. If you would like to join please send an e-mail to z.tenger@surrey.ac.uk with the subject line 'Join Qb Mailing List'.



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