

## Interactive training for the interviewers

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In Statistics Norway we started our first distributed CAI-operation in 1995. By then we trained our old interviewer staff to use laptops for their work. Quite many of them had low skills, if some at all, in using computers. We did worry about the training, but it turned out to be successful. Most of the inexperienced computer-users found it very interesting and useful to learn to use a computer. They appreciated to get this kind of knowledge, which was more and more a common knowledge in the society. And they found it very useful in their work as interviewers. As I have told on earlier conferences we gave them a laptop with full Windows environment and they also had the possibility to send and receive e-mails.

One of the main reasons to the success was the fact that we divided the training in sessions.

They stayed at a hotel twice in groups of 10-20 participants for 3 days. We offered two teachers and two teacher assistants. In the period between the two sessions they had 2 weeks at home, getting familiar with the equipment and they also had some tasks to do. After this period they went back to a hotel again and had some other 3 days of training. Afterwards it was also some tasks to do.

This two-sessions model was later adopted by the ordinary training of new interviewers. So after 1995 all new interviewers have been trained in using computers, Windows, e-mail and so on, mixed up with interviewer specific themes, all the time with a period at home between two residential courses. This way of training has been very useful for those who had low skills in using computers.

The part of inexperienced computer users has decreased dramatically during the years from 1995 to 2003. Norway is a country with quite big distances, and the traveling costs for two meetings does cost a lot. Early in 2002 we decided that we couldn't go on with this. The most of the participants doesn't need this "Getting Familiar" – period anymore. Spring 2002 we quitted the two sessions model, due to the costs. We started up with a training model with one residential course of 4 days. We quitted the computer teaching and expected that the interviewers had the needed skill to handle the laptop in their work. When they applied for the interviewer job it is a question in the form on what they themselves think about their skill of computer knowledge. We know from experience that this information does not give a correct picture. So we developed a computer skill questionnaire (using Blaise of course) in which we asked 27 questions about use of computers. On this bases we decide if the applicant would gain of some pre training on the computer. Due to travel costs this one-day pre-training is kept the day before the residential course. Until now just two participants have needed this extra training before two of the courses.

In fact the reduction from two to one training session didn't meant a big reduction in number of hours available for the training. We use four whole days. But to get through all the contents in so short period of time, makes the training very compressed. Of course this reduce the quality of the training. We started to evaluate alternative ways of training to reduce the loss caused by the compression. It needed to be done from their home. Not all the participants have access to a computer before they got their laptop. So if the training should include use of computer it had to be after the residential course. So what we had to do was to make some exercises for the purpose of repetition after the course. There were

already some homework after the course, consisting of interviewing of other interviewers, people in the office and so on. We made up a list of the subjects we want to repeat, some computer tasks and some interviewer topics. We want to make something more motivating than just reading some pages, something requiring action from the user, and also giving us some results back. We want the possibility to check that they really go through the repetition session, and perhaps also with which level of difficulty.

What tool could offer this functionality? What we want was much the same, as we want from a questionnaire, so why not use Blaise? It has also the advantage of being a known environment for the users.

So what we did was to make a questionnaire with sound and pictures picked from the themes we want to repeat. For the time being it has been within following subjects

- First contact with the respondent
- How to meet different ways of answering
- Use of Outlook Express and Internet Explorer - the Interviewers Homepage
- How to look at/correct your wage demand
- Specific questions in the Labour Force Survey

### Examples:

#### Example 1: The first contact with a respondent on the Labour Force Survey

<b>FIELDS</b>	
<b>Kont1</b>	"You call a respondent on the Labour Force Survey You get hold of the respondent, introduce yourself and say that you are calling from Statistics Norway in occasion of the survey in which he is chosen to take part @F Press <Enter> to hear the respondents answer. @F" : STRING[1], EMPTY
<b>Kont1Lyd</b>	"@GYou are calling a respondent on the Labour Force Survey You get hold of the respondent, introduce yourself and say that you are calling from Statistics Norway in occasion of the survey in which he is chosen to take part. @G How would you respond on this?" "^Lyd" : (Slippe "No, of course you may be let off. It is voluntary", Maalkke "No, it is voluntary, but we want you take part, otherwise we lose the information about all persons in the group of which you are chosen to represent.", Maa "Yes, in fact persons are obliged to take part in this survey.")
<b>Oppf1</b>	"^Oppftxt Press <Enter>" : STRING[1], EMPTY
<b>RULES</b>	Kont1 Lyd := 'SOUND(Sound/Kont1.wav)' Kont1Lyd IF Kont1Lyd = Maa THEN OppfTxt := '@KCorrect@K/ LFS is in fact the only interview survey where a person is obliged to take part'

	<p>ELSE</p> <p>OppfTxt := '@LError@L,@/LFS is in fact the only interview survey where a person is obliged to take part'</p> <p>ENDIF</p> <p>Oppf1</p>
<b>Kont1. wav</b>	"Oh I don't know. I don't take part in all the surveys going on. They are voluntary, so I don't have to take part. Do I?"

**Example 2: How to meet different ways of answering – "in the middle"**

<b>FIELDS</b>	
<b>Spm2_Innl</b>	<p>Imagine a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 means never and 10 means always. At what point would you place yourself concerning when to justify the following action:</p> <p>Avoid to report a damage that you have involuntary caused on a parked car</p> <p>Press &lt;Enter&gt; to listen to respondent's answer"</p> <p>: STRING[1], empty</p>
<b>Spm2</b>	<p>Imagine a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 means never and 10 means always. At what point would you place yourself concerning when to justify the following action:</p> <p>Avoid to report a damage that you have involuntary caused on a parked car</p> <p>@F If you can't manage to pick out an answer, you may press Enter!@F"</p> <p>"^Lyd"</p> <p>: 1..10, EMPTY</p>
<b>Oppf2b</b>	<p>"Well certainly this is not easy to decide. What would you do.."</p> <p>: (Spm "Repeat the whole question",</p> <p>Svar "Repeat the scale, for example.: Yes, would you say 2,3,4,5,6 7 ,8 or 9",</p> <p>Tall "Ask for what number she would choose",</p> <p>Sint "Ask the respondent if she is stupid - you need an accurate answer")</p>
<b>Oppf2</b>	<p>"^Oppftxt</p> <p>Press &lt;Enter&gt;"</p> <p>: STRING[1], EMPTY</p>
<b>RULES</b>	<p>Spm2_Innl</p> <p>lyd := 'SOUND(sound/midt.wav)'</p> <p>Spm2</p> <p>IF Spm2=EMPTY THEN</p> <p>Oppf2b</p> <p>ENDIF</p> <p>IF (Spm2 &gt; 4) and (spm2 &lt; 7) THEN OppfTxt :=</p> <p>'Well, actually it won't be quite correct. Won't both 5 and 6 both be in the middle?'</p> <p>ELSEIF spm2 = DONTKNOW THEN OppfTxt:=</p> <p>'It was perhaps to stop some quickly!'</p> <p>ELSEIF spm2 = REFUSAL THEN OppfTxt:=</p> <p>'Would not exactly mean that she refused to answer.'</p> <p>ELSEIF Oppf2b = Spm THEN OppfTxt :=</p> <p>'Yes perhaps, but wouldn't it be better to ask for an accurate number"</p>

	<pre> ELSEIF Oppf2b = Svar THEN OppfTxt :=   'Yes certainly it will be. Then let us hope that she'll understand that you   need   an answer' ELSEIF Oppf2b = Sint THEN OppfTxt :=   'Does not think this was any good idea. Wouldn't it be better to ask for an   accurate number' ENDIF </pre>
<b>midt.wav</b>	<i>"Oh. In the middle, I guess"</i>

By now, we have used these interactive training for repetition after four courses, and the users have told they find this way or repeating of the subjects very useful.

We have also started to think of using this technique for repeating subjects and for further training of experienced interviewers. Some subjects, for instance, how to reduce non-response, could be made as a small course with some cases, and send to interviewers that have been in the field for a while. As a test of the interviewers knowledge it will be useful to let them return the answers in the questionnaire, and perhaps also to take advantage of the audit trail feature.

For some surveys, which require special knowledge we have used different methods of training, in addition to the obligatory instruction paper. Sometimes we have made a videocassette with some examples. Sometimes when it is a very large survey we have arranged residential courses. We now discuss to use the interactive training technique to make the adequate training as a sort of briefing before the survey goes in the field.

This spring Statistic Norway bought a dedicated tool for making interactive courses, Rapid Builder. The interview training is being picked out to be a test project using this tool. So I have now started the work of making this repeat part of the training in Rapid Builder to find out if it will be better to make this feature in this tool. Of course we lose the advantage of using the well-known Blaise environment.

We have also discussed to use the technique for helpdesk purposes. For more technical issues Rapid Builder, with the possibility to record the cursor movement on the screen will be useful.

Sending Blaise questionnaires together with pictures, sounds, and movies to the interviewers using the ordinary lines will be impossible. Our communication is based on ISDN and the communication will time out before all the large files are transferred. So we have to use CD's for this purpose.

As a conclusion, it is clear that we are just in the initial period of using this training method. We hope to develop it much further. It is a cheap, and we think, efficient way of training. It gives new possibilities and is much more motivating than just to read some more instructions. To be very optimistic, we can imagine a possibility just to send the interviewer a laptop with a complete self-study program when they are hired as interviewers. This will mean that we could avoid periods of areas lacking interviewers. On the other hand it is a lot of subjects that is more suitable for face-to-face training. Another matter to concern is the social aspect. To be interviewer out in the field is a lonely employment, with few possibilities to have contact with colleagues. The residential courses are essential for the purpose of making contacts between the interviewers and also to improve the contact between the interviewer and the office. So more realistic is it to think about the interactive training as an efficient complement to the residential courses.