

Challenges in Converting the National Crime Victimization Survey to Blaise

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Introduction

The National Crime and Victimization Survey (NCVS) is a major national longitudinal survey with a sample size of about 56,000 households. This survey provides personal victimization and property crime data on types and incidences of crime; monetary losses and physical injuries due to crime; along with characteristics of the victims and offenders. Although NCVS is a household based survey, it collects crime data for every household member who is age 12 and older. The NCVS was converted from a Pen and Paper Interview (PAPI)/Computer Assisted Telephone Interview (CATI) CASES interview to a Computer Assisted Personal Interview (CAPI)/CATI Blaise instrument in July 2006.

Survey design

The NCVS has a set of screener questions that determine the type and number of times a specific crime has occurred within a six month reference period for each eligible household member that leads to a set of questions that provide more detail information for every person who has reported a crime. To avoid the problem of reporting the same crime multiple times between household respondents, the survey also has an un-duplication component that compares the crimes reported and flags duplicates for deletion. The final component of the survey is an editing and coding operation that is integrated within the regular NCVS instrument and is administered after data collection has been completed.

Implementation Challenges

We had serious performance issues because of the initial requirements to collect up to 30 crimes for each eligible member of the household – with a maximum limit of 30 people per household. This requirement results in a large number of arrayed blocks being generated ($30 * 30 = 900$).

Another implementation challenge had to do with developing an approach for comparing crimes between members of the household that contained enough detail for the interviewer to determine if the crime is a duplicate of one that has already been reported.

The third challenge with the NCVS instrument was integrating an “Editing and Coding” instrument that only allows a certain set of questions to be eligible for review, editing, or coding.

Conclusion

This paper will discuss our three major challenges and the approach we used to address them. It will also discuss the structure of the instrument and the difficulties inherent in converting a survey of the size and complexity of NCVS from CASES to BAISE.