

# Exploration of Blaise Instrument Generation from Metadata

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Blaise instruments consist of a structured set of fields, along with routing, edits and layout instructions. Instruments are often scripted from specifications, which define the instrument content and behaviour. If sufficient rigour were applied to the definition of this metadata, would it be possible to build a system that could generate the source code for Blaise instruments?

This paper explores the issues associated with the generation of Blaise instrument source code from metadata. It commences with a detailed analysis of the elements which make up an electronic questionnaire, and leads into the development of a prototype facility which is expected to deliver Blaise instruments from metadata.

While some level of instrument generation appears possible, it can only be done if the metadata is comprehensive enough. This is particularly so if the code generation facility is to support different modes of collection (eg. personal interviewing or self-completed form). The generation of instrument code will also be assisted by having standardised instrument designs and some preprogrammed questionnaire elements. A good, flexible metadata management facility also seems to be fundamental to the success of any code generation system. These and other issues will be discussed in the paper.

Abstract