Experiences Using an Event History Calendar in the PSID

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About the PSID

- Nationally representative sample of 8,000 U.S. families
- Panel survey conducted since 1968
- Survey instrument programmed in Blaise and Visual Basic
Why use an EHC?

• PSID went from an annual interviewing cycle to an every other year cycle

• Wanted to improve respondent recall over the past two calendar years

• Evidence from experiment between standard Q-list and EHC indicated EHC improved recall
EHC versus Question List

Q-List version

EHC version

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First Experience with EHC

• Main survey instrument reprogrammed in Blaise

• Employment section programmed as a calendar in Visual Basic

• Limitations prevented the use of DLLs
Application Design in 2003

Total Database files
3 bdb’s, 2 mdb’s

Blaise App 1
Coverscreen Housing

VB App 1
EHC Job calendar for Head

Blaise App 2
Follow-up Employment Section for Head based on EHC1

Blaise App 3
Follow-up Employment Section for Wife based on EHC2 plus rest of interview

VB App 2
EHC Job calendar for Wife

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Results First EHC Wave

- Minor problems experienced with the application that passed preload
- EHC did seem to aid respondent recall
- Could not back up to make corrections
- EHC did not have robust consistency checking
- Differing design of EHC provided different variables
- Required hand corrections to reconcile key variables with prior waves
### EHC versus Question List

#### Q-List version

<table>
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<tr>
<th>CYRTH</th>
<th>CYNAMF</th>
<th>CYNAML</th>
<th>WHICH</th>
<th>ED39M</th>
<th>BD41C</th>
<th>BD45B</th>
<th>BD48C</th>
<th>BD48CE</th>
<th>BD54CE</th>
<th>BD54CEYR</th>
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<td>COLLYER</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>MCKENZIE FINANCIAL</td>
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<td>05</td>
<td>2000</td>
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#### EHC version

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<th>JobN.</th>
<th>cEDate</th>
<th>SYear</th>
<th>SSeason</th>
<th>SMonth</th>
<th>SByGrd</th>
<th>SYear</th>
<th>EYear</th>
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<td>WIN</td>
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<td>DEC</td>
<td>Last</td>
<td>Craftworks</td>
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</table>

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Multiple Datasets

- Incorporating the EHC required five separate datasets
- Used Blaise bdb and MS Access for EHC
- Required different utilities to import into SAS
- Tools available for Blaise files were not available for EHC
Interviewer Training

- EHC data entry varies considerably from Q-list data entry
- Data entry is a combination of mouse and keyboard
- Not every question or probe is scripted
- Interviewers trained to use landmarks to anchor other responses as necessary
Interviewer Training

• Multiple training materials used to reach each type of learner
  – Home study material
  – Demo on DVD
  – Class presentations
  – Hands-on practice
  – Certification
EHC Round 2

- In spite of difficulties, recognized value of EHC administration for special question series
- Childhood health sequence prime candidate for EHC format
- DLL used to launch EHC (VB calendar) and write data back to bdb
Programming Logistics

- Programmed a data structure in Blaise to work with the grid in the VB form
- Conditions loaded dynamically based on information in screening section in the DEP sequence
- When calendar is complete, the data are saved back to the bdb
- Also save data to xml file for backup

At what age were you first diagnosed with **an Allergic condition**? Until what age did you have it?

**PROBE:** "If you don't know the exact age, please give us your best guess."
**PROBE** for age using landmarks, starting with the earliest landmark.
For age at which condition ended: if R says "Still have it" or "Older than 16", CLICK "17+" and enter age.

At what age were you first diagnosed with an Allergic condition? Until what age did you have it?

PROBE: “if you don’t know the exact age, please give us your best guess.”
PROBE for age using landmarks, starting with the earliest landmark
For age at which condition ended: if R says “Still have it” or “Older than 16”, CLICK “17+” and enter age

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Processing Challenge

- Calendar portion of the application was pretested and processed without problems.
- Early data dumps from the production version had some anomalies with the calendar variables.
- Narrowed down the problem to the Blaise to SAS extraction routine.
Note Field in VB Form

Note Field allowed interviewers to enter hard returns

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Calendar field that allowed for hard returns caused variable misalignment during extraction.

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<tr>
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</table>

Text data with hard returns was pushed to next variable causing misalignment.
Conclusion Interviewer Training

• Easier interviewer training
  – Concepts
  – Interface
• Home study
• In class presentation/practice
Conclusion Processing

- Using DLL call extremely stable
- Flexibility to back up and make corrections
- Streamlined processing
- Avoided start and stop dates
- Consider restrictions imposed on Blaise field you are writing back to when planning an external application
Next Steps

• Reprogram the EHC employment calendar in a similar fashion to the childhood health calendar

• Use a DLL to call the employment EHC

• Write EHC data back to the Blaise bdb

• Goal = 1 bmi and 1 dataset!
Thank You

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