Fostering Modern and Innovative Data Collection Methods

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US Bureau of Labor Statistics

UNECE Workshop on Statistical Data Collection
‘Resourceful Data Acquisition’
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Background


Diagram:

- OIES
  - QCEW
  - CES
  - JOLTS
OIES Data Collections

- 2 Monthly **Surveys** (of establishments):
  - Current Employment Statistics (CES), and
  - Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey (JOLTS)

- 1 Quarterly **Census** (of establishments):
  - Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW)
Data Collection - QCEW

- **Quarterly** collection of ~10,000,000 worksites
  - Administrative data on 8.4 million UI accounts, collected by UI for administrative purposes
  - Multiple Worksite Report: 144,000 UI accounts reporting on 1.8 million worksites, collected by BLS to obtain worksite reporting for each business establishment

- **Annual Refiling Survey** – to verify industry and addresses: ~ 1/3 of businesses with 3+ employees surveyed each year
Data Collection: JOLTS

- 16,000 business establishments collected with 2 “closings” per reference period
  - Eight weeks after reference period is initial close of collection estimates
  - ~Four weeks later close of collection for final estimates
Data Collection: CES

- 651,000 business establishments collected with 5 “closings” per reference period

- IT NEVER STOPS

Go Go Go Go Go
Data Collection: CES

5 “closings” per reference period

Closings of collection following reference period for National data at:
- 3 weeks (1st close, preliminary estimate),
- 7 weeks (2nd close, 1st revised estimate),
- 11 weeks (3rd close, 2nd revised estimate)

Closings of collection following reference period for State and (substate) Area data at:
- 5 weeks (1st close, preliminary estimate),
- 9 weeks (2nd close, final [revised] estimate),
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>CES</th>
<th>JOLTS</th>
<th>QCEW</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Site</td>
<td>Managers</td>
<td>Staff</td>
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<tr>
<td>OIES CES Data Collection Branches (2)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>OIES JOLTS Data Collection Staff</td>
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<td>Data Collection Help Desk</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Data Collection Center Atlanta</td>
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<td>EDI Center Chicago</td>
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<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>58</strong></td>
<td><strong>340</strong></td>
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Data Collection Resource Management

- Resources:
  - Data Collection Related Management, Staffing, and contracts: about $70 million per year
  - Management:
    - 121 managers, front-line supervisors, and Quality Assurance staff
  - Staffing:
    - 756 staff focused on data collection, review, editing, and recontact activities
    - Some staff (44) focused on IT systems to facilitate work
Planning for Innovation

How?

- Plan for and allow for failures
  - Create a culture that recognizes that it’s good to try new things
  - Identifying things that don’t work still adds value

- Develop leaders
  - Try to have co-leaders on project teams – expanding leadership training opportunities
  - Reward leadership efforts
Planning for Innovation

How?

- Reward teamwork and individual efforts
- Recognize successes
- Plan for training opportunities
  - Plan to have $$$ for training
  - Seminars
  - Online training
  - University courses
Planning for Innovation

- U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics annual management process
  - Identify work and research items to put in management and employee work plans
    - Accountability at the employee level
  - Identify work and research items to report further up the management chain
    - Accountability at the management and agency level
Recent Collection Innovations

- Online spreadsheet web form
  - Replaces Excel spreadsheet upload
  - Problem with Excel – respondents like it!
    - Modify spreadsheet for own use
    - Modification makes automatic extraction of data elements problematic
  - New tool allows copy/paste of columns from Excel
Recent Collection Innovations

- Online data entry via spreadsheet web form

Data Entry

The online spreadsheet below offers a number of features to facilitate data entry. View hints for entering data. Note:

- Copy & paste across cells (use keyboard commands Ctrl+` for copy and Ctrl+` for paste).
- Sort rows ascending/descending (click on the column header).
- Expand location information (click '+' next to 'Location Information').

June 2018   July 2018   August 2018

Please report data for the pay period that includes the 12th of the month.

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<th>Count</th>
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Recent Collection Innovations

- Expanding use of email blasts as a prompting mechanism
- Annual Refiling Survey has about 1.2 million reporters each year
  - Updates industry and address
Recent Collection Innovations

- Expanding use of email blasts as a prompting mechanism: results

- Web collection
  - In 2012 – 6.2 percent of survey done by web
  - In 2014 – 27.5 percent
  - In 2017, survey completely paperless
    - Response from companies signing up for web reporting achieved a 77 percent unit response rate
Recent Product Innovations

- Nonprofit data
  - Matching publicly available IRS data on nonprofit companies to BLS’ QCEW, provides U.S. census level data on nonprofit companies
Recent Product Innovations

- Data on companies with foreign direct investment (FDI)
  - Matching data from the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis on FDI with the QCEW and the Occupational Employment Statistics survey
    - Data on companies and occupational staffing patterns of companies with and without FDI
Final Thoughts

- Data collection is serious business
  - It needs adequate funding
  - It needs constant management attention to ensure fiduciary responsibility of this large expenditure of resources
  - It needs managers and staff who are willing and able to test new processes, to innovate, to obtain responses from as many as possible with the fewest resources
Final Thoughts

- Data collection is hard
  - High cost
  - Decline in respondent willingness to participate in government surveys

- Wherever possible, leverage alternate data sources
  - Create new products at lower cost
  - Reduce respondent burden
  - Caution: provenance and consistency are critical
Contact Information

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