HEALTH AND RETIREMENT STUDY
2006 Internet Survey
Final, Version 1.0
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Data Description and Usage

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Data Description and Usage

1. Introduction

Beginning in March 2006, a sub sample of the Health and Retirement Study (HRS) participated in an Internet based survey developed jointly by the HRS, Survey Research Center, Institute for Social Research (ISR), at the University of Michigan and the RAND Corporation. The National Institute on Aging at NIH (R01 AG020638) provided funding for the 2006 Internet Survey. The 2006 Internet Survey Final Release (Version 1.0) questionnaire contained several different topical areas including Internet/computers, health and emotional problems, Social Security, numeracy items, psychosocial items, household composition, expectations, questions about housing/checking accounts, and stocks and prescription drug usage and insurance. The 2006 Internet Survey is the second in a series of surveys that will be conducted on the internet. Completed interviews were obtained from 1,352 HRS respondents.

By receiving the dataset, you agree to use it for research and statistical purposes only and make no effort to identify respondents. In addition, you agree to send us a copy of any publications you produce based on the data. See Obtaining the Data (at the end of this document for additional details).

2. The Sample Interviewed in the 2006 Internet Survey

Contact letters were sent to 1,920 HRS respondents, inviting them to participate in the 2006 Internet Survey, in March 2006. Each respondent was offered $20.00 to participate in the study. The 2006 Internet sample consists of respondents who participated in the HRS 2003 Internet survey (n=785), non-response respondents from the 2003 Internet survey (n=170) and 965 respondents drawn from those who said they had internet access in the HRS 2004 survey and who were not already selected to participate in an HRS 2005 mail survey. A total of 1,352 respondents completed the 2006 Internet Survey, for a simple response rate of 70.4%.

3. Documentation

3A. 2006 Internet Survey Codebook and Data

The codebook file for the 2006 Internet Survey is called net06_r.txt. The 2006 Internet Survey data are at the respondent level. Respondent level files contain question that were asked of all respondents about themselves and/or their household. The data file contains one record for each respondent who completed the 2006 Internet Survey. The 2006 Internet Survey data file is called net06_r.

The net06_r data file contains 1,352 cases and 314 variables. The primary Identification variables (IDs) are:

```
HHID        HOUSEHOLD IDENTIFIER
PN          PERSON NUMBER
```

Records in the data files are sorted in order by HHID and PN. The variable PN refers to the respondent who answered the Internet survey.

Identification variables are stored in character format. For further
information about HRS identification variables and merging data, see
the Data Description for the HRS 2002 Core.

The variable names in the 2006 Internet Survey data file begin with the
letter "I" followed by a number "2" and then the variable name. The
variable names in the data file are not the same as what is shown in
the "paper version" of the questionnaire. However, we have included a
reference in variable labels (where possible) that should make it easy
to match a given question with the corresponding variable(s). For
example, in the paper version of the questionnaire you will see:

IU004_LastTime (IU004) LAST TIME INTERNET WAS USED FOR EMAIL

Not counting right now, when was the last time you used the Internet
to check, read or send email?
        1. earlier today
        2. yesterday
        3. a couple of days ago
        4. about a week ago
        5. several weeks ago
        6. never

In the codebook and data, the variable has been named I2_EMAIL.
However, IU004 is part of the label in the codebook (see below), which
provides a link to the relevant question in the paper version of the
questionnaire.

I2_EMAIL   LAST TIME R USED EMAIL - IU004
        Section: I   Level: RESPONDENT   Type: Numeric   Width:
4   Decimals: 0

    Not counting right now, when was the last time you used the
    Internet to check, read or send email?

....

            779   1. EARLIER TODAY
            274   2. YESTERDAY
            126   3. A COUPLE OF DAYS AGO
             57   4. ABOUT A WEEK AGO
             76   5. SEVERAL WEEKS AGO
             30   6. NEVER
              8   8. DK (Don't Know)
              2   9. Question Skipped

3B. Data Quality

In the prescription drug sequence, there are several "amount" variables
where the program did not allow the Respondent to enter an amount with
a decimal. Here is a list of affected variables:

I2_PD_GENAMT   AMOUNT PAY GENERIC – PDGEN
I2_PD_BRAAMT   AMOUNT PAY BRAND NAME – PDBRA
I2_PD_NONAMT   AMOUNT PAY NON-PREFERRED – PDNON

```
I2_PD_OTHAMT          AMOUNT PAY OTHER – PDOTH
I2_PD_YRDEDCAMT       DEDUCTIBLE AMOUNT - PD008
I2_PD_OOPMON          OUT-OF-POCKET COST-LAST MONTH - PD010
I2_PD_OOPYR           OUT-OF-POCKET COST-LAST 12 MO - PD011
I2_PD_TOTCST          TOTAL COST DRUGS - PD014A
```

Respondent answers to either open-end or "other (specify)" question have not been coded for this release. For example, the name of the prescription drugs (PDPHP_1 – PDPHP_5) as well as responses to PDSpe (What other prescription do you mean?) are not released. You will see these types of variables referenced in the paper questionnaire; however, there will be no record of them in the codebook.

3C. Explanation of the "Ball Sequence"

The goal of the ball sequence was to gauge what a Respondent thought their future monthly benefit from Social Security might be. Based on the monthly amount reported at I2_EXPSSMOAMT, the 7 bins were assigned 7 amounts. The bin amounts were calculated using the following formula: The length (L) of the interval of one bin is L=A/2.5 (rounded) and the thresholds would be: 0, L, 2L, 3L, 4L, 5L, 6L. So, if I2_EXPSSMOAMT= 800, the bins would be 0, 320, 640, 960, 1280, 1600, 1920 (these amounts correspond to variables, I2_BALLNUM1 – I2_BALLNUM7). In those 7 bins, the Respondent is asked to place the 20 balls. The ball placement reflects what the Respondent thinks the chances out of 20 that future social security benefits fall in each bin. The variables I2_BINNUM1 – I2_BINNUM7 represent the number of balls put into each of the bins.

Here is an example of how these ball placements can be interpreted:

There are no balls in the ranges below $320 or above $1600, so the Respondent is certain that benefits will not be lower than $320 or higher than $1600.

12 out of 20 balls are in the bin $320 – $640 meaning that the chance that benefits are between $320 and $640 is 12 out of 20 (60 percent).

8 out of the 20 balls (40 percent) are in the bin $640 and $960.

4. Distribution Files

The following extensions are used for the six different types of distribution files:

.DA for data files,
.SAS for SAS program statements,
.SPS for SPSS program statements,
.DO for Stata DO statements,
.DCT for Stata dictionary statements, and
.TXT for codebook files.

For example,

NET06_R.DA contains ASCII data.
NET06_R.SAS contains corresponding SAS program statements,
NET06_R.SPS contains corresponding SPSS program statements,
NET06_R.DO contains corresponding Stata DO statements,

NET06_R.DCT contains corresponding Stata dictionary statements, and
NET06_R.TXT contains the ASCII codebook.

The 2006 Internet Survey Final Release data are provided in ASCII
format, with fixed-length records.   Use the associated SAS, SPSS or
Stata program statements to read the data into the analysis package of
your choice.   In addition, you will probably want to download the
codebook file (NET06_R.TXT) and the data description (this document).

5. Program Statements

5A. Using the Files with SAS

To create a SAS system file for a particular dataset, two file types
must be present for that dataset -- .SAS program statement files and
.DA data files.

To create a SAS system file, load the *.SAS file into the SAS Program
Editor.

If the *.SAS file is located in "c:\net06\sas" and the data file is
located in
"c:\net06\data", you can run the file as is. A SAS system file
(*.SAS7BDAT) will be saved to directory "c:\net06\sas".

If the files are not located in the specified directories, you will
need to edit the *.SAS file to reflect the proper path names prior to
running the file.

5B. Using the Files with SPSS

To create an SPSS system file for a particular dataset, two file types
must be present for that dataset -- .SPS program statement files and
.DA data files.

To create an SPSS system file, open the *.SPS file in SPSS as an SPSS
Syntax File.

If the *.SPS file is located in "c:\net2006\spss" and the data file is
located in "c:\net06\DATA", you can run the file as is. An SPSS system
file (*.SAV) will be saved to directory "c:\net06\spss".

If the files are not located in the specified directories, you will
need to edit the *.SPS file to reflect the proper path names prior to
running the file.

5C. Using the Files with Stata

To use Stata with a particular dataset, the following three file types
must be present for that dataset -- .DCT files, .DO files, and .DA data
files.

Files with the suffix .DA contain the raw data for Stata to read.
Files with the suffix .DCT are Stata dictionaries used by Stata to
describe the data. Files with the suffix .DO are short Stata programs
("do files") which you may use to read in the data. Load the .DO file
into Stata and then submit it.

If the *.DO and *.DCT files are located in "c:\net06\Stata" and the data file is located in "c:\net06\data", you can run the .DO file as is.

If the files are not located in these directories, you must edit the *.DO and *.DCT files to reflect the proper path names before you run the files.

Note that the variable names provided in the .DCT files are uppercase. If you prefer lower case variable names, you may wish to convert the .DCT files to lower case prior to use. You may do this by reading the .DCT file into a text or word processing program and changing the case. For instance in Microsoft Word, Edit, Select All, Format, Change Case, lowercase.

6. Obtaining the Data

6a. Registration and Downloading the Data

HRS data are available for free to researchers and analysts at the HRS Web site. In order to obtain public release data, you must first register at our Web site. Once you have completed the registration process, your username and password will be sent to you via e-mail. Your username and password are required to download any data files.

By registering all users, we are able to document for our sponsors the size and diversity of our user community allowing us to continue to collect these important data. Registered users receive user support, information related to errors in the data, future releases, workshops, and publication lists. The information you provide will not be used for any commercial use, and will not be redistributed to third parties.

6B. Conditions of Use

By registering, you agree to the Conditions of Use governing access to Health and Retirement public release data. You must agree to

- o not attempt to identify respondents
- o not transfer data to third parties except as specified
- o not share your username and password
- o include specified citations in work based on HRS data
- o provide information to us about publications based on HRS data
- o report apparent errors in the HRS data or documentation files
- o notify us of changes in your contact information

For more information concerning privacy issues and conditions of use, please read "Conditions of Use for Public Data Files" and "Privacy and Security Notice" at the Public File Download Area of the HRS Web site.

6C. Publications Based on Data

As part of the data registration process, you agree to include specified citations and to inform HRS of any papers, publications, or presentations based on HRS data. Please send a copy of any publications you produce based on HRS data, with a bibliographical reference, if appropriate, to the address below.

Health and Retirement Study

Attn: Papers and Publications
The Institute for Social Research, Room 3050
P.O. Box 1248
Ann Arbor, MI (USA) 48106-1248

Alternately, you may contact us by e-mail at hrsquest@isr.umich.edu
with "Attn: Papers and Publications" in the subject line.

7. If You Need to Know More

This document is intended to serve as a brief overview and to provide
guidelines to using the Internet 2006 Final Release (Version 1.0) data.
If you have questions or concerns that are not adequately covered here
or on our Web site, please contact us. We will do our best to provide
answers.

7A. HRS Internet Site

Health and Retirement Study public release data and additional
information about the study are available on the Internet. To access
the data and other relevant information, point your Web browser to the
HRS Web site.

        http://hrsonline.isr.umich.edu/

7B. Contact Information

If you need to contact us, you may do so by one of the methods listed
below.

Internet: Help Desk at our Web site

E-mail: hrsquest@isr.umich.edu

Postal service:
Health and Retirement Study
The Institute for Social Research, Room 3050
The University of Michigan
P.O. Box 1248
Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1248

FAX: (734) 647-1186