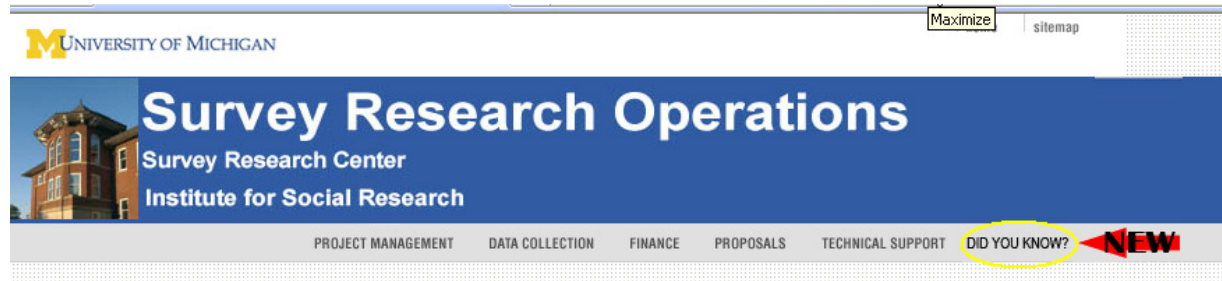


July 18, 2013

Happening in SRO

You can find this “Happening in SRO” and all similar updates on the SRO Intranet. Look for the Section titled: Did You Know?



SSL Expands Capacity

Jody Dougherty

Due to increased work load in the Survey Services Lab (SSL), the interviewing staff has more than doubled in size as result of our most recent hiring – from about 50 active staff to well over 100 interviewers.

Beginning this past spring, the hiring team, led by Meg Stephenson and Bonnie Andree, working with SSL Manager Cheryl Wiese, orchestrated this recruitment effort, introducing some new approaches to recruitment in the Lab. This included making extensive use of available Google products for the first time (e.g. Google Calendars and scheduling software to schedule interviews and follow-up assessments, Google Spreadsheets to record performance outcomes, and Google Forms to collect information from the candidates). This made the process more efficient for the applicants and our hiring team. Some of the details on this recruitment effort are outlined below.

Recruitment Sources: Free ads were placed on craigslist, on job boards at colleges, universities and community centers, and, in the final month of recruitment, through flyers posted in the general Ann Arbor area.

The Numbers: 400 individuals completed applications for our interviewer positions, using the Data Collection Services (DCS) Recruitment website. 231 phone interview appointments were scheduled by staff in DCS. 222 telephone interviews (20-30 minutes) were conducted with applicants by 11 SSL staff (Stan Hasper completed 66 interviews alone!) 160 applicants qualified for further assessment/testing and 119 of them completed the face-to-face testing and participated in one of the 15 group interview sessions.

Results: 69 of the final 80 applicants (86%) who were offered positions accepted and will be working on the following projects:

- Surveys of Consumers (SCA)
- Monitoring the Future (MTF)
- Health and Family Life Study (DUST)
- Army STARRS Pre/Post-Deployment Study Time 3 (PPDS-T3)

We are very pleased to welcome these new interviewers to the SSL staff.

The Role of Housing in Children's Healthy Development (Housing & Children)

Barb Ward

The Housing & Children project is starting with a bang in July and August! This project, originally started in June of 2012 as Housing Tradeoffs (HTO), and then How Housing Matters (HHM), is re-starting with a re-configured, re-energized scientific (and project!) team. SRO has received funding for July & August and is conducting extensive planning and development activities designed to re-start the project.

The Housing & Children project seeks to understand how a family's housing situation affects the behavioral and emotional adjustment of low and moderate income urban children from 3-8 years of age at the study's inception. The project is very ambitious and includes collection of multiple measures in the household in order to achieve the study's goals. Interviewers will conduct two-hour face-to-face interviews with caregivers and around 45-60 minutes of activities with children. The in-home measurements will include Woodcock-Johnson assessments, blood pressure, height, weight, waist and hip measurements, and dried blood spots with both adults and children. Interviewers will conduct extensive in-home observations, including collecting laser-tape measurements of rooms in the household, deployment of a noise meter, and a child-time diary. They will also conduct neighborhood walk-around observations.

Designed as a three-wave study, the project intends to screen over 15000 sample lines to achieve interviews with ~2654 caregivers and 3450 children aged 3 to 8 in Wave 1. One-half of the sample will be a list sample obtained from local public housing authorities, one-half of the sample will be a population-based sample heavily skewed toward low-income families. Interviewing is planned in four urban areas: Cleveland, OH; Denver, CO; Dallas, TX; and Seattle, WA. One pretest (using a convenience sample) will be conducted in the Detroit, MI area.

The project schedule is not yet determined, awaiting final funding decisions. It is currently anticipated that the project will not go into the field before Spring of 2014 (earliest start date). The Housing & Children project promises to be a challenging and interesting project for SRO!

From the Archives

Kelly Chatain

When "Little Boy" was dropped on Hiroshima, the world was dramatically introduced to the Atomic Age, and by 1950 there were seven major laboratories in the United States conducting research on the peacetime uses of atomic energy. The responsibility for developing the potential of this new, powerful technology lay in the hands of the Atomic Energy Commission (AEC). Nothing was known about the public's awareness of atomic energy or their response to living near these installations. As "the new Prometheus", it behooved the AEC to learn more in order to make the right administrative decisions and develop atomic energy responsibly and effectively¹. Therefore, in 1950 they hired the SRC to conduct a survey that would help answer the following questions:

1. Is there a social problem issuing from the nature of people's perceptions of atomic energy?
2. What are the relationships, if any, of the presence of a nearby atomic energy installation to these perceptions?
3. What other socio-psychological factors are associated with these perceptions?²

¹ University of Michigan. Survey Research Center. Public Response to Peacetime Uses of Atomic Energy: a Study of People's Reactions and Information Based on a Sample Interview Survey in Comparable Communities With and Without Major Atomic Energy Activities. Ann Arbor, 1951, p.1

² *Ibid* p.1

A national sample would not have provided enough respondents living near the laboratories, so the study team drew a sample from communities around the installations and then matched two sets of communities with similar demographics which were not located near an installation. Even so, the low population density surrounding most of the labs resulted in loosely constructed 'areas' with matched sample sizes, instead of specific towns or communities. And the resulting data did not support conclusions on a particular town or community's opinion.

The questionnaire design was problematic because of the lack of structured knowledge on atomic energy. It wasn't possible to anticipate how much the respondents knew or what questions would trigger that knowledge. The study team settled on a hybrid approach merging the 'write-in' form (for taking answers verbatim) and the 'fill-in' approach (for structured responses) by putting the questions on the left side and the writing space, loosely structured, on the right side. This allowed for more freedom in recording answers as respondents made connections during the interview.

At the dawn of the Cold War Era, knocking on people's doors and asking them about atomic energy was not a straightforward endeavor. For a number of reasons, the interviewers were not allowed to tell respondents that they were conducting the study on behalf of the AEC, so they mentioned only the SRC and the University. In addition, interviewers were required to notify law enforcement authorities that they would be conducting interviews in the area.³ When speaking with respondents, interviewers walked a fine line between probing and not appearing to be soliciting classified information.

The study report concluded that there was no great difference in the overall interest in or knowledge of atomic energy between those living near installations and in the matched areas. In fact, both were generally low, while there was still a positive outlook for the future of the field of atomic energy. Interestingly, the report went on to make a very specific point that even though respondents are taking atomic energy in stride, they still know very little about it, their attitudes being "not founded on understanding, but on faith." They cautioned that this faith is an individual characteristic which could change significantly when personal experience with atomic energy changes. It would occur when more applications for daily use were developed or, regrettably, if a major catastrophe should occur.

The relevance of the point made by this study can be easily appreciated today!

The Details:

Directed by Dr. Charles A. Metzner

Funded by the Atomic Energy Commission

Conducted in August 1950, interviews 20-60 minutes in length

Final cost: \$65,749.30

1,276 respondents, approximately half from areas surrounding Oakridge, Argonne, Brookhaven, Los Alamos, Hanford, Berkeley and Ames, the other half from two sets of matched areas.

³"Instructions for Interviewing," Public Thinking Regarding Atomic Energy-Project 53, SRO Archive

Example Question from the AEC Survey:

12. Do you recall it's ever having been blamed for:	
1. odd weather changes	
2. people being blinded	
3. grass and other growing things being killed	
4. water being poisoned	
5. unexpected explosions	
6. things burning	
7. eruptions of a volcano	
8. things being dangerous to touch or be near	
9. diseases	
10. making some people dangerous to touch or be near	
IF ANY MENTIONED	12a. Now we want to be sure we understand what you mean. Have you heard <u>(each item mentioned)</u> blamed on atomic energy or on the atom bomb or both?
BOMB OR BOTH	12a1. Do you think that's pretty true of what the bomb did?
	12a2. Do you think atomic energy - without the bomb - could cause that?
ENERGY	12a3. Do you think atomic energy could be to blame for that?

Space Crunch!

Jody Dougherty

It may be surprising to some that we are still experiencing a space crunch here in SRO. The SSL will be at or near capacity for the remainder of this year and well into 2014. In addition, half of the Data Collection Services (DCS) team is still located in the Thompson building, along with supplies and employee files.

We have started making plans for DCS to return to Perry at some point next year. But, in order to meet immediate needs for space we are in the process of moving STARRS work out of G132. The work and staff will be moved to G116. To free up space for interviewing stations in the SSL, the Respondent 800 number staff and the quality control staff will move into G132. Although some quality control activities will continue to take place in the SSL, most of that will be completed in G132.

In addition, the following SSL Staff are moving:

- Bonnie Andree will relocate from the carrel in G106 to G132.
- Ann Munster will relocate from G106D to G216.

- Russ Stark will relocate from a carrel in G116 to G237.
- Meg Stephenson will relocate from G237 to the carrel in G106.
- Cheryl Wiese will relocate from the SSL front desk to G106D.

Congratulations....

.. to Rick Krause (PDG) on his marriage to Stefanie Nurmi on June 22. The rain storms spared their beautiful ceremony, and they enjoyed a fantastic honeymoon in Hawaii. We wish Rick and Stefanie the very best in their new life together!

