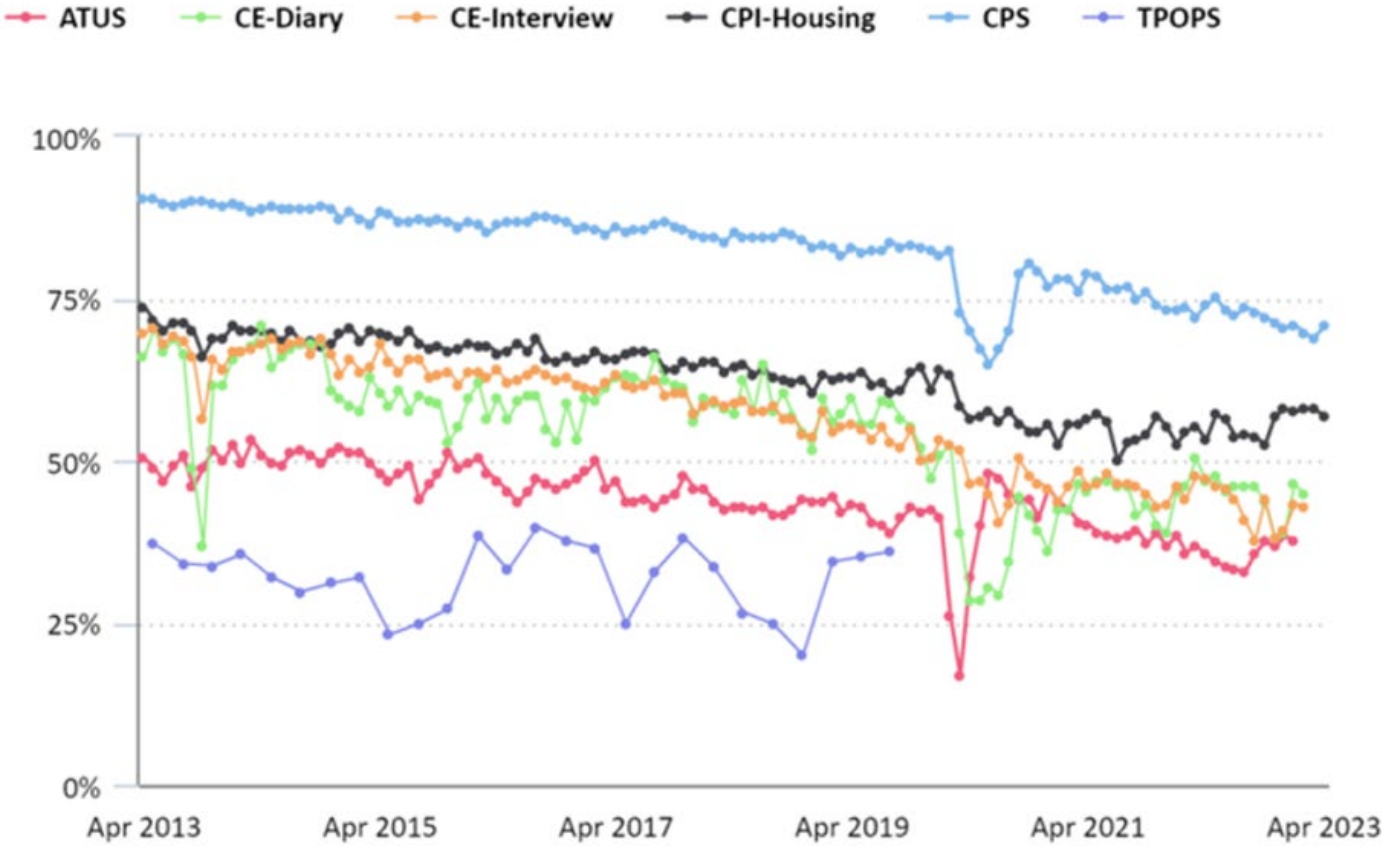


# Understanding Our Agency's Needs: Preparing to Integrate Web Surveys

Renee Stepler, Jennifer Sinibaldi, Jessica Holzberg  
Data Collection Quality Improvement Initiative  
Center for Behavioral Science Methods  
U.S. Census Bureau

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# Survey modernization among declining response rates



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics [Response Rates](#)

# Data Collection Quality Improvement (DCQI) Initiative

- Proposal in the Census Bureau [FY23 budget](#)
- Conceived as a five-year program
- Charge: Modernize the designs of major demographic surveys while maintaining data quality
  - Introducing internet self-response (ISR)
  - Incorporating auxiliary data sources

# Developing a research agenda

- Identify research gaps in the literature
- Determine what might be different about U.S. Census Bureau surveys
  - To help us out with this, we interviewed survey directors to identify most pressing needs
    - Options under consideration for ISR
    - Concerns about and opportunities for ISR

# Survey Director interviews

## Methodology:

- Semi-structured interviews
- Conducted in April and May 2024
- Interviewed Survey Directors of CAPI surveys only

## Topics covered:

1. Current environment and anticipated integration of ISR
2. Opportunities and challenges of integrating ISR
3. Resources and guidance needed for transition

**Surveys were in different stages of evaluating the addition of ISR.  
This is the start of our conversations.**

# Current environment & anticipated integration of internet self-response (ISR)

# Motivation to include ISR is multifaceted

- Declining response and rising costs were most frequently cited reasons
- Resistance to opening doors
- People use internet for ranges of tasks – it's common sense to offer web response
- Engage in partnership with respondents to accommodate preferences for online options



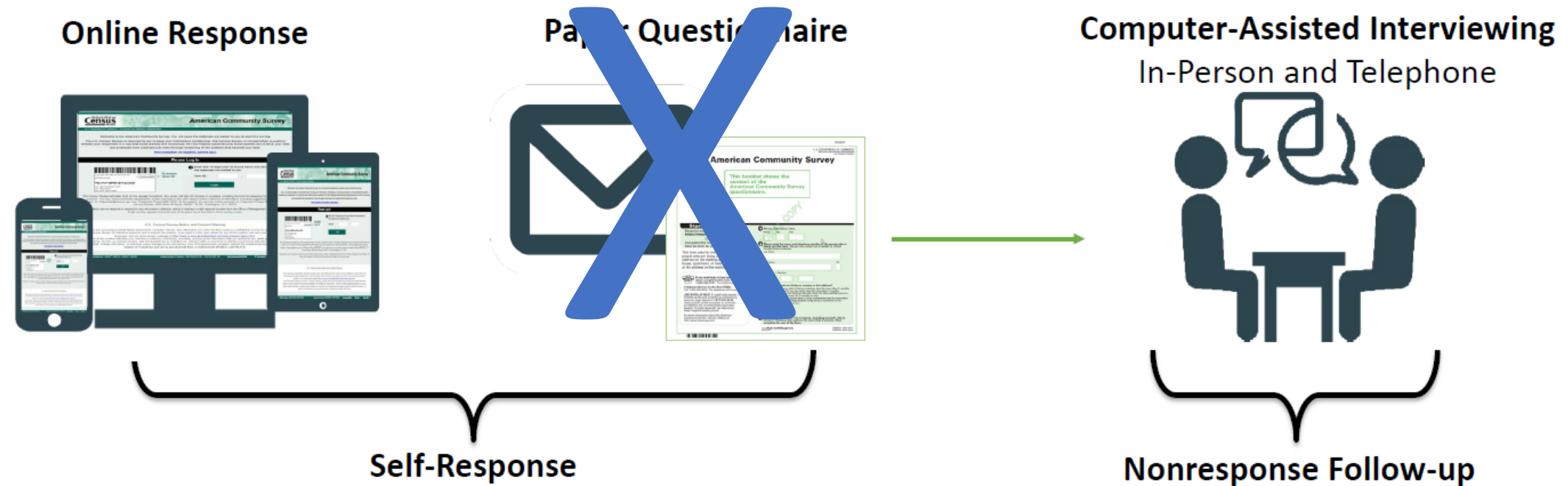
# ISR offers potential enhancements to survey programs

- More timely response
- Invitations can be sent quicker than visiting homes
- Improved paradata to evaluate and enhance instruments
- Using visual nature of a web survey to improve accuracy of data
- Costs savings on internet response can shift to increase sample sizes



# Integrating ISR with CAPI efforts

- Most envisioned a sequential multimode survey design – “The ACS Model”



# Opportunities and challenges of implementing ISR

# Concerns for introducing ISR

- Compatibility of web and CAPI instruments
- Procedures of person-level interviews
- Adjusting interviewers' roles
- Developing and revising contact strategies

# Data quality concerns

- Item missingness
- Survey breakoffs
- Speeding respondents
- Consistency checks and redundancy
- Complex or technical questions
  - Health insurance coverage, detailed income, occupation/industry write-ins

# Can we improve accuracy?

- APIs to populate addresses for work or purchasing goods
- Linking to utility accounts or bills to provide spending information
- Using images to assist respondents in identifying types of equipment in their home
- Effectively using dependent data for longitudinal surveys

# Resources and guidance needed

# Research and methodological support

- Expert reviews of **contact strategies** and help designing experiments to test contact strategies.
- Methodological partner to examine the types of **instrument revisions** that would need to occur for self-response.
- Designing **test plans and evaluating** impact of adding ISR on their data.

# Impact of Survey Director interviews



# What did we learn?

- Challenges that were cross-survey and those that were unique to some surveys
- How survey teams were envisioning adding ISR – not all were sequential mode designs
- Concerns that are specific to Census Bureau surveys and could not necessarily be found in the literature

# How did we use this information?

- Developed short course on some basic tips for converting CAPI questions to ISR
- Designed experiments for ISR concerns and opportunities:
  - Probing skipped or don't know responses using images, help text, and motivational messages
  - Uploading resumes and mortgage documents
  - Using dependent data online
- Collaborating with survey teams and other Census Bureau researchers to develop contact strategy experiments and examine self-response contact strategies

# DCQI research agenda themes

1. Contact strategy and mode sequencing
2. Comparable internet questionnaires
3. Data quality in a multimode context
4. Using auxiliary information

# Connect with us

- We want to learn from you and share what we are learning. If we haven't had a chance to connect, please don't hesitate to reach out.

[Jessica.Holzberg@census.gov](mailto:Jessica.Holzberg@census.gov)

[Renee.A.Stepler@census.gov](mailto:Renee.A.Stepler@census.gov)

[Jennifer.Sinibaldi@census.gov](mailto:Jennifer.Sinibaldi@census.gov)