A Manual For Interviewers

Institutional Studies Office

Smithsonian
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The success of the study is in your capable hands.

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Preface

The first version of this manual was developed about a decade ago, when the Institutional Studies Office was established. It was first published for use with a major survey at the National Air and Space Museum.[1] Since that time, it has been modified to reflect our increased understanding of data collection from museum audiences as well as comments made by interviewers who have used it.

Thus, the manual has no author. Rather, it is the result of the work and dedication of both the permanent staff of the Institutional Studies Office and interviewers who have joined us for countless studies.

We will continue to welcome your comments!

Zahava D. Doering, Director

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[1] Institutional Studies Office. (1988). *A Manual for Interviewers.* Prepared for the 1988 National Air and Space Survey (Report No. 88-3). Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution.

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Introduction

The Smithsonian's Institutional Studies Office conducts studies of the various audiences that visit the museums, zoo and exhibitions or attend programs at the Smithsonian Institution. Research or educational offices at other cultural institutions also study their audiences. One of the primary methods for collecting information from visitors is in sample surveys, either through face-to-face interviewing or by giving visitors a questionnaire to complete themselves. Another method for collecting information is by observing a sample of visitors. The objective of each study is to obtain data about visitors' characteristics along with their behavior, knowledge and opinions of a museum's or zoo's activities, or obtain observational data about the activities visitors undertake in various settings.

The goal of this manual is to train you to be an effective and productive interviewer. *Part I. General Instructions* contains information about data collection in general and how to conduct a face-to-face interview. *Part II. Instructions for Selecting Respondents* deals with sampling people for interviews. *Part III. Question by Question Specifications* gives instructions for some frequently encountered questions in surveys. *Part IV. Tracking Procedures* outlines a method for observing and recording visitor behavioral data.

Steps in a Study

1 Origins of a study: A "client" has a need for information which requires systematic data collection.

2 Developing the study

A. Develop the study design; overall approach and sample design.

B. Draft the data collection form: questionnaire, tracking form, protocol, etc.

C. Pretest the data collection form and methods to see if they work.

3 Data collection

A. Select or identify the population for the study.

B. Collect the data: interview, observe, track.

4 Analysis

A. Review & code data.

B. Process & tabulate data.

C. Analyze data. Consider implications.

5 Report results: "client" receives the needed information!

I. General Instructions

A. The role of the interviewer in survey research

Conducting a survey requires a large amount of work on the part of many people, and an interviewer must be aware of the numerous processes involved in conducting survey research.

The diagram to the left is a simplified illustration of the steps involved in a survey. Start at the top and work your way to the bottom.

The interviewer is a vital link in the survey process. The value of the survey information depends on the skill and accuracy of the interviewer.

The interviewer's job is to collect the data from the respondents which, after analysis, will provide the client with required information.

Interviewing is similar to normal conversation but is more structured and specialized. It requires many of the social skills we use everyday such as courtesy, tact, polite assertiveness, and concentrated listening.

As an interviewer, you must establish a good rapport with respondents, maintain a neutral attitude, and convey respect for the confidence the respondent has placed in you.

Your respondents must be aware that all the information collected will be treated as entirely *anonymous*.

You must never divulge your respondents' names, should you know them, or any information given by them. We will never report individual data; all reports will protect the anonymity we promise the respondents.

The work of interviewers

Data collection takes many forms ranging from short factual interviews to in-depth interviews about behavior, attitudes and opinions. Most surveys use a *structured questionnaire*; i.e., one on which the questions to be asked are strictly ordered and most of the likely replies are printed. This manual deals primarily with personal, face-to-face interviewing which uses a structured questionnaire. This manual DOES NOT deal with in-depth interview studies.

Sampling respondents

To speak to every person in the population would be impossible; therefore, sampling methods are used in surveys to allow us to select a random group to represent the entire population or a special group.

Information about sampling is presented later in this manual. When interviews are conducted in a museum/zoo setting, we place *complete* reliance on interviewers since they will ultimately identify the people who are "in the sample" and must be interviewed.

You must remember that the purpose of survey research is to obtain a profile of the population and NOT to describe the particular people who happen to be part of the sample.

What happens to survey results?

Museum/zoo personnel use analyses based on data collected from visitors in many ways: to plan future programs and exhibitions, to assess current programs and exhibitions, to make changes, etc. Also, the findings of many studies can be of use to others. Visitor studies resources are continually being refined and expanded. Copies of studies are available to interested interviewers.

B. Before Interviewing

Briefing and training

All interviewers working on each survey must be trained.

> In training, interviewers become familiar with the purpose of the study, the sample selection method, administrative matters, specifications on the particular study design, question-by-question specifications, and interviewing techniques.

The briefing provides a chance for you to raise questions and talk about any difficulties you foresee. Every question you ask will help other interviewers, so we welcome your active participation.

Materials

Check to ensure that you have all the necessary supplies (provided by ISO) before you begin interviewing. You generally need your official name badge, a clipboard, sufficient questionnaires for the session, the survey fact sheet, a supply of respondent gifts, and several sharpened pencils. In addition, a mechanical counter and sample selection forms are important for the selection procedure.

For observational (tracking) studies, additional materials such as watches are needed. At the training session the method for storing and picking up materials will be discussed. It is the interviewers' responsibility to keep track of supplies and request materials, such as additional interviewer forms, when needed.

Appearance and reporting

An interviewer's appearance can affect the way in which respondents answer questions. If you dress in a "neutral" way, the chances of bias will be reduced.

> A "neutral" style of dress varies depending upon where you are interviewing, but in general you will want to wear clothing that would be appropriate for the professional staff of the museum in which you are working.

On the other hand, for a tracking study, trackers should be as inconspicuous as possible and should dress more casually to look like a visitor or "student." Tracking visitors is a form of *unobtrusive* observation. Visitors may alter their behavior if they suspect that you are watching them. Visitors should be unaware that you are observing them. In order to remain unobtrusive, trackers need to blend in with the crowd. You should dress comfortably in casual clothes. Do not wear anything or exhibit behavior that would bring attention to you. **You should not wear any clothing that would identify you as a staff member or volunteer.**

Report early enough to gather materials and prepare so you can be ready to begin on time. Let your supervisor know *as early as possible* if you are not available to work on the days and times assigned so that you can be replaced.

C. Conducting the Interview

General guidelines

One of the arts of interviewing is to put the respondent at ease and create a friendly atmosphere. **The critical moment is when you introduce yourself.**

> Interviewers who achieve the best results convey a study's importance by their own enthusiasm. It can be fun to listen to other people and learn about their opinions.

It is also important that interviewers never present themselves as "experts" on the subject matter of the interview. The less you know about an exhibition or subject matter the better, that way you can easily answer "I don't know" if the visitor asks if their answers were "right." Each respondent is an expert in his or her own opinions!

Introducing yourself

The simplest and quickest way to gain your respondent's cooperation is to smile and greet him/her cheerfully.

Hello! We are doing a study of this museum, and would like to ask you some questions.

OR

Hi! My name is _____ and I work for this museum. Today I'm talking to visitors.

> After a few interviews, interviewers generally develop a personal introduction with which they are comfortable. The key is to make the introduction quick and to the point.

Explaining the survey

Once you have made initial contact with the respondent you may need to quickly tell him/her few things about the survey. In general, you want to begin with the first question as soon as possible. If there is some hesitation on the part of the respondent, you might say approximately *how long* the interview will take and mention that the survey is *voluntary* and that the results are *anonymous*.

Talk briefly and conversationally and, above all, *be natural*. You may need to vary your explanatory wording to suit the people you meet.

Interviewing Children

Sometimes we wish to sample children's' opinions in our study. In this case it is important to have a parent's consent before proceeding. This can be done casually: first approach and introduce yourself to the child and then, before asking the first question, ask the parent "Is it all right if I talk to her/him?"

Usually parents are more than happy to allow their child to take part in the survey. Sometimes a parent may seem reluctant or may want to answer the survey themselves. You simply state that you are particularly interested in children's opinions for this study, to hear their perspective would be a great help, and the parent is perfectly welcome to stay and listen if he/she wants to. If the child is reluctant, you may want to mention that you have a postcard/poster/gift to give when the interview is completed.

Organizing the interview

> When possible, lead the respondent to a quiet area, away from the flow of other visitors, to conduct the interview.

If the respondent appears tired, you may want to offer to conduct the interview at a bench nearby.

Ideally, the interview should be conducted without a third person looking over the respondent's shoulder. However, a large proportion of our visitors come in groups of two or more, and they are likely be interested.

> Remember, only the respondent's views are required, and you should deal politely with third persons.

If a third person answers the questions for the respondent you should politely tell them that you are only able to record the respondent's answers. You can explain your choice of respondent by pointing out the counter and stating that you were assigned a certain person to interview as part of a random procedure.

In some special cases, third person assistance may be helpful. For example, in the case of a foreign visitor, a third person may be extremely helpful as an interpreter. An adult is often needed or required if children are being interviewed.

You must *remember to face the respondent*. If he/she is next to you, the respondent may read the questionnaire instead of listening to you. Familiarity with the questionnaire will enable you to concentrate on facing your respondent and listening well.

Respondents who have a physical or mental disability or who do not speak English are as much a part of the sample as anyone else. They should be given the chance to take part since their absence from the sample will bias the results.

Respondents may have questions about why the study is being conducted. Fact sheets, with contact information, are available for respondents to answer questions about the survey. You should never attempt to explain the survey's purpose to a respondent, even if the interview has been completed. Never allow a respondent to keep a copy of the questionnaire.

Avoid telling the respondent about your own background. Even an answer to a simple question about your work at the Smithsonian (for example) can influence the respondent's answers as well as elongate the interview. Gently return the conversation back to the interview questions and the respondent's opinions.

Other visitors will recognize that you are museum "staff" and may try to interrupt you while you are conducting an interview or counting. In all cases direct them to the information desk or the nearest security guard.

> In some rare cases a respondent may make the interviewer feel quite uncomfortable by their behavior. In this instance an interviewer should terminate the interview.

Increasing your response rate

"Response rate" means the proportion of people successfully interviewed out of the total number of attempts made. The response rate is a critical feature of sample survey work because a low response rate can cause bias in the results. The views of the people who were missed may well have been different from those who cooperated; therefore, the results of the survey may not reflect accurately the views of the population as a whole.

> Generally speaking, interviewers are able to successfully complete 8 or 9 out of every 10 interviews they attempt. In many cases, you <u>can</u> turn a refusal into an interview and improve your response rate by your manner.

The main reason given for refusing is lack of time. The important point is to find out the reason for the refusal so that you can persuade the person to take part; however, do not be too pushy. You will have to adapt your persuasive tactics according to the type of refusal. Some useful points to stress are the following:

- **Lack of time**: You can move quickly through the interview in FIVE minutes.
- To people who say they have been **over-interviewed**: You are not conducting a marketing survey, and the results will be used to plan for the future with a museum/zoo visitor in mind.
- To **foreigners**: We are very interested in what they have to say, and you can speak slowly. If they are accompanied by someone, then perhaps the other person can help.
- Personal **reluctance** (say they don't know much about museums): emphasize that you are interested in the opinions of <u>all</u> visitors.

If, however, the respondent has made it emphatically clear that they do not want to speak with you, then do not attempt to convince them otherwise.

D. Questionnaires

The main types of questions that you will encounter on survey questionnaires are <u>pre-coded</u> questions, <u>open-ended</u> questions, and <u>filtered</u> questions.

Pre-coded questions

Questions are "pre-coded" to save interviewing and data processing time. The interviewer circles or marks the appropriate coded response. A pre-coded question is preceded by a small oval or box for each possible answer. Remember that the pre-codes should NEVER be used as prompts unless the instruction "READ OUT LOUD" is given beside the question or you are using a response card to aid the respondent.

> **Did you find the exhibition...** [READ OUT LOUD]
> O **Very crowded,**
> O **Crowded, or**
> O **Not crowded?**

The pre-coded question form used most frequently in museums is one in which the codes are NOT read out loud. The interviewer classifies the answer into an existing category immediately OR records it for subsequent classification. Questions that have two or three logical answers are usually in this form:

> **Before today, have you visited other Smithsonian museums?**
>
> O Yes O No

In many instances, more concentration is required on the interviewer's part in order to code the answer. Consider the following:

***Who are you here with today?**

O Alone	O Child(ren)
O One other adult	O Group of Teens
O Several adults	O Tour group
O Adult & Child(ren)	O School trip
O Adult(s)& Child(ren)	O Other ______

From the respondent's perspective, this is a question which he/she can answer in any fashion; however, it has been pre-coded into the categories of interest. Most respondents, in fact, name one of these. An alert interviewer can easily code the following answers to this question:

"My daughters." or "My friend Joan and her two children."
or "The Senior Citizens' Club of Helena."

For some questions, only the replies expected most frequently are listed and a space is left for recording OTHER: ____________

Answers that do not fit any of the printed pre-codes must never be forced into pre-codes. If an "Other (specify)" category is not provided, and the respondent gives an answer which does not fit, write it down!

> When in doubt about any response, write the response down on the questionnaire and it will be resolved later.

In the examples given so far, only one answer is possible. Questions that allow two or more answers are called "multiple response questions."

For which occasions would you consider a Smithsonian membership an appropriate gift?
(Mark ALL that apply.)

O Birthday	O Father's Day
O Graduation	O New Home
O Wedding	O New Job
O Anniversary	O Other
O Mother's Day	

Open-ended questions

An open-ended question is followed by a space on the questionnaire on which to record the respondent's answer in full, e.g.:

> **If you were the director of this museum, what one thing would you change?**
>
> ______________________________________
>
> ______________________________________

Write down the respondent's answer word for word and make sure that the respondent has completed his/her responses to the question. PROBE if necessary. By PROBE, we mean using neutral questions to encourage respondents to clarify further their opinions, provide additional information or express additional ideas. Probing techniques are discussed more fully later in this manual.

Filtered (or skipped) questions

Filtered questions are those which are not asked of all respondents. For example, a question about when the respondent last visited the museum would not be asked of a person who just told you this was his/her first visit.

Filtered questions are always followed by skip instructions :

> **Q1. Is today your first visit to this American History Museum?**
> O No
> O Yes: **Go to Q.3**
>
> **Q2. How many times have you been here before today?**

If a respondent said "No," you would ask the next question, i.e. Q.2. If a respondent said "Yes," you would skip Q.2 and ask Q.3. You must always follow skip/go to and other instructions carefully.

E. Asking Questions

People who are interviewing for the first time often have concerns that they are "imposing" upon visitors. Often interviewers may approach timidly, not wanting to disturb the visitor. This often results in a refusal. Similarly, an interviewer may try to rush through an interview, trying to allow visitors to return quickly to their museum visit. It is important to give visitors enough time to answer questions. Even if a visitor begins an interview in haste, he or she will often "get into" the interview and give increasingly longer answers.

Pace

Adjust the pace of the interview to suit your respondent. Remember that your respondent is hearing the questions for the first time. Most interviewers need to speak more slowly than they do in ordinary conversation. Be aware of how the interview is going and adjust pace if necessary. If the respondent is looking at her/his watch you may want to reassure them with "Just a couple more questions" or "We're finishing up now."

> The two most important things to keep in mind about interview pace:
> - Read the questions aloud clearly.
> - Always give the respondent time to consider her/his answer.

Look at the respondent as often as you can, especially immediately after asking a question. In this way, you are alert to signs of bewilderment or embarrassment. Sometimes you may need to repeat a question.

Make sure to keep the interview on track. If the respondent digresses into other areas of conversation, gently but firmly bring the focus back on the interview and continue with the next question. Try to interview at eye level when possible. If the respondent is sitting down, you should sit down as well. For an interview with a child, you may want to crouch down on their level, if comfortable. If someone is in a wheelchair, sitting on a nearby bench may be useful, otherwise standing during an interview is acceptable. In all cases, judge each interview situation independently and asses what you think would work best.

Question order

> Ask all the questions in the order printed on the questionnaire. Ask every question, even if you think the answer has already been given.

Sometimes when answering a question, a respondent will also give an answer to a question that is asked later. Even so, ask the later question when you come to it. You can always introduce a question by saying, "I think you may have mentioned this, but ..."

Question wording

> Always use the exact words printed on the questionnaire. Ask all questions in a straightforward, neutral manner.

If you change the wording of questions, even in an apparently trivial way, you will introduce bias. Sometimes it is necessary in the case of foreign visitors to change questions slightly, if they do not understand the question the first time around.

If you ask every question in the same straightforward way, you are likely to get a straightforward reply. A note of surprise or disbelief in your tone of voice may cause your respondent to give answers which he/she thinks will please you or which the respondent thinks are "socially acceptable." Never apologize for asking what you may think are "difficult" questions.

Getting responses to pre-coded questions

In asking pre-coded questions, you should try to get an answer which will fit one or more of the pre-coded answers without prompting. Several methods of probing are particularly useful, including the following:

Dealing with "don't knows"

Suppose that you ask a respondent—*On a scale of 1 to 4, where 1 means not useful and 4 means very useful, how would you rate computer or interactive displays?*

You may get an answer such as—*Oh, I don't know. I 'm really not sure.*

In such cases, probe with—*Which is closest to how you feel?* and repeat the question and the codes.

Dealing with vague replies

In answering the same question, a respondent might say—*Oh, I suppose I find them relatively useful*

In such cases, ask*What number on the scale would you assign to that?* and repeat the codes.

If you still get an answer which does not fit one of the pre-codes, e.g. *I'd say they are somewhat useful really* ...ask them if their response means the same as one of the precodes.

None of these "probes" suggests an answer. They are used to guide the respondent towards giving a definite answer which will fit a precode.

Probing techniques

Probing encourages the respondent to express her/his own views on a question. If she/he needs help to do this you can use a variety of probes:

"Would you like to add anything more?"
"Could you tell me a little more about that?"
"Anything else you'd like to add?"

A questioning expression and a few seconds of silence until the respondent thinks of another idea often produces a good response. Sometimes the respondent will use vague words such as "good" or "interesting." Clarify the meaning by probing. For example:

- "Exactly why do you think that this is important?"
- "What do you mean by interesting?"
- "What about this did you find interesting?"

Another good method of probing is listening carefully to a respondent's choice of words, and then repeating words back to get the to elaborate further. For example:

- "You used the word 'haunting', what did you mean by that?"
- "When you say 'confusing' what do you mean?"

F. Recording the answers

All information must be recorded ACCURATELY and LEGIBLY.

Use a pencil. Pencils are efficient and erasable and sharpeners are easy to include with the study materials. If you have to change an answer on a survey form, cleanly erase it or put 2 lines through the wrongly marked code.

Recording pre-coded questions. Fill in the appropriate circle. Sometimes you will write down an answer under "Other (specify)" which you then realize fits one of the pre-codes. When this happens, cross out the response on the "Other" line with 2 hash marks and initial it. Mark the appropriate precode.

Recording open-ended questions. Answers to open questions must always be written out fully in the respondent's own words. In this way, the researcher receives the material directly and not paraphrased/interpreted by the interviewer.

G. Concluding the interview

Always thank the respondent. Let the respondent feel that the interview has really been worthwhile and that you have enjoyed the interview. Leave every respondent feeling that he/she has made a contribution to the future of the Smithsonian, and that they'd be happy and willing to cooperate again. Give them the gift.

Never leave a questionnaire with a respondent. If a respondent has additional questions, give the respondent the Study Fact Sheet and suggest that he/she write to the address on the Study Fact Sheet for further information.

Check your work. Glance through the questionnaire before you leave each respondent, or immediately after the interview, to ensure that every question has been answered. Check that:

- A legible response is recorded for every question or in the space marked "Other ______." If no response is recorded, the editors will assume that the question was not asked.
- Odd circumstances or observations affecting the interview or any unusual answers are noted and explained.
- Administrative items are entered. Do not forget to mark the status box, the location box, Segment, and Session.
- Erase any stray marks. These will be picked up by the scanner.
- Make sure circles are filled in properly (filled in circles NOT check marks). Make sure that marks do not go outside the appropriate circle.
- Don't forget to write your initials or interviewer code at the top.
- Unless the question specifically calls for more than one answer only mark down the respondent's first answer.
- For ALL refusals, please write down the reason on the second page AND:

DON'T FORGET to answer the questions marked with an asterisk (*). The information needed in most surveys is—Residence ("Where do you live?") Social composition ("Who are you here with?"), Age, Racial/Ethnic identification and Gender.

II. Instructions for Selecting Respondents

This section of the manual provides detailed instructions for selecting respondents. As indicated earlier, the quality of the survey data depends on correctly identifying respondents to be interviewed.

In the past, this office has used three methods for selecting respondents:

- Quota sample selection,
- Fixed interval sample selection and
- Variable interval sample selection.

Quota sampling is used when the purpose of the study does not depend on selecting a representative sample of the population. In this approach, interviewers are instructed to select respondents based on certain characteristics. A quota sample permits interviewers the flexibility of completing the quota independent of time. Some controls, such as directions on how to select respondents and how many interviews are conducted during established time periods, may be constructed to eliminate or reduce selection bias. With this method, however, the results cannot be generalized to the total population.

Two methods of systematic sampling which enable generalizability are fixed interval and variable interval sampling. In both cases, since every visitor has an equal chance of being selected, the resulting pool of responses are representative of the population as a whole with statistical validity.

Fixed Interval Sampling requires that every Nth (10th, 25th, 30th, etc.) person is selected for interviewing. The sample is representative of the total number of possible respondents because each person selected for the sample represents or carries the "weight" of every person in the "fixed" interval.

Variable Interval Sampling is based on interviewer availability so intervals are not equal or "fixed." Variable Interval Sampling is only representative when each interview is "weighted" separately based on the total number of possible respondents in the 15 minute time segment during which they were selected. For example, if 22 people are possible respondents during a 15 minute segment of interviewing and interviewers are only able to intercept two of those people, then each of those intercepted people represents 11 people from the total number of possible respondents.

The method of selection to be used in a specific study is made by the person who will analyze the data. The decision is based on a combination of study purpose and statistical tools available to the analyst.

The following section describes the procedures for selecting respondents for both Fixed Interval Sampling and Variable Interval

Fixed Interval and Variable Interval Sample Selection

Overview of data collection

Working in teams of two or three people (one team leader and one or two interviewers), you will be responsible for selecting respondents, conducting interviews, making observations and reviewing questionnaires and forms to ensure that they are accurately completed.

Team Leader

The Team Leader (counter) for each 90 (or 60) minute interviewing Session has two major responsibilities:

(1) To count on a mechanical counter and record, generally in 15 minutes intervals (Segments), the number of persons (including all employees, even those you know), of all ages (unless otherwise stipulated by the study guidelines), who cross the boundary line specified by the supervisor for the study; and

(2) To select respondents and tell the Interviewers who they should intercept.

A Sample Selection Form, a mechanical counter, and a watch are used in this task. An example of a Sample Selection Form is on page 34. Each study will have a specific designation as to what age a visitor must be to be counted and intercepted. It is up to the counter to estimate visitors' ages. The boundary line is important because everyone who crosses it is at least passively part of the study population.

If you are interviewing at an exit of a building, it is very likely that you will observe some visitors who cross the boundary line a number of times because they are meeting someone or checking the weather, etc. If you notice this, count the individual only once.

Procedure

A. Preparing to begin an interviewing session

Fill-out:
Interviewers should enter their initials or interviewer code at the beginning of the questionnaire. This will tell the office who conducted the interview.

Enter the Session Number in the ADMIN BOX. This information comes from the Sample Selection Form or the envelope with materials for each session.

[At the end of the session each interviewer should check to see that this information is recorded on all the questionnaires they have used.]

Get ready:
The Team Leader stands or sits near the designated location at which interviewing is to take place.

The counter is set at zero (0) at the start of the Session and the interviewers stand by ready to begin.

B. Selecting respondents

The procedures for selecting respondents are different for Fixed Interval Sampling and Variable Interval Sampling.

Selecting respondents with Fixed Interval Sampling

In using a Fixed Interval Sample, the first step is to determine an appropriate interval (i.e. every 10th person, every 25th person, etc) by analyzing attendance records, observing the space in which interviewing will be conducted, and considering available resources (number of interviewers). You should ensure that the interval is large enough to give the interviewer enough time to complete and interview and be available to intercept the next person selected.

The first intercept:
Start the counting with the first person closest to the team leader to cross the line.

Using the predetermined interval, the Team Leader designates the respondents to be selected. The Team Leader designates the first respondent of the interval (10th person, 25th person, etc) to be selected.

The Team Leader marks the count number (which should correspond to the interval number—10 if the interval is every 10th person) of that person in the appropriate segment under the column Interviewer #1. The interviewer also records the count number on the interview form.

The second and subsequent intercepts:
The Team Leader continues to count and designate the next person of the same interval (if 10 is the interval, person #20 is selected) for Interviewer #2.
The Team Leader continues to count and record the intercepts on the Sample Selection Form.

> If two people are crossing the line at the same time when the Team Leader is ready to identify a respondent, the <u>closest</u> person to the Team Leader is selected for an interview.

The interviewers take turns intercepting respondents unless an interviewer is still conducting an interview when his/her turn comes up to accept the next selection. In that case, the available interviewer takes the intercept. If no interviewer is available, the Team Leader records the demographic information based on observation on an interview form and selects the appropriate status.

Exceptions:
There are only two exceptions when the interviewer DOES NOT intercept the next person approaching the line. If the next person approaching the line is a child that is part of an escorted school group or an adult in a clearly led tour group, he/she is not to be interviewed. Instead:

The Team Leader, at this point stops counting, writes a "G" in the column marked Groups on the Sample Selection Form and estimates the size of the Group.

After the Group passes, the Team Leader continues counting and then assigns the next person to the interviewer.

If the next person approaching the line is a Building Management worker, wearing a Smithsonian uniform, or a Smithsonian employee that you know personally they are to be counted but not intercepted—a questionnaire should be filled-out with administrative information and the status box marked Staff/Contractor. If you do intercept an employee that you don't know you must also have a questionnaire for that individual where Status is marked Staff/Contractor. Do not assume that someone wearing a badge is an employee. You must intercept them to determine whether or not to administer a questionnaire. Only security personnel are not counted.

The end of the first segment:
After 15 minutes, the Team Leader writes the number of visitors recorded on the counter ("Current Segment Count") on the Form in the column titled "Count" for that 15 minute segment. The mechanical counter is NOT re-set.

The above procedure continues until the end of the Session.

Selecting respondents with Variable Interval Sampling

This is the method used most often by this office. A Variable Interval sample selection approach maximizes interviewer resources by minimizing the time interviewers wait for a respondent while maintaining the randomness of selection. It is especially useful in cases when the flow of visitors crossing the boundary line is highly variable. In this approach, the sampling interval varies according to on-site visitor flow and detailed data are collected which provide the basis for weighting the final samples.

The first intercept:
The survey supervisor designates the first person to be intercepted, usually the first or third person (depending on the flow of visitors) for Interviewer #1. The designated first intercept is often pre-printed on the Sample Selection Form for the interviewing team.

Start the counting with the first person closest to the team leader to cross the line. The Team Leader designates the first person to be intercepted (either the first or third person) and records that number on the Sample Selection Form under Interviewer #1.

Interviewer #1 also records the number (01 or 03) on the questionnaire.

The second and subsequent intercepts:
Interviewer #2 intercepts the next respondent based on the number indicated on the Sample Selection Form (usually 03 or 06) and records the number on the questionnaire.

When an interviewer returns after completing an interview and editing their questionnaire, and is ready to begin the next interview, the Team Leader identifies the next person to approach the line as the next respondent. The Team Leader notes the "Count Number" and records it on the Sample Selection Form under the interviewer's name in the appropriate time segment. The interviewer also records the number on the next blank questionnaire and moves out to intercept the identified respondent.

The Team Leader continues to provide "Count Numbers" every time interviewers indicate that they are ready to "intercept." The interviewer always writes down a "Count Number" on the next blank questionnaire.

If two interviewers return to the Team Leader at the same time, she/he handles them sequentially. In other words, a "Count Number" is given to the first interviewer and she/he is sent out. Then a "Count Number" is given to the second interviewer and the next person is intercepted.

Two members of the same group should never be interviewed.

If at the beginning of the session the first person selected and the second person selected are of the same group, then the second interviewer waits until the counter designates the very next person not in the same group to cross the line.

If two people are crossing the line at the same time when the Team Leader is ready to identify a respondent, the <u>closest</u> person to the Team Leader is selected for an interview.

The end of the first segment:
The Team Leader continues to count the flow of visitors. After 15 minutes, the Team Leader writes the number of visitors recorded on the counter ("Current Segment Count") on the Form in the column titled "Count" for that 15 minute segment. The mechanical counter is NOT re-set.

Exceptions:
There are only two exceptions when the interviewer DOES NOT intercept the next person approaching the line. If the next person approaching the line is a child that is part of an escorted school group or an adult in a clearly led tour group, he/she is not to be interviewed. Instead:

The Team Leader, at this point stops counting, writes a "G" in the column marked Groups on the Sample Selection Form and estimates the size of the Group.

After the Group passes, the Team Leader continues counting and then assigns the next person to the interviewer.

If the next person approaching the line is a Building Management worker, wearing a Smithsonian uniform, or a Smithsonian employee that you know personally they are to be counted but not intercepted—a questionnaire should be filled-out with administrative information andthe status box marked Staff/Contractor. If you do intercept an employee that you don't know you must also have a questionnaire for that individual where Status is marked Staff/Contractor. Do not assume that someone wearing a badge is an employee. You must intercept them to determine whether or not to administer a questionnaire. Only security personnel are not counted.

The above procedure continues until the end of the Session.

C. Summary

The systematic, unbiased and orderly selection of respondents is the primary responsibility of the Team Leader. The Team Leader is also responsible for recording the number of persons who exit during the 15 minute Segments of each Session. Remember, everyone, except those in escorted groups and security staff is counted.

The interviewers are responsible for intercepting and interviewing respondents as well as recording an assigned Count Number on each questionnaire used. A questionnaire must exist for every person who was intercepted (or should have been, e.g., employee).

Remember:

The success of the study is in your capable hands!

III. Question-by Question-Specifications

If a survey is part of a study, interviewers are given general instructions about the study (e.g., main purpose, locations, etc.) as well as specific instruction for every question on the survey. To ensure comparability across our studies, and based on our experience, some demographic, museum and exhibition questions are a part of most surveys. On page 35 is a questionnaire made up of some 'standard' questions which can generally be used. Below are the "Q-by-Q specs" (question-by-question specifications) for this sample survey.

In general, the questionnaire is set up so that everything in **bold** is read or said to the person you intercept for an interview. Instructions for conducting the interview are either in small capitals, quotes, or another clearly identifiable format (e.g., "Go to Q.3" or "MARK ALL THAT APPLY."

If the person you intercept refuses to participate in the study, try to ask and mark the questions preceded by an asterisk (*). What may surprise you is that even as someone runs out of the door, they will usually tell you a few characteristics. If the intercepted person will tell you nothing else, find out where they live (Q.11). Mark the other four asterisked questions (Q.12 age, Q.14 visit group, Q.15 racial/ethnic identification and Q.16 gender) based on your observations. Mark a Status category in the ADMIN box for the type of refusal and record the reason for the refusal on the line below.

Questions

1. Is today your first visit to this museum?

(1) If "Yes" Go To question 2. If "No" then ask question 1A.

(2) If the person you intercept identifies themselves as an employee or as a contractor, do not interview them. Mark the "Staff/Contr." circle under Status in the ADMIN Box.

> We must have a questionnaire for every individual intercepted, whether an interview is conducted or not.

1A. How many times have you been here before today?

(1) This question refers only to the museum in which you are conducting the interview.

(2) Mark one of the precoded categories if applicable. If the response is "many", probe: "more than 10?"

2. Was there something in particular that you came to see or do in this museum today?

(1) If the respondent answers "No", then Go To question 3.

(2) If the respondent answers "Yes", then Go To question 2A.

2A. What was that?

(1) Record the exhibition name or program, if given, or the general objects mentioned on the line. Be as accurate as possible. If you need to ask to clarify, please do so.

3. What time did you enter the museum?

(1) Enter the time that they entered the exhibit.

(2) Use military time

4. Did you first hear about this exhibition today or before today?

(1) If the respondent answers "Today", then Go To question 4.

(2) If the respondent answers "Before today", then Go To question 3A.

3A. Where did you hear about it? Anywhere else? [RECORD ALL]

(1) Record the respondent's answer on the line. If "newspaper" or "magazine" is the response, find out which one.

4. What time did you enter the exhibition?

(1) Enter the time that they entered the exhibit. Usually 24 hour clock.

5. Overall, what in this exhibition interested you the most?

(1) Respondents may mention a topic, concept, object, etc. If you are tape recording this segment of the interview, you may choose only to write down key phrases the respondent uses. Otherwise, write down everything the respondent says word for word.

(2) The respondent may not immediately think of an answer. You can probe by asking "what in the exhibition most attracted your attention?" or "what caught your interest?" Be careful not to lead the respondent by asking about specific components.

(3) If he/she can not articulate what was interesting or did not find anything interesting, record that on the line.

6. Do you think the exhibition will influence the way you think about ________?

(1) The blank can either be filled with a predetermined subject matter (e.g Art", "American Politics", etc) or can be a product of the previous question. This will depend entirely on the exhibition being studied.

If yes, **In what way?**

(a) If the respondent answers "yes," probe further as to how they have been influenced. Record the respondent's answer in his/her own words.

If no, **Can you explain why not?**

(b) Again, try to get a more complete answer through probing and record.

7. What kind of work do you do?

(1) The purpose of this questions is to identify the respondents <u>occupation</u>. An occupation is the skill/specialty an individual is trained to perform. For example, chemist, secretary, construction worker, astronaut are all occupations.

(2) "Consultant" and "government worker" are <u>not</u> occupations and require probing for the skill or specialty of the occupation.

(3) If the respondent is unemployed, ask what occupation they are trained for if it is not too awkward and record unemployed .

(4) Record the response on the lines provided.

(5) If the respondent is retired, mark the "Retired" circle but ask them what their occupation was before retirement.

(6) If you are interviewing someone 18 years old or younger, their occupation will most likely be "student," but still ask the question.

***8. Where do you live?**

(1) For respondents from "Other U.S." states or "Foreign" countries, mark the code <u>and</u> also record the <u>name of the state or country</u> on the line provided. We are only interested in which state or country the respondent lives in, not the city.

(2) MARK FOR REFUSALS. Even if you are unable to ask the respondent anything else, ask "Where do you live?"

(3) If the respondent names a location unknown to you, ask for the name of the state or country. Don't assume you know the correct state or country if they give you a city name -- verify with the respondent.

(4) If the respondent says "Virginia" or "Maryland," ask them if they live in a suburb of the Washington metropolitan area. If you are unsure if a response is a MD/VA suburb, record the city and state near the question and we will categorize it in editing.

***9. What is your age?**

(1) Record age on the line provided.

(2) Record an estimate on the line provided if you have a refusal or if the respondent says something like "over 50".

10. What is the highest level of education you have completed?

(1) Some foreign visitors give answers which you may not recognize. You should ask the respondent for the American equivalent. If the answer cannot be immediately precoded, write down everything they say without marking a precode.

(2) If the person indicates "College" or says "I went to College," do not mark "Bachelor's Degree." Clarify with further probing and if still unclear mark "Some College."

(3) Some people are defensive about answering this question. Do not persist with obtaining an answer if the person appears reluctant.

***11 Who are you here with today?**

Mark for refusals.

Important: Although you are asking the respondent to answer the group they have come with, your answer should reflect the ENTIRE visiting group (including the respondent).

(1) You may already know the answer from earlier in the interview but confirm the precode with the respondent.

(2) Several adults is any group of three or more visitors, all over 12 years of age.

(3) "Adult w/ child(ren)" is used when the respondent and another adult have children under age 12 with them in this museum.

(4) If you are interviewing a child who is with one adult, mark the "adult w/ child(ren)" category and so on.

***12. What is your cultural/racial/ethnic identity?**

(1) Do not assume you know the respondent's cultural, racial or ethnic identity. For example, someone who you think may be African American may identify with the Latino culture. Only if they refuse to answer the question should you mark a category by using your best judgment.

(2) This is not an optional question, you must ask it. However, some individuals are sensitive about this question. If the respondent appears reluctant, do not probe. Use your best judgment in choosing a category.

(3) If the answer does not exactly fit into one of the precoded categories, do not probe; write the response in the "Other" space without marking a precode.

(4) If respondent does not understand the question, give your own cultural/racial/ethnic identity as an example, e.g. African American, White, Native American, etc.

(5) If the respondent says they are "Native-American and Hispanic," ask the respondent which group they identify with most and mark the

appropriate precode. If the respondent does not identify with one group more than another record the multiple racial ethnic identity on the line marked "other," without marking a precode. We will report the number of respondents who gave an identification beyond the U.S. Census Bureau's categories listed on the questionnaire (i.e., African American/Black, Asian/Pacific Islander, Caucasian, Hispanic/Latino, and Native American/Alaskan Native).

***13. MARK GENDER.**

(1) Mark for refusals.

Administrative Responsibilities

In addition to filling out the questionnaire as you are conducting the interview, you also have to pay attention to information pertaining to the administration of the survey when the interview is complete or when an intercept does not result in an interview.

Observations

If you noticed anything about a respondent's behavior while interviewing, or if they said anything during the interview that did not fall under one of the items on the questionnaire, record this information on the unused portions of the questionnaire. These observations may be useful during editing and analysis.

Recording Administrative Information

Most questionnaires contain and "administrative box" to record administrative information about the interview. It is important that interviewers fill out the administrative box for every intercept. Administrative information usually includes:

(1) Location of the interview

(2) Status of each intercept

a) <u>Interview</u> is a completed interview

b) <u>Ineligible</u> includes people just using the phone or bathroom, someone who has been interviewed before, and any other situations which don't clearly fall into one of the other categories.

c) <u>Staff/Contractor</u> is people who work for the museum in any way.

d) <u>Refusal: language</u> are people who cannot complete interview because of a language barrier.

e) <u>Refusal: other</u> are people who do not want to be interviewed for whatever reason. The reason, usually time, should be written down.

(3) Segment: (1 to 4 or 1 to 6)

(4) Session: (1 to n)

Checking Your Work

a) Make sure all circles have been filled in completely.

b) Make sure your count number and initials or interviewer code (interv.) are filled in.

c) ID will be filled in later by the office.

d) Make sure all your answers are legible.

e) Verify the information in the ADMIN. box with the team leader.

IV. Tracking Procedures

The purpose of observational (tracking) research is to learn how visitors move through, interact with and behave during a museum or exhibition visit. Each tracking study will have detailed instructions specific to that study, such as how visitors are selected, how to use the tracking map, the recording form, where tracking begins, etc.

Tracking instructions

You will need the following:

Digital Watch
Clipboard with Exhibition Map
Tracking Survey Forms
Session envelopes
counter
pencils

A sample tracking form is on page 36.

A. Selecting a visitor to track.

Each tracking study will have a specific method for selecting visitors to track. Most often trackers will use the sample selection method described earlier in this manual.

> **REMEMBER:** The visitor should not know that you are observing her or him.

You may spend more than a half hour with some visitors. Your task is to remain attentive to the visitor's behaviors and actions. Maintain a distance at which you feel you can make the necessary observations, yet not be apparent in every gallery.

When the Team Leader selects a visitor for tracking, the Tracker will:

Enter the **COUNT** number.
Enter his/her initials or Tracker code on the front of the Tracking Form
Also on the front of the form:

Enter **Session**. The Team Leader will give you this number.
Enter **Segment**. The Team Leader will give you this number.
If there is little time to get this information, it may be filled in after the tracking is terminated. Leave "ID" blank. It will be filled in later.

B. Recording information about the visitor.

Tracking begins by recording the START time on the Tracking Survey Form. This is the time the selected visitor crosses the designated boundary line. This is recorded as HH:MM:SS, that is, using military time or a 24-hour clock.

> NOTE: Use the actual time on the digital watch, for example, 09:30:00 for 9:30 A.M. or 15:30:00 for 3:30 P.M. (Do not record 00:00:00 as the starting time.)

Record the following observations at the bottom of the Tracking Survey Form either at the beginning or during the course of the tracking:

GENDER	F (female) or M (male)
AGE	Estimate in years
GROUP SIZE	Number of people in group (including the selected visitor)
GROUP COMPOSITION	Make-up of the entire group Examples: Alone Couple (2 people, including the selected visitor) Group of adults Group of teens Adults and Kids: write the number of children in each age range in the group
RACE/ETHNIC IDENTITY	Best estimate Examples: White, Black, Hispanic, Asian

C. Tracking the visitor

Once the visitor has been designated by the counter, you will record ALL "stops" that the visitor makes within the exhibition.

(1) When the visitor stops at any point for three seconds, record that as a STOP. It is mandatory that the visitor stop at a point for three seconds before it is considered a STOP. NOTE: You can count "1001, 1002, 1003" to gauge the 3 second interval.

A stop is defined only by the selected visitor doing an activity at a location. A visitor must somehow be involved in the exhibit's stop location. This type of involvement may be the object of the study or may vary in your list of activities. Looking up at an exhibit from a distance is not a stop, even though the selected visitor remains motionless. Each STOP that the visitor makes is recorded sequentially on the Tracking Survey Form.

(2) The Tracking Form has columns to record information about STOPS:

1 # Designating the sequential STOP number.
2 Location.
3 Start time.
4 Stop time.
5 Visitor interactions during stop.
6 Interactions (after stop and before next stop).

(3) For each sequential STOP, record the following information:

(i) *Start time of the STOP* (after the mandatory three seconds—do not include the 3 seconds). This start time is the beginning of the STOP. It is recorded as MM:SS.

(ii) *Location from the map.* The location code is a number taken from the map. The numbers are for place where the visitor may stop or galleries visited or other locations (e.g., restrooms, overlook area, ticket line, store, seat, etc.)

(iii) *Visitor interactions or "activity" during this stop.* Again, the types of interaction and method for recording them may change from study to study. Social interactions and activities are behaviors that visitors exhibit during their visit. It is important for us to know, for example, that the visitor took care of a child during a stop. This might explain the length of the stop. Interactions should be recorded ONLY for the visitor being tracked. For example, a man may look at an aircraft while the tracked visitor (a woman) is caring for a child. Only the woman's behavior is to be recorded. There may be more than one social interaction during a stop. Record all social interactions on the same line as the stop.

Each study will have different activities to be recorded depending on the purpose of the study. These activities will be noted on the Tracking Form. Some examples of possible activities are:

U = Using interactive/touchable object by oneself
D = Doing/talking about something together with another group member
C = Calling another's attention to something in the exhibition
L = Looking at object or watching another use an interactive
G = Photographing or videotaping
P = Playing (not using something the way it is intended to be used)
S = Sitting or resting
B = Comment Books
T = Talking to staff
R = Reading or checking labels
I = Interrupted/distracted
A = Asked staff member, security guard or volunteer a question.
W = Looking at or pointing to a direction sign or wall map
M = Looking at map in hand.
V = Asking question or talking to another visitor (outside group).
K = Taking care of child

If some type of behavior happens that affects the visit but is not adequately described by the list of codes, write exactly what happened (e.g., visitor grabbed a fire extinguisher to put out a fire).

Sometimes interactions may be recorded not only during a stop, but before and after stops as well. Each study will designate when interaction/activity codes are to be used.

(4) Record end time of the STOP. This time, recorded as MM:SS is recorded when the visitor moves on to something else or exits a gallery.

D. Terminating tracking

Unless otherwise indicated, terminate tracking when the visitor exits the exhibition. Each study will have its own particular terms for termination (i.e. entering the gift shop, after 15 minutes, etc).

(1) Once the observation terminates, record the termination time at the bottom of the form. This is recorded as HH:MM:SS.

(2) **IF APPLICABLE:** If any member of the visitor group picks up a map of the museum at any time during the tracking period, circle YES for MAP on the Tracking Form. Otherwise circle NO.

(3) **IF APPLICABLE:** If any member of the visitor group picks up an AUDIO TOUR of the museum at any time during the tracking period, circle YES for AUDIO TOUR on the Tracking Form. Otherwise circle NO.

(4) Record all appropriate information on observations. Check that it is correct and legible. Remember, someone else will be reading your notes! Remember to fill in all the demographic information if you haven't already done so.

(5) Return to your starting location immediately to repeat this procedure again with another visitor.

E. Concluding the tracking session

When all assigned observations are completed for a session, put all materials for the session in the envelope.

The **Comments** space is included on the tracking form for any observations you think would be useful in the analysis or if you are unsure of a code. Was it especially crowded in the exhibition? Did a member of the visitor's group get sick? Did the security staff ask everyone to exit the exhibition? This, along with other blank areas throughout the form, is space for your notes to help you sum up after the track is over.

Example of a Sample Selection Form

SAMPLE SELECTION FORM

Any Study 1999

Location: Building Exit
Session No. 001

Date: January 1, 1999
Day: Friday
Weather: Clear, cold

Team Leader Jill
Interviewer #1 Jack
Interviewer #2 Jordan

Seg.	Time	Interviewer #1	Interviewer #2	Int. in Seg.	Groups	Current Seg. Count
1	11:00 to 11:15	01, 08, 13	03, 10	5	G 10	13
2	11:15 to 11:30	18, 28	20, 21, 32	5		34
3	11:30 to 11:45	35	36, 40	3		43
4	11:45 to 12:00	44, 54	45	3		54

	Interviewer #1	Interviewer #2
Intercepts:	8	8
Total Intercepts:		16

Appendix B

Visitor Survey Sample Questionnaire

1. Is today your <u>first</u> visit to this useum?
O Yes
O No **1A. How many times have you been here before today?**______

2. Was there something in particular that you wanted to see or do in this museum today?
O No: [GO TO Q3]
O Yes: **2A.What was that?**

____

3. What time did you enter the museum?

____

4. If you were the director of this museum what things for visitors would you improve, change or add?

____
____

Now, I'd like to ask about this exhibition.

3. Did you first hear about this exhibition today or before today?
O Today O Before today

3A. Where did you hear about it? Anywhere else? [RECORD ALL]

____
____

6. What time did you enter the exhibition?

____

8. Overall, what in this exhibition interested you the most?

____
____

9. Do you think the exhibition will influence the way you think about...?
O Yes: **In what way?**
O No: **Can you explain why not?**

____
____

A few final questions about you.

10. What kind of work do you do?

____

***11. Where do you live?**
O City O Suburbs
O Other US ____________
O Foreign ____________

***12. What is your age?** __________

13. What is the highest level of education you have completed?
O HS/less O BA/BS
O AA/Jr/Tech O Some grad
O Some coll O MA/PhD/Prof

***14. Who are you here with today?**
O Alone O Adult(s) & child(ren)
O One other adult O Tour
O Sev. adults O School

***15. What is your cultural/racial/ethnic identity?**
O African Am/Black O Asian
O Caucasian O Hispanic/Latino
O Native Am O Other __________

***16.** <u>Mark Gender</u>: O Male O Female

ADMIN
<u>Location</u>

<u>Status</u>
O Interview O Staff/Cont.
O Ineligible O Refusal:
Language
O Refusal:
Other________________

Segment: 1 2 3 4 5 6
Session: ________

Appendix C

Sample Tracking Form

TRACKING SURVEY FORM												
START TIME:												ID:
STOP TIME:				Soc.						Soc.		**TRACKER:**
#	Loc.	Start	Stop	Int.		#	Loc.	Start	Stop	Int.		
1						26						
2						27						
3						28					Comments:	
4						29						
5						30					Audio Guide: Yes No	
6						31						
7						32					Soc Int Key	
8						33						
9						34					C	Calling something to
10						35						the attention of another
11						36						not at exhibit
12						37					D	Distracted or
13						38						interrupted by
14						39						a group member
15						40					K	Attending to child
16						41					P	Photographing or
17						42						Videotaping
18						43					Q	Waiting to view/use
19						44					R	Reading panels/labels
20						45					S	Sitting/resting
21						46					U	Using interactive/
22						47						touchable
23						48						
24						49						
25						50						
						Group Composition:						
Gender:		M F				alone			adults + kids			
Age:						couple			0-6 ____			
Group size:						grp adults			6-12 ____			
Racial/Ethnic:						grp teens			over 12 ____			