

THE NATIONAL SURVEY OF COLLEGE GRADUATES LOCATING TEST SUMMARY REPORT

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I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In May 1994, we conducted the National Survey of College Graduates (NSCG) Locating Test to accomplish the following:

1. to demonstrate that locating sample persons from the telephone centers is possible for the 1995 NSCG
2. to determine what resources and procedures are the most useful for locating sample persons

The results of the locating test indicate that if the interviewers had used the test procedures during the 1993 NSCG, the HTC interviewers could have located and interviewed more persons. For example, in Subpanel A1 (Panels and Subpanels are described later), which is the most similar to our original sample for the 1993 NSCG, the following information was obtained:

1. Eleven of the 60 Subpanel A1 cases were successfully located and sample person contact was made.
2. In an additional 24 of the 60 cases, the interviewer obtained the home telephone number of the respondent. (Some were not confirmed because no one was home, answering machines, etc.)
3. Overall, in 38 of the 60 cases, information regarding the location of the sample person was obtained.

Given the test procedures and training, the interviewers successfully located 63 percent of the sample persons, as compared to the 32 percent that CATI resolved in the 1993 NSCG. Overall, the locating test established that successful locating procedures could be easily implemented and used by the interviewers at the telephone centers with little trouble. As a result of this test, the CASIC Technologies Management Office (TMO) is in the process of discussing the progress and plans of various divisions toward improving locating operations. The TMO is assisting the various divisions in researching and developing locating operations, and also brainstorming on ways to improve these methods as well as coordination efforts and preventing the duplication of work.

The following recommendations and comments from the test and debriefings affect the 1995 NSCG.

1. Try all means possible to locate a sample person from the telephone centers because this reduces field costs.
2. Make use of the Phone Disc, or other similar resource (either by an automated match or a manual search) to obtain sample person telephone numbers, neighbor information, etc., prior to going to directory assistance. Use Metronet or a similar database only for the National Change of Address search.

3. Develop training, guidelines, and standard documentation procedures for the interviewers.
4. Revise the questionnaire and CATI instrument to provide better locating information for future surveys (for example, ask for the department of the sample person's college degree, ask them to make the contact person aware of the survey, and ask for the relationship of the contact person to the sample person).
5. Our findings also indicate that with time and experience, interviewers will learn and develop a "best" approach to contacting employers, educational institutions, and other sources. Therefore, we should view the development of locating strategies as an ongoing process. Also, we should contact state and federal agencies whose records we may want to use for locating sample persons before locating begins. At this time we would not be asking for information about specific sample persons; however, contacting these agencies beforehand will help establish a relationship and the protocol involved in accessing their files.

II. GENERAL

A. Background

On May 23, 24, and 25, 1994, I observed the locating efforts of the Hagerstown Telephone Center (HTC) staff assigned to work on the NSCG Locating Test. Also, on May 24, staff from headquarters, the National Science Foundation (NSF), Westat, Inc., and the Charlotte Regional Office attended a session at the HTC to discuss locating procedures, and to observe locating operations. (Refer to NSCG PLANNING MEMORANDUM NO. 94-03 for a brief description of those events, along with observations from Westat, Inc., and the debriefing of the interviewers at headquarters on May 26.)

We conducted the test to demonstrate that locating sample persons from the telephone centers is possible for the 1995 NSCG. We also wanted to determine what resources and procedures are the most useful.

B. Comparison with 1993 NSCG Results

The results of the locating test indicate that if the interviewers had used the test procedures during the 1993 NSCG, the HTC interviewers could have located and interviewed more persons. For example, in Subpanel A1 (Panels and Subpanels are described later), which is the most similar to our original sample for the 1993 NSCG, the following information was obtained:

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2. In an additional 24 of the 60 cases, the interviewer obtained the home telephone number of the respondent. (Some were not confirmed because no one was home, answering machines, etc.)

3. Overall, in 38 of the 60 cases, information regarding the location of the sample person was obtained.

In the 1993 NSCG, the telephone centers resolved 32 percent of the CATI cases, but if we had used the locating test procedures, it is possible that we could have resolved close to 63 percent of the cases.

This document contains further analysis of the results of the locating test and the sources that the interviewers used during the test.

III. ANALYSIS

A. **Panels**

The workload for the Locating Test consisted of 250 cases split into panels and subpanels based on the source of the case and the information provided to the interviewer on the Case Information Sheet. The panels consisted of the following:

Panel A (100 cases never attempted in the 1993 survey, split into 3 subpanels)

- A1: 60 cases - We provided all available information (i.e., name, DMD address, and Metronet address) as specified on the case information sheet without alteration.
- A2: 20 cases - We provided all available information but deliberately misspelled either the first or last name. For example, we may have changed the sample person's name from "Dan Anderson" to "Doug Anderson."
- A3: 20 cases - We provided all available information but deliberately falsified the street name and/or house number. For example, we may have changed the street name from "Thornton Ave." to "Grizzard Rd.," or changed the house number from "503" to "305."

Panel B (50 mailout interview (01) cases, split into 4 subpanels)

- B1: 10 name change cases (cases in which the sample person indicated a name change for himself/herself on the questionnaire) - We printed the original name only, decennial address (without mail corrections), and Metronet information (not including the corrected name, if provided by Metronet). We did not provide a telephone number for these cases.
- B2: 10 "regular" cases (no name or address change) - We printed all available information from the keyed questionnaire, for example, name, address, phone numbers, education (schools where sample person has received degrees and date of degrees), employer, and contact person(s).
- B3: 15 cases - We provided all available information from the keyed questionnaire, except we left blank the address(es) and telephone number(s) of the sample person.

B4: 15 cases - We provided all available information from the keyed questionnaire, except we left blank the address(es) and telephone number(s) of the sample person and the name and telephone number of any contact persons.

Panel C (50 personal visit interview (01) cases, split into 4 subpanels)

C1: 15 cases - We provided all the same information originally given the field representative in the file for the System to Automate the Regions (STAR); for example, if the case was sent to the field with neighbor information, we included this information on the case information sheet. We did not include any data from the keyed questionnaire.

C2: 10 cases - We provided all available information obtained from the keyed questionnaire. We did not include neighbor information.

C3: 15 cases - We provided all available information from the keyed questionnaire, except we left blank the address(es) and telephone number(s) of the sample person. We did not include neighbor information.

C4: 10 cases - We provided all available information from the keyed questionnaire, except we left blank the address(es) and telephone number(s) of the sample person and the name and telephone number of any contact persons. We did not include neighbor information.

Panel D (50 cases from the 1993 NSCG sample that we were unable to locate)

We had no subpanels and we provided all information collected on these cases during all phases of the 1993 survey.

B. Outcome Codes

For analysis I coded the outcome of the cases as follows (see Attachment A for a more detailed explanation of each code):

- 01 Sample Person Contact (All information verified)
- 02 Sample Person Home Telephone Number Obtained/Verified
 - A By Directory Assistance (DA), Phone Disc (PD), etc.
 - B By a Contact Person (CP), Neighbor, Parent, Secretary, etc.
 - C By a Household Member (HHM)
 - D Other (Tax Assessor's Office, Deceased, etc.)
- 03 Sample Person Work Telephone Number Verified
- 04 Sample Person Address Verified
- 05 Other Verified (city/state)
- 06 Not Located

Table A below lists the number of cases falling into each category.

Table A

Outcome Code	Number of Cases
01	35
02A	46
02B	20
02C	19
02D	3
03	13
04	15
05	5
06	94

C. Outcome Results

The two tables on the next page list a tally of the different outcomes by panel/subpanel. The row labeled "% Locate" at the bottom of Table C is the percent of cases in each subpanel that the HTC interviewers located (outcomes 01-05).

Table B

	Panel A	Panel B	Panel C	Panel D
Outcome Code				
01	20	9	5	1
02	34	24	19	11
03	0	7	6	0
04	2	0	5	8
05	1	1	1	2
06	43	9	14	28

Table C

		SUBPANELS												
		A1	A2	A3	B1	B2	B3`	B4	C1	C2	C3	C4	D	TOTAL
C O N T A C T C O D E S	01	11	5	4	0	5	2	2	0	2	1	2	1	35
	02A	16	1	4	3	2	2	2	2	1	1	3	9	46
	02B	1	1	0	1	0	2	3	0	5	5	0	2	20
	02C	6	1	3	3	1	3	0	1	0	1	0	0	19
	02D	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
	03	0	0	0	0	0	2	5	0	0	4	2	0	13
	04	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	8	15
	05	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	2	5
	06	22	12	9	2	1	3	3	7	2	2	3	28	94
	TOTAL	60	20	20	10	10	15	15	15	10	15	10	50	250
	% Locate	63%	40%	55%	80%	90%	80%	80%	53%	80%	87%	70%	44%	62%

D. Points of Interest

1. The interviewers had the most difficulty with Panel A, cases never attempted in 1993, and Panel D, unable to contact in 1993.
2. The interviewers did contact a sample person from the nonresponse panel (D). They also obtained telephone numbers for eleven (9 + 2) sample persons in this panel; however, verification was not made. In another eight of the panel D cases, the interviewers verified the sample person's address.
3. For Panel B, mailout interview cases, the interviewers located between 80-90 percent, depending on the subpanel.
4. For Panel C, personal visit interview cases, they also had success in locating as long as we provided all the information off the keyed questionnaire without changes.

E. Implication for the 1995 NSCG

The results of the test indicate the importance of providing as much complete and accurate information as we have available in 1995. The interviewers' success in locating cases from Panels B and C with 1993 information and from Panel A where we did not alter the name or address, indicates possible future success in locating sample persons for the 1995 survey. In 1995, we will have the ability to provide the interviewers with information such as employer and education, and the address will be more recent than the one provided in Panel A.

IV. RESOURCES

I observed the locators using a variety of resources to locate sample persons, including, but not limited to, directory assistance (DA), employers, educational institutions, and the phone disc.

Table D below lists the resources used by the interviewers and the number of times they used the resource by outcome. Resources used for outcomes 01 - 05 resulted in a number, or other information about the sample person, either directly or indirectly, that led to locating him or her. Resources used for outcome 06 did not result in a number for the sample person. See the Attachment B for a description of the resource codes.

For example, 102 times that an interviewer contacted DA, the sample person was located as a direct or indirect result. Eighty-six times an interviewer contacted DA, the sample person was not located. The last column labeled "% Information Obtained" is the percent of total contacts to a resource that resulted in a lead to locating the sample person.

Table D

Resource Code	Outcomes 01 - 05	Outcome 06	Total	% Information Obtained
01 - SP at # listed on case info sheet	12	5	17	71%
02 - SP at other #	0	1	1	0%
03 - DA/DA leads	102	86	188	54%
04 - Contact Person	14	6	20	70%
05 - Neighbor	6	9	15	40%
06 - Employer	22	3	25	88%
08 - Educ Inst	3	6	9	33%
09 - Alumni Assoc	0	1	1	0%
10 - Parents	1	0	1	100%
13 - Post Office	0	5	5	0%
17 - Phone Disc	17	32	49	35%
29 - Apt Mgmt	2	0	2	100%
39 - Tax Assessor's	1	1	2	50%

A. Points of Interest

1. Of the 188 times the interviewers used DA, 102 times, or 54 percent, resulted in a number or other information regarding the sample person.
2. Six out of 20 times the contact persons from the 1993 questionnaires refused to give information regarding the sample person.
3. Neighbors provided information six out of 15 times contacted.
4. Of the 25 times we contacted an employer was contacted, 22 times, or 88 percent, resulted in a number or other information regarding the sample person.

B. Implication for the 1995 NSCG

Directory Assistance

Directory assistance provided telephone numbers for a great number of cases and the interviewers generally used this resource first and most often. The idea was to sift through the cases that we could easily locate through a call to DA. We informed the interviewers of the various methods they should use when contacting DA operators in an interviewer's memorandum. These methods include asking the DA operators to scan the entire area for a match to the name given if one is not listed at the given address.

Note: In order to call DA for a particular city, the interviewer's referred to the Bellcore or the AT&T Area Code Handbooks for the correct area code. Using one of these books saved a call to DA for the proper code.

Training for locating in 1995 should emphasize DA and the different approaches to take when contacting DA operators.

Phone Disc

The phone disc provided useful information in many ways. By using the phone disc the locators often obtained:

1. the sample person's telephone number
2. some unpublished numbers
3. neighbors of the sample person
4. a current resident at the address listed for the sample person, if not the sample person

Employers

Employers, if listed on the case information sheets, assisted the interviewers in 88 percent of the attempts used. This indicates that we should provide employer information in 1995 to assist in locating efforts. Some employers would only verify information and were leery of giving the locators any other information. However, by verifying employment, the locator narrowed the location of the sample person down a great deal. Then later, when calling for the sample person, the interviewers found it better to ask for the person directly instead of dealing with the personnel department.

Educational Institutions and Alumni Associations

The success the locators had with educational institutions and alumni associations is hard to gauge at this time. The institutions and associations were helpful, but the locators needed to take a different approach when using these resources, as Westat, Inc. pointed out to us. Instead of asking for the registrar's office, or the alumni department, the interviewers had better success asking for the particular department the sample person had graduated from. For example, if the sample person was a chemical engineering graduate, ask for the engineering department. The people working in these types of offices tend to give more information than people working in administrative offices.

Neighbors

Contrary to results from the 1993 National Survey of College Graduates (NSCG) CATI neighbor search operation, neighbors for the locating test were a valuable resource. Even if the neighbor would not provide a telephone number, in many cases (s)he would verify the address for us and explain that the sample person has an unlisted number. The interviewers obtained neighbors from the phone disc by selecting the closest house numbers to the address listed for the sample person. Some cases had neighbors listed on the case information sheet; however, these neighbors were not as useful. It seems that the neighbors obtained from Metronet (the ones that would have been printed on the case information sheet) were often times located several blocks away from the sample person's address. With the phone disc, the interviewer could be more discriminating with the neighbors that were called.

Contact Persons

Contact persons were persons the sample person listed during the 1993 NSCG interview as people who are likely to where the sample person can be reached. Given that, I found it strange that contact persons were not a very useful resource. In some cases where a contact person was reached, (s)he would not give ANY information, and sometimes even reported that the sample person was unknown to him or her. Perhaps if more contact persons had been reached, the locators would have better success with this resource.

For 1995, we should ask the sample person to inform the contact person of the survey. This way, if the contact person is called, he or she knows of the survey and may be more willing to provide information regarding the sample person.

Other Resources (Tax Assessor's Offices, Post Offices)

The locators used other resources with varied success. One locator commented that the tax assessor's office will "give you anything you want." Local post offices also provided information regarding street names and addresses, but were not helpful with sample person information. Also, housing and apartment management offices were useful (2 out of 2 times).

We did not attempt contacts with agencies such as the Department of Motor Vehicles. However, the field representative's success using such sources indicates we should attempt to use these agencies for locating by phone. One suggestion was for the DSD to make contact with these agencies before locating starts to determine the best way to access their records.

V. TIME

The average time spent per case on an overall basis was 4.28 minutes. Table E gives the average time spent per case by outcome.

Table E

Outcome	Time in Minutes
01	3.00
02A-D	5.26
02A	5.20
02B	7.10
02C	3.63
02D	4.33
03	4.15
04	4.40
05	4.80
06	3.81
01 - 05	5.02

The times listed per case may be misleading. Westat, Inc. reported that, on average, they spend 45 minutes to an hour per case. One of the reasons for our low average is that the interviewers were not instructed to include documentation time in their estimate. Also, a great deal of time was spent obtaining area codes, numbers for educational institutions, etc., that was never recorded. For example, one interviewer sorted all the cases by state, and then used the Bellcore to get area codes all at one time. This time was never recorded on the case information sheets. Furthermore, the documentation used by the interviewers was not standardized or as detailed as we later realized it should be. Finally, the interviewers only worked on the cases for 2 days. Many of the cases were not attempted beyond a call to DA or a look-up on the PD. Given more time, the interviewers would have worked more on the non-located cases.

Table F further breaks down the time per case by subpanel and outcome.

Table F

		OUTCOME CODE								
		01	02A	02B	02C	02D	03	04	05	06
S U B P A N E L	A1	2.45	4.06	18.00	3.33	8.00		6.00	8.00	3.36
	A2	2.20	4.00	7.00	3.00					2.92
	A3	2.50	3.50		4.33					2.56
	B1		3.67	7.00	3.67	3.00				2.00
	B2	1.60	5.00		2.00	2.00				4.00
	B3	3.50	5.50	3.00	4.67		5.00		1.00	2.67
	B4	4.00	3.50	12.00			4.60			8.33
	C1		2.50		2.00			4.60		6.43
	C2	5.00	3.00	6.00						4.50
	C3	4.00	40.00	4.20	4.00		3.50		3.00	8.50
	C4	9.00	10.67				3.50			3.33
	D	2.00	4.11	8.50				3.88	6.00	3.71

VI. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

I realize that the scope of this test was limited by the small caseload and the small amount of cases in each subpanel, and therefore, the conclusions are based on limited results. However, I feel the test demonstrated that we can locate respondents from the telephone centers using these techniques.

I also believe that, given more time, the interviewers could have located significantly more sample persons. The interviewers worked 2 days from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. During this time frame, persons are generally at work. Working a day on the weekend, or during evening hours, could increase contact with sample persons.

VII. 1995 NSCG

For future locating efforts, I think we should examine ways to automate documentation of calls and contacts to people. Furthermore, we should write detailed procedures for the documentation of calls. These procedures would include the standard notations interviewers should use for as many different outcomes as possible. For example, if a call results in a number for the respondent, the interviewer should note who they got the number from, including a full name and relationship to the sample person.

The following list summarizes other actions we should take for locating in the 1995 NSCG:

1. make use of the Phone Disc (either by an automated match or a manual search) to obtain sample person telephone numbers, neighbor information, etc. (use Metronet only for the National Change of Address search) prior to going to DA
2. develop training, guidelines, and standard documentation procedures for interviewers
3. contact state and federal agencies whose records we may want to use for locating sample persons, before locating operations begin
4. revise the questionnaire and CATI instrument to provide better locating information for future surveys (for example, ask for the department of the sample person's college degree, ask them to make the contact persons aware of the survey, and ask for the relationship of the contact person to the sample person)

Outcome Codes

Cases coded as 01 - Sample Person Contact

The interviewers contacted the sample person and verified the name, age, or address of the sample person. No doubt exists as to whether the interviewer contacted the correct person.

Cases coded as 02 - Sample Person Home Telephone Number Obtained/Verified

The interviewers obtained a telephone number for the sample person, with varied degrees of reliability.

A By DA, PD, etc.

The interviewer obtained the number by calling the operator, for example, or using the phone disc. The interviewers did not make contact with anyone at these working numbers (answering machines, no one answers, etc.), and therefore, the interviewer could not verify the sample person as correct.

B By a CP, Neighbor, Parent, Secretary, etc.

The interviewer obtained the number through a source other than DA or the PD. For example, the interviewer contacted the "contact person" provided by a 1993 sample person on the back of the questionnaire, or the interviewer contacted a neighbor who gave him or her the sample person's number. However, no one was reached at that number (answering machines, no one answers), and therefore, the interviewer could not verify the sample person as correct even though the number came from a reliable source.

C By a HHM

The interviewer obtained a number for the sample person and contacted a household member at the number who verified the number and sample person as correct. Due to the time frame that the interviewers called within (10 a.m. - 3 p.m.), most sample persons were at work and we made no further calls.

D Other (Tax Assessor's Office, Deceased, etc.)

The interviewers obtained a number from the tax assessor's office, or were informed that the sample person is deceased.

Cases coded as 03 - Sample Person Work Telephone Number Verified

The interviewer obtained a work number from a resource (DA, CP, neighbor, parent, etc.) and verified the sample person does work there, usually through a secretary or the personnel

department. However, the interviewer did not directly speak with the sample person. For example, several teachers were in a class at the time.

Cases coded as 04 - Sample Person Address Verified

The interviewer did not obtain a telephone number for the sample person, but did verify the address through another resource. For example, a CP would verify that the sample person lives at the given address, but would not give us a number because it is unpublished.

Cases coded as 05 - Other Verified (city/state)

The interviewer could only verify the city and state where the sample person resides. For example, the interviewer called DA for a "Ronnell L. Jackson" on "222 Berry Street." The operator replies that no one at that address is named "Ronnell L. Jackson," so the interviewer asks for a "Ronnell L. Jackson" at another address in the area. The interviewer replies that "Ronnell L. Jackson" is unpublished at another address.

Cases coded as 06 - Not Located

The interviewer did not locate the sample person.

RESOURCE LIST

- 01 Sample Person at a Number Listed on the Case Information Sheet
- 02 Sample Person at Other Number (i.e., work number obtained from employer)
- 03 Directory Assistance/Directory Assistance Leads (calling similar names may lead to relatives)
- 04 Contact Person Listed on Case Information Sheet
- 05 Neighbors Listed on Case Information Sheet
- 06 Employer
- 07 Professional Organizations
- 08 Educational Institutions
- 09 Alumni Associations
- 10 Parents
- 11 Other Relatives
- 12 Referrals (other than parent, other relative, or contact person)
- 13 Local Post Office
- 14 Area Code Book (AT&T, Bellcore)
- 15 ZIP Code Book
- 16 Atlas
- 17 Reverse/Criss-Cross Directory (i.e. the Polk Book found at some local libraries)
- 18 Current and Old Telephone Directories
- 19 Police and Fire Departments

- 20 Motor Vehicle Department-Driver's License
- 21 Electric and/or Gas Companies-billing forwarded when account closed
- 22 Water Company-billing forwarded when account closed
- 23 Telephone Company-billing forwarded when account closed
- 24 Title Company
- 25 Local IRS Office
- 26 Chamber of Commerce
- 27 Catholic Social Services or Similar Organizations (especially in small towns)
- 28 Ethnic or Minority Organizations
- 29 Housing/Apartment Management (i.e., rental offices, college dorms and housing office)
- 30 Board of Elections/Voter Registration Office
- 31 Local Stores-Grocery Stores, Convenience Stores, Service Stations (especially in small towns)
- 32 Employment Services - Public and Private
- 33 Unemployment Offices
- 34 Immigration & Naturalization Offices
- 35 Department of Vital Statistics:
 - Birth - parents names and addresses
 - Divorce - address of both parties, lawyer, and custody records
 - Marriage - address of bride and groom and name of witnesses
 - Death
 - Adoption
- 36 YMCA, YWCA, Sports Group

- 37 If house has been sold or rented, real estate agent or rental agent
- 38 If military, check with base military locator
- 39 Tax Assessor's Office
- 40 Social Security Offices
- 41 Prison System-if you suspect person may be jailed
 - City Jail
 - State Prison
 - Probation or Parole Officers
 - County Workhouse
- 42 Credit Bureaus
- 43 Embassies
- 44 Other Resources Not Listed