

The 4th International Workshop on Business Data Collection Methodology was held in the U.S. on 14-16 September 2015. Chartered in 2005, the Workshop is designed to offer an informal and “open discussion forum, ... <where> issues that can be discussed are research papers, but also – and this is even more important– research in progress, unanswered questions, hands-on experience, mistakes and pitfalls.” Accordingly, the Workshop emphasizes the “Work” in Workshop, aiming to share applied practices and participants’ expertise. To foster dialogue among participants, size and scope of the Workshop are limited. The agenda devotes 15 minutes of discussion following each individual presentation, along with topic-focused roundtable sessions that engage all participants in sharing their knowledge, experiences and solutions to problems that were surprisingly common. Previous workshops, held in 2006, 2008, and 2010, averaged 22 presentations and 11 countries per workshop.

The 2015 Workshop involved 35 participants representing 17 survey organizations from 7 countries, 24 presentations, and two roundtable sessions, along with one special invited session. Topics included data collection designs, issues in aligning collection methods with the response process and business records, communication strategies, issues in questionnaire design associated with concepts, questions and measurement error, and a case study describing multiple approaches for data collection research supporting a single survey.

Most of one day was devoted to issues related to Web surveys, their development, design and testing, along with challenges and opportunities towards a research agenda, and a roundtable discussion on the next generation of electronic data collection instruments. The Workshop ended with a lively exchange of ideas about survey planning, project management, and associated practices, triggering a reality check for all attendees.

This paper shares key issues, insights and outcomes from the 2015 Workshop with the broader ICES-5 audience.