



COMPUTER-ASSISTED TELEPHONE INTERVIEWING
IN THE SURVEY RESEARCH PROCESS
Panel Discussion

Chairperson: Gregory A. Marks, University of Michigan

Panelists: Robert Groves, University of Michigan
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Session Abstract

Research on human populations often involves the use of survey methods for information collection. A recent innovation in the methods available has been the use of computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI). The computer may be utilized for such tasks as work scheduling for the interviewers, respondent selection through random digit dialing, presentation of question text on the screen of the interviewer's terminal, dynamic modification of question text to insert respondent's name or other "personal touches," checking of data validity, branching around irrelevant questions based on prior responses, and many other aids to the operation of the process.

The members of this panel are all actively engaged in using CATI. They will be discussing the impact, both good and bad, these systems have on the people involved. The reactions of interviewers to these systems, such as appreciation of the work aids provided or anger at being forced to do things as the machine demands, will be considered. The survey respondent may be effected, changing the willingness to respond or the quality of information obtained. The supervisors and researchers using CATI may find themselves able to do data collections that are better quality, do them sooner, and have them lower in cost, but may also find much time being devoted to unexpected problems and greater demand for rigorous project management. In short, these CATI systems are having important consequences for everyone involved. The panel members will be reviewing what is currently known about these human factors and how the design of these computing systems may evolve as a result.