

Time Use Diary Data Capture System built in Blaise and Maniplus

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Time use surveys generally make use of paper diaries that respondents fill in over a specified period (24 or 48 hours). The activity descriptions in these diaries need to be captured in electronic form and coded so that data can be analysed.

This paper will describe a time use diary data capture system built for Statistics New Zealand using Blaise and Maniplus. The system provides for capture of the literal text descriptions of activities which are then coded to an activity classification using the Trigram coding method. The coded data is checked for consistency and the status of each edit check is 'piped' into a series of flags to enable the system to produce a report of the edit failures.

The underlying Blaise instrument used to record the diary entries provides for two entry modes, one form-based and the other table-based. The operator can activate either mode and the entries are duplicated and preserved in the alternate view. Providing the table-mode allows for table functions to be used to insert, split, merge or delete entries, which would otherwise be difficult to do.

The system interface uses the advanced features of Maniplus to present tailored views of the cases for both operators and managers. The central component of the system is a register of the cases which records the status of each set of diaries. Another important feature is the support for updating the activity classification as the survey progresses.

Quality control is handled by assigning a proportion of all diaries for dual coding. Coded entries are compared and scored by the system before being verified by the quality control manager.

The paper also discusses some of the challenges of developing such a system.