PROGRAMME

The Final Oral Examination
for the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
Department of Geography

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1973  South Pacific College           B.A.
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“Developing a New Mixed-Mode Methodology for a Provincial
Park Camper Survey in British Columbia”

June 17, 2013
1:30 pm
Social Science & Mathematics Building, A144

Supervisory Committee:
Dr. Philip Dearden, Dept. of Geography, UVic (Supervisor)
Dr. Rick Rollins, Dept. of Geography, UVic
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Abstract

Park and resource management agencies are looking for less costly ways to undertake park visitor surveys. The use of the Internet is often suggested as a way to reduce the costs of these surveys. By itself, however, the use of the Internet for park visitor surveys faces a number of methodological challenges that include the potential for coverage error, sampling difficulties and nonresponse error. A potential way of addressing these challenges is the use of a mixed-mode approach that combines the use of the Internet with another survey mode. The procedures for such a mixed-mode approach, however, have not been fully developed and evaluated.

This study develops and evaluates a new mixed-mode approach – a face-to-face/web response – for a provincial park camper survey in British Columbia. The five key steps of this approach are: (a) selecting a random sample of occupied campsites; (b) undertaking a short interview with potential respondents; (c) obtaining an email address at the end of the interview; (d) distributing a postcard to potential respondents that contains the website and an individual access code; and (e) undertaking email follow-ups with nonrespondents.

In evaluating this new approach, two experiments were conducted during the summer of 2010. The first experiment was conducted at Goldstream Provincial Park campground and was designed to compare a face-to-face/paper response to face-to-face/web response for several sources of survey errors and costs. The second experiment was conducted at 12 provincial park campgrounds throughout British Columbia and was designed to examine the potential for coverage error and the effect of a number of email follow-ups on return rates, nonresponse error and the substantive results.

Taken together, these experiments indicate: a low potential for coverage error (i.e., 4% non-use Internet rate); a high email collection rate for follow-ups (i.e., 99% at Goldstream; a combined
rate of 88% for 12 campgrounds); similar return rates between a paper mode (60%) and a web (59%) mode; the use of two email follow-ups reduced nonresponse error for a key variable (i.e., geographic location of residence), but not for all variables; low item nonresponse for both mixed-modes (about 1%); very few differences in the substantive results between each follow-up; a 9% cost saving for the web mode. This study suggests that a face-to-face/web approach can provide a viable approach for undertaking park visitor surveys if there is high Internet coverage among park visitors.

**Awards, Scholarships, Fellowships**

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**Presentations**


*Presenter