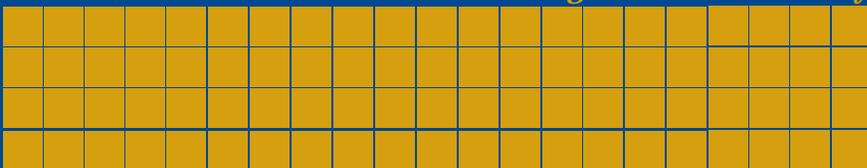


FY 2006 Report on Customer Satisfaction

Measuring the Nation's Economy.





Customers Continue to be Satisfied with BEA's Products and Services—4.2 on a 5-point Scale

Results of the FY 2006 Customer Satisfaction Survey

BEA received more responses to its FY 2006 customer satisfaction survey than to previous customer surveys, nearly 1,200. This represents a sixfold increase and is thanks in large part to a change in the survey instrument. This year, the survey was presented to selected Web site visitors over a nine-month period and it asked more specific demographic and data product usage questions. While the *FY 2006 Report on Customer Satisfaction* discusses the FY 2006 survey results in their entirety, this document highlights solely top-level results.

From continual Web site improvements and e-mail alerts to BEA's subject matter experts and an improved SURVEY OF CURRENT BUSINESS, customers continue to be satisfied with BEA's products and services. When asked if they were satisfied with BEA's products and services, respondents to the FY 2006 survey rated BEA a 4.2 on a 5-point scale, exceeding the goal of 4.0 set forth in BEA's strategic plan. And, when asked about the courtesy and responsiveness of BEA staff, respondents rated BEA's staff a 4.5 on a 5-point scale.

The FY 2006 survey provides demographic information about our customers that had previously been unavailable. (See the text and chart below) While more than a third of survey respondents self-identified as economists or statisticians (36.4%), almost another third (29.5%) self identified as either educators (21.4%) or students (8.1%), making academicians a considerable share of Web site visitors. The fourth largest audience

was comprised of those working in financial, securities, or investment capacities (7.2%). To view specific satisfaction and data product usage results for these groups, see the *FY 2006 Report on Customer Satisfaction*.

The results of the FY 2006 survey also include data about the type of information sought by visitors to <www.bea.gov>. Half of Web site visitors sought data tables, while more than a quarter (28.1%) sought general information on the U.S. economy. (See the table below.)

To view more data from the FY 2006 survey—including data about how often customers access the Web site and how they initially discovered <www.bea.gov>—see the full report, which is available on BEA's Web site.

What were visitors to <www.bea.gov> looking for?

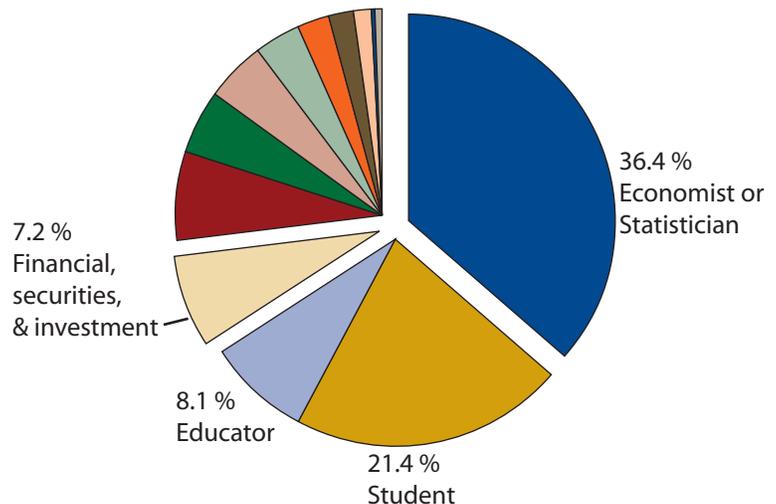
Type of Information	Percentage of total information
Data tables	50.0%
General information on the U.S. economy	28.1%
Other	9.3%
News releases	7.3%
SURVEY OF CURRENT BUSINESS	3.9%
BEA career information	1.1%
BEA contact information	0.2%

Who are BEA customers?

The largest segment of BEA's online customers define themselves either as an economist or statistician (36.4%) or as an academician (students and educators total 29.5%).

Other customers self-defined as:

Other	7.1%
Government representative	4.9%
Business owner/manager	4.7%
General public	3.6%
Marketing professional	2.7%
Reporter/news professional	1.9%
Accountant	1.3%
Trade/policy association representative	0.4%
Attorney	0.3%





Background and methodology	2
Customer satisfaction measures.....	2
About the BEA Web Site	3
BEA’s Products and Services.....	4
BEA’s customers	4
Economists and Statisticians.....	6
Students.....	7
Educators	8
Financial, securities, and investment	9
Appendix A: Foresee Results’ Survey Design	10

Background and Methodology

The Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) is committed to understanding and meeting the needs of its customers. Since FY 2000, BEA has asked customers for their opinions about its data products, its staff, and its Web site through surveys. These customer satisfaction surveys and their associated reports have served as valuable tools for gauging performance. Past survey outcomes have served as catalysts for new strategic planning goals and spurred Bureau-wide improvement efforts.

This year's report marks a change in both the survey methodology and in the types of results obtained. The *FY 2006 Customer Satisfaction Survey* has merged two surveys into one. From FY 2000 through FY 2005, the *Customer Satisfaction Survey* (a paper-based survey) was sent to subscribers of BEA publications and products to obtain customer satisfaction information. Due to several factors—most notably the free, online availability of nearly all BEA data products—BEA subscription rosters have decreased, thereby decreasing the survey response rate. Because of these phenomena, in FY 2006 BEA decided to add customer satisfaction elements to the existing *Web Site Satisfaction Survey*, which queries online visitors about the BEA Web site. Unlike past surveys, the online survey is conducted year-round and garners multiple, statistically-relevant sample sets. See *Appendix A for additional details on the survey methodology*.

The results included in this report were collected from October 1, 2005, through June 30, 2006. There were more than 1,200 respondents during this time period—a sixfold increase from previous years. In addition to better representing how BEA interacts with data users, the newly-designed survey provides more detailed information about our customers, their satisfaction, their site visit habits, and the types of information they seek. And the survey responses can be cross-examined to obtain more dynamic information about BEA customers. Are economists satisfied with BEA products and services? Are news/media reporters accessing BEA news releases? Do educators who are seeking general information on the U.S. economy find what they need? This report provides a wealth of information about BEA's performance and its customers.

Customer Satisfaction Score

4.2

What do customers think of BEA's products and services? FY 2006 survey respondents rated BEA's products and services a 4.2 on a 5-point scale.

Customer Satisfaction

Products and Services. BEA has always been responsive to the economic data needs of its customers. Since their inception, the *Customer Satisfaction Surveys* have been a useful tool in finding out how successful BEA has been in meeting customers' expectations. From data accelerations and Web site updates to user group meetings and more detailed data, many recent improvements have been prompted by BEA's commitment to customers.

In the FY 2006 survey, respondents were asked, "How satisfied are you with BEA's products and services?" Once again, BEA received a high score—4.2 on a 5-point scale. This score, which is reported to the Office of Management and Budget, represents BEA's success in meeting its strategic goals for FY 2006. In its *Strategic Plan for FY 2006–FY 2010*, BEA set a goal of receiving a 4.0 or better in this measure.

BEA Staff. Since BEA's data users rely heavily upon online information exchange, opportunities for phone, e-mail, and in person interactions are even more crucial for connecting with our customers. Through the exhibit services program, the public information line, subject matter experts, and various subject-specific e-mail accounts, BEA has made it easy for data users to connect with BEA staff and get their questions answered quickly and precisely. And BEA has placed a premium upon professionalism, courtesy, and responsiveness in these interactions. Those efforts have not gone unnoticed.

In the *FY 2006 Customer Satisfaction Survey*, respondents were asked, "How satisfied are you with the courtesy and responsiveness of BEA staff?" BEA customers indicated high levels of satisfaction, with the BEA staff receiving a 4.5 on a 5-point scale.

About the BEA Web site

The public Web site has emerged as the primary way BEA communicates with its data users. Thanks to recent enhancements, customers can access not only the latest economic data, but also interactive tables and maps, historic SURVEY OF CURRENT BUSINESS articles, and details about evolving economic issues in the FAQ section. And, nearly all BEA data products are available online and free-of-charge. During the survey period (October 1, 2005–June 30, 2006), the Web site averaged approximately 150,000 unique visitors each month. In today’s digital world, <www.bea.gov> is increasingly the ‘face of BEA.’

To continue reaching more data users, it is important for BEA to explore how customers are being introduced to the Web site. According to FY 2006 survey results; 20% of respondents initially found the site via a government Web site or link, another 20% were referred by a search engine, and 15% were referred by a professor or college course.

Another critical Web trend is how often BEA’s customers visit <www.bea.gov>. BEA has always been aware of its core audience of dedicated data users—both from conversations with customers at conferences and from the rising numbers of subscribers to the e-mail subscription service, which has risen to more than 11,000 since January 2006.

Survey respondents indicate that BEA’s audience is seeking accurate, timely, and relevant data fairly often. According to FY 2006 survey results, more than half (59.8%) of BEA’s customers visit at least monthly. A third of BEA’s customers visit weekly or more often (33.5% of total respondents). An especially-dedicated group of BEA’s data users (0.1%) visit more often than once daily!

This type of frequently-visiting audience provides many opportunities for BEA to further build its customer base. By finding ways to repackage existing data products to provide added value to our customers, BEA can continue to retain existing weekly visitors, create reasons for monthly visitors to return more often, and to secure new repeat visitors. The public site’s recently-posted newsroom and the news release highlights are good examples of work already being done to add value to existing data products.

Chart 1. How did customers find out about <www.bea.gov>?

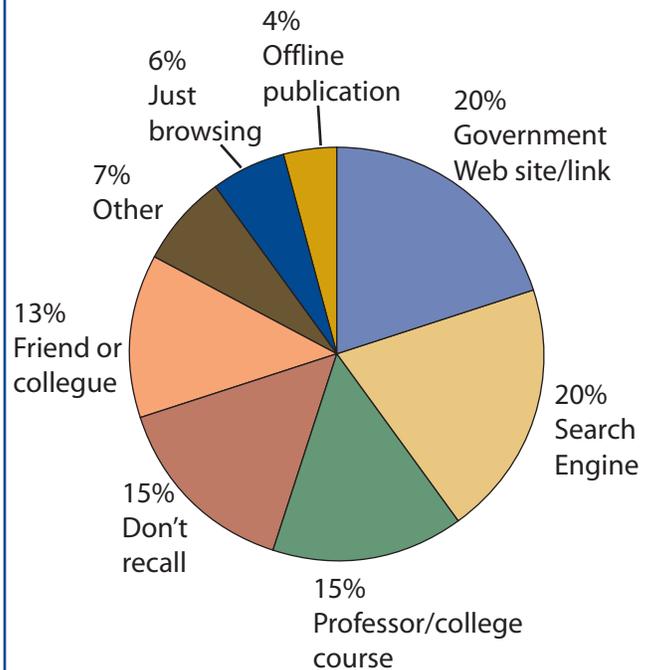
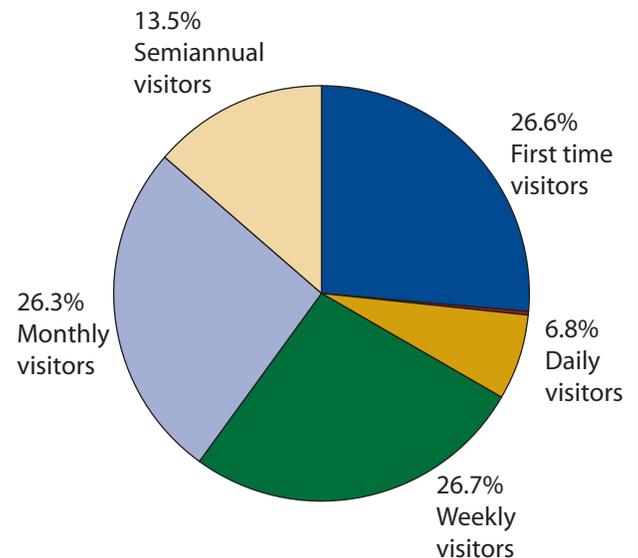


Chart 2. How often do BEA customers visit?



BEA Products and Services

Respondents to the FY 2006 survey were asked to select the type of economic information they were seeking when visiting the BEA Web site. Data tables were the most popular type of information (50.0%), followed by general information on the U.S. economy (28.1%). The third largest type of information was ‘other’ at 9.3%. With more than 1,200 respondents, analysis on fill-in responses will require more time; however, the results will be analyzed for trends and reported to the Bureau during the first quarter of FY 2007. *See table 1 below.*

Survey respondents were also asked if they had found what they sought on the BEA Web site. Overall, 65.5% of all survey respondents indicated that they had found the information they sought. Another 19.1% indicated they hadn’t found the information yet, while 15.2% indicated that they did not find the information they sought.

Not surprisingly, when asked if they’d found what they were looking for, the most ‘no’ responses (34%) occurred among those who indicated ‘other’ when asked what type of information they sought. These fill in responses will be analyzed for trends and the results will be circulated.

BEA’s Customers

Determining and meeting the needs of customers is a central component of BEA’s strategic plan. In the past, BEA defined its core customers based on feedback from subject matter experts and knowledge about how BEA’s economic indicators could be used. In the FY 2006 sur-

vey, respondents were asked to classify themselves into one of 12 categories defined by BEA’s existing knowledge of its customers. Results from the FY 2006 survey support the existing audience segmentation. *See charts 3 and 4, next page.*

Not surprisingly, the largest segment of survey respondents self-defined as economists or statisticians (36.4%). At more than a third of BEA’s core audience, external outreach activities connect with these data users throughout the fiscal year. In the coming fiscal year, BEA will reinforce its strong ties with this group and solicit feedback about existing and future products and services.

The second and third largest groups were academicians, with students (21.4%) and educators (8.1%) totalling 29.5% of site visitors. BEA will begin to focus on this user group, finding new ways to connect with these customers and to repackage existing data products for their use.

The fourth largest group of customers defined themselves as in financial, securities, or investment arenas (7.2%). BEA will conduct analysis on how BEA data is being used by this group and will find new ways to enhance their experience.

There was also an option to self-classify as ‘other,’ and 7.1% of respondents chose this option. These respondents were given the option to write in their role. These write-in responses will be analyzed for trends and results will be circulated.

For specific data about the survey’s four largest respondent groups, see pages 6–9.

Table 1. Types of Information Sought by Survey Respondents and Was That Information Found

Type of information sought	Did you find what you were looking for?			Percent of total information sought
	Yes	Not yet	No	
For all types of information	65.6%	19.1%	15.2%	
Data tables	68.2%	17.3%	14.4%	50.0%
General information on the U.S. economy	64.3%	23.3%	12.4%	28.1%
Other	38.3%	27.8%	33.9%	9.3%
News releases	84.4%	8.9%	6.7%	7.3%
SURVEY OF CURRENT BUSINESS	64.6%	14.6%	20.8%	3.9%
BEA career information	92.3%	0.0%	7.7%	1.1%
BEA contact information	66.7%	33.3%	0.0%	0.2%

Chart 3. Who are BEA customers?

The largest segment of BEA's online customers define themselves either as an economist or statistician (36.4%) or as an academician (students and educators total 29.5%).

Other customers self-defined as:

Financial/Securities/Investment	7.2%
Other	7.1%
Government representative	4.9%
Business owner/manager	4.7%
General public	3.6%
Marketing professional	2.7%
Reporter/news professional	1.9%
Accountant	1.3%
Trade/policy association representative	0.4%
Attorney	0.3%

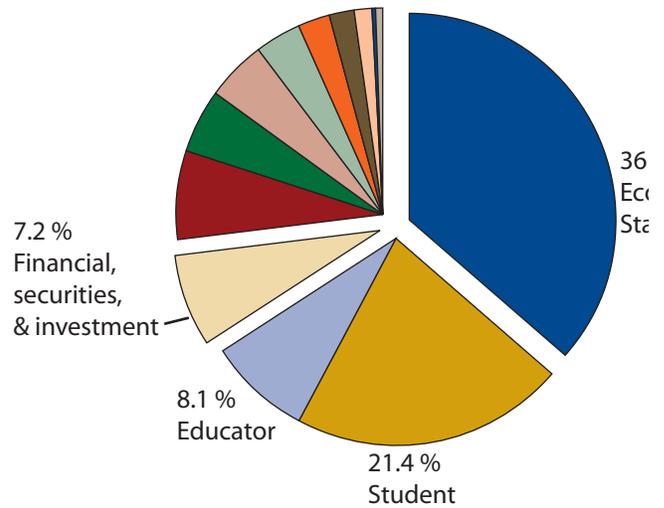
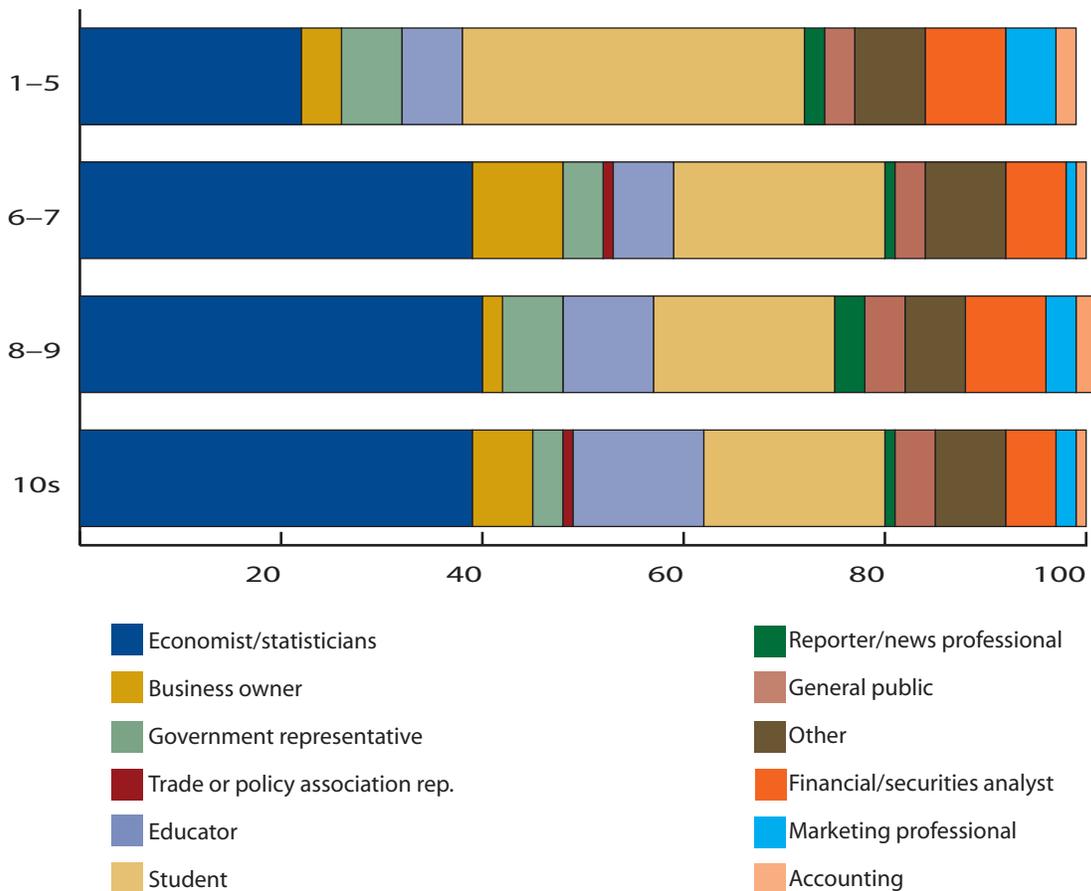


Chart 4. Are they satisfied with BEA's products and services?

The chart below examines BEA's audiences and their satisfaction with BEA's products and services. Survey respondents were to rate their satisfaction with BEA's products and services on a 10-point scale. Scores between 1–5 points are considered 'unsatisfied,' while scores of 6 or 7 are considered

'somewhat satisfied.' Scores of 8 or 9 are classified as 'moderately satisfied,' and a score of 10 is classified as 'very satisfied.' Survey respondents were also asked to self-classify themselves into one of several job-based categories, which were based upon who BEA thought its customers might be.



More about BEA's Customers:
Economists/Statisticians
36.4% of respondents

Economists and statisticians comprise the largest user group in the survey. And more than two-thirds of them came to <www.bea.gov> seeking data tables (67%), with the next largest percentage seeking general information on the U.S. economy (17%). Those who sought news releases ranked third at 8%.

While some of the economists and statisticians who completed the FY 2006 survey were first-time (10%) or daily (10%) visitors to the BEA Web site, most of this user group (69%, total), visit <www.bea.gov> weekly or monthly.

BEA will continue to perform outreach to this user group by continuing the customer satisfaction survey, attending professional economic conferences, and soliciting feedback on products and services—with the goal of reinforcing existing alliances.

Table 2. Types of Information Sought by Economists and Statisticians

Type of information sought	Percent of 'economist/statistician' respondents seeking
Data tables	67.3%
General information on the U.S. economy	16.7%
News releases	8.0%
Other	4.2%
SURVEY OF CURRENT BUSINESS	2.7%
BEA career information	0.9%
BEA contact information	0.2%

Chart 5. Economist and Statisticians' Satisfaction Levels with BEA Products and Services (Scale 1–10)

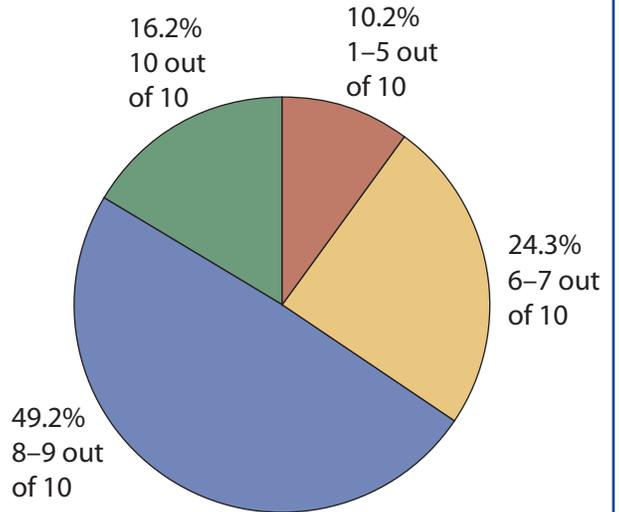
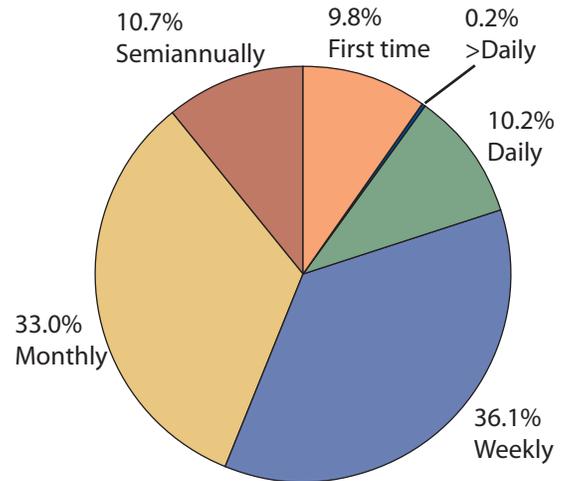


Chart 6. Economist and Statisticians' Frequency of Use



More about BEA's Customers:

Students

16.4% of respondents

Respondents self-identifying as students made up the second largest user group, according to the *FY 2006 Customer Satisfaction Survey*. Together with educators, academicians comprised 29.5% of respondents.

The majority of students visited the BEA Web site to find general information on the U.S. economy (45%), followed closely by data tables (40%). While just over half (52%) of the respondents in this user group were first time visitors to <www.bea.gov>, more than a third indicated that they visit monthly or more. Many of these respondents were initially referred by their professors to the BEA Web site.

In the coming fiscal year, BEA will gather more information about this user group to determine more specific information about their data needs and to discover how existing data can be repackaged to meet their needs. The goal of this interaction is to connect with core audiences.

Table 3. Types of Information Sought by Students

Type of information sought	Percent of 'student' respondents seeking
General information on the U.S. economy	44.7%
Data tables	40.0%
Other	8.3%
News releases	3.0%
SURVEY OF CURRENT BUSINESS	3.4%
BEA career information	0.4%
BEA contact information	0.0%

Chart 7. Students' Satisfaction Levels with BEA Products and Services (Scale 1-10)

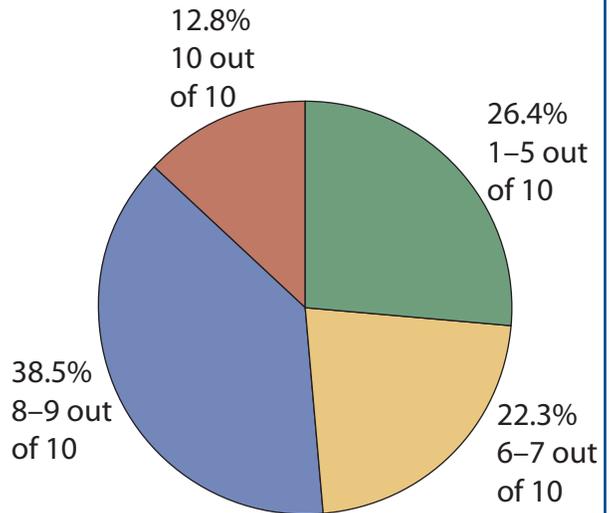
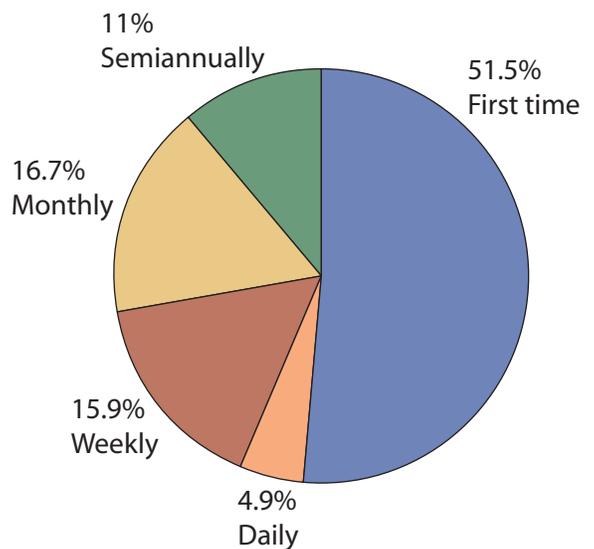


Chart 8. Students' Frequency of Use



More about BEA's Customers:

Educators

8.1% of respondents

Among respondents to the *FY 2006 Customer Satisfaction Survey*, 8.1% self-classified as educators. Among this user group, more than two-thirds visit the BEA Web site monthly or more often: daily, 3%; weekly, 29%, and monthly, 36%.

The majority of educators came to <www.bea.gov> looking for data tables (51%); and just over a third (35%) came seeking general information on the U.S. economy.

In FY 2007, BEA will conduct informal surveys of this user group to determine how BEA's data products can be integrated into their coursework. An emphasis will be placed on making this audience more knowledgeable about BEA's existing data products, including the e-mail subscription service, the FAQ database, and the news release highlights. The FY 2007 goal for these users is to connect with core audiences.

Table 4. Types of Information Sought by Educators

Type of information	Percent of 'educator' respondents seeking
Data tables	51.0%
General information on the U.S. economy	35.0%
News releases	7.0%
Other	5.0%
SURVEY OF CURRENT BUSINESS	2.0%
BEA career information	0.0%
BEA contact information	0.0%

Chart 9. Educators' Satisfaction Levels with BEA Products and Services (Scale 1-10)

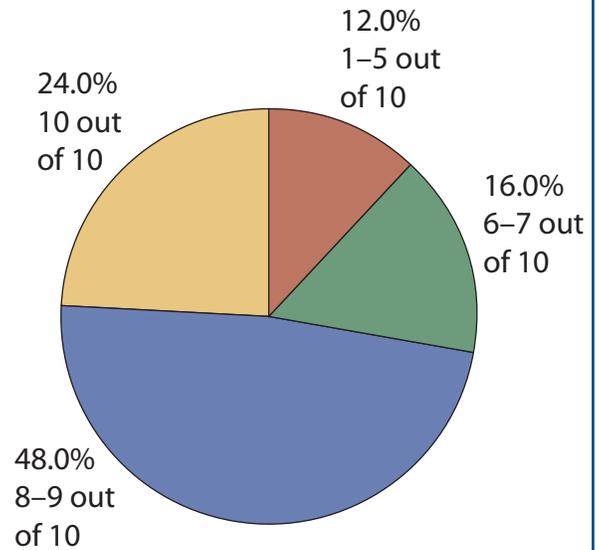
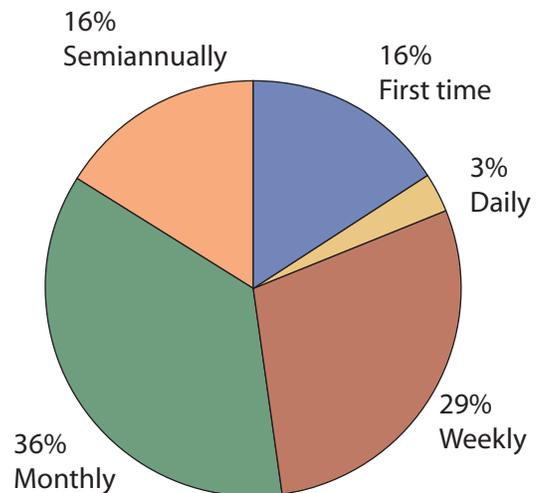


Chart 10. Educators' Frequency of Use



More about BEA's Customers:

**Financial, securities, and investment
7.2% of survey respondents**

The fourth-largest user group was comprised of those who work in financial, securities, or investment capacities. Just over a third (38%) visited the BEA Web site looking for data tables, followed by general information on the U.S. economy (29%) and news releases (16%).

And almost three-fourths (71.9%) visit monthly or more often with 5.6% of those in the financial, securities, or investment arenas being daily visitors; 34.8% weekly visitors; and 31.5% monthly visitors.

In FY 2007, the goal is to foster industry-specific relationships with these users. Possible types of include providing statistical primers for the newly-employed in the industry.

Table 5. Types of Information Sought by Financial, Securities, and Investment

Type of information	Percent of 'financial, securities, and investment' respondents seeking
Data Tables	38.2%
General information on the U.S. economy	29.2%
News releases	15.7%
Other	10.1%
SURVEY OF CURRENT BUSINESS	4.5%
BEA career information	2.2%
BEA contact information	0.0%

Chart 11. Financial, Securities, and Investment Satisfaction Levels with BEA Products and Services (Scale 1-10)

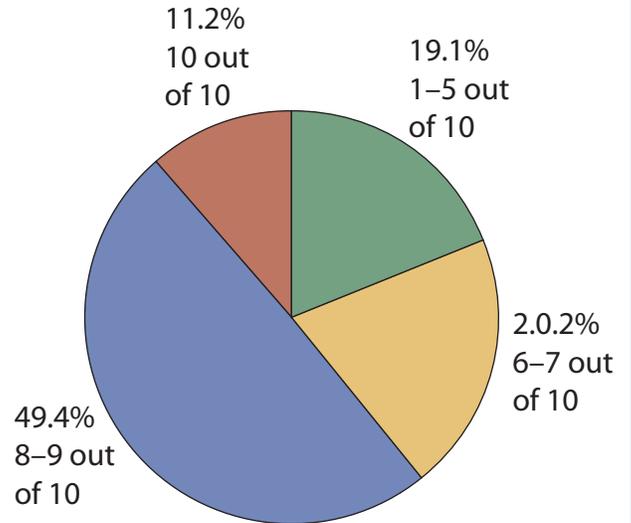
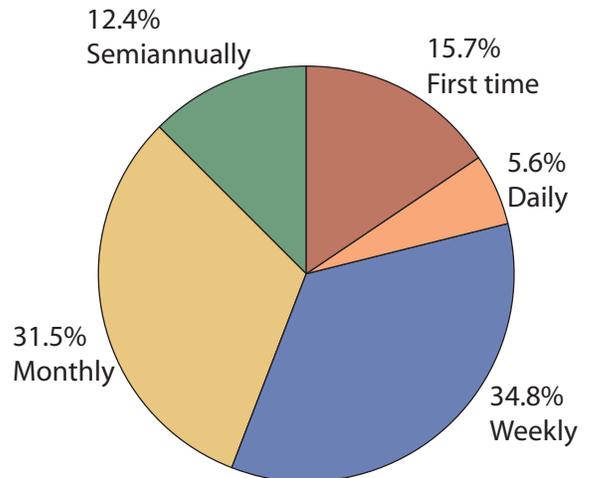


Chart 12. Financial, Securities, and Investment Frequency of Use



Appendix A:

About Foresee Results' Survey Design

The Bureau of Economic Analysis uses a Web-based survey instrument that is conducted by Foresee Results, a market leader in online customer satisfaction measurement and management and specializing in converting satisfaction data into user-driven web development strategies. Using the methodology of the University of Michigan's American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI), ForeSee Results has created a model that scientifically quantifies the elements that drive online customer satisfaction and predicts future behaviors, including the likelihood to return to the site or recommend the site to others. This contractor's methodologies and survey instruments are OMB-approved.

There are several key characteristics of ForeSee Results' survey design:

The use of multiple item scales: Instead of relying on the answer to a single question to measure customer perceptions for a particular attribute, or "element" (which typically results in a rather large confidence interval), ForeSee Results asks multiple questions to derive a score for each measured element. For example, rather than asking respondents to "Please rate your overall satisfaction with the functionality of this Web site" to derive a score for Functionality, respondents are asked to rate the "Usefulness of services", the "Convenience of services" and the "Ability to accomplish what you wanted to". Not only is the information gathered more specific and actionable, but combining a number of correlated measures together into an element also reduces the confidence interval around the mean score, enabling us to detect true changes in scores over repeated measurement periods.

Element questions before satisfaction and future behavior questions: ForeSee Results asks all questions relating to specific site elements before asking questions relating to overall satisfaction and future behaviors. This is to help ensure that overall site satisfaction is rated based on respondents' experiences with the various site elements.

Performance ratings of attributes on 10 point scales: ForeSee Results employs the use of 10-point scales (with an option

of Don't Know, where applicable) to help maximize the precision of the scores and to extract greater amounts of information from skewed data.

The use of partial (partitioned) questionnaires: ForeSee Results' proprietary technology allows us to partition a 30-to-40 question customer satisfaction survey model into 12-to-20 question surveys. Imputation is used to fill in the missing data based on responses to common questions. Only taking about two minutes to complete, this drastically reduced questionnaire length improves survey response rates. The result is a means of gathering accurate and precise data that is far less intrusive than traditional market research surveys.

Derived impacts rather than self-rated importance: Self-rated importance, (e.g. "Please rate the importance of site performance on your web experience), is a traditional market research approach that can provide misleading, unreliable results. Using its proprietary methodology, ForeSee Results uses derived impacts to estimate the amount of change in satisfaction that will occur with an improvement in a quality component (such as site performance).

Imputation: What is it and why does it work? Imputation is a broad class of statistical methods for estimating the missing values in a data set using the information that is available. In essence, imputation allows us to use people's responses to the questions they ARE asked to PREDICT how they would have answered the questions that they WEREN'T asked. There are a number of common methods for handling missing data. The method utilized by Foresee Results is sophisticated method that takes into account the relationships in its customer satisfaction model and intercorrelations in the data.

In simplest terms, imputation works because the survey partitions are set up in such a way that there is sufficient information about the intercorrelations of all the questions in the data to estimate the necessary predictions.

Why does the survey use a sample of 300?

Based on thorough research Foresee Results determined

Continues on page 11

that a sample of 300 is the most optimized in terms of both minimizing measurement error and expediting data collection. This sample size ensures stable and precise impacts and scores. Scores are typically (+/-) 2 points at a 95% confidence interval. It is important to note that the determination of an appropriate sample size is a statistical formula and is not dependent upon population size.

How does Foresee Results know that the survey questions are the “right” questions?

To create its core list customer satisfaction survey model, ForeSee Results went through a rigorous question development process. This process included qualitative, one-on-one interviews with a variety of Internet users, with a follow-up survey to validate the findings. In general there are three types of validity that we apply to the assessment of the survey. First, do the questions have “face validity” that is do they make sense. Second, construct validity is evaluated by examining whether the questions that comprise each element group together statistically in the way we expect them to group. And third discriminant validity is examined and assessed to determine if the various groups are statistically independent from each other (i.e., low inter-correlations between elements).

About the ACSI: The American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI) is a uniform, national, cross-industry measure of satisfaction with the quality of goods and services available in the United States. In addition to being a powerful economic indicator of customer satisfaction, the ACSI is also the only econometric indicator that links satisfaction to customers, future behaviors and economic returns. Since its inception in 1994, the ACSI has provided business managers with an independent, customer-based satisfaction measurement of nearly 200 companies and organizations and 39 industries in the U.S. economy, accounting for over 45% of the GDP.

The powerful mathematical models used by the ACSI methodology do not relegate customer satisfaction to the realm of anecdotes, assumptions, personal experiences, inferences

or even simple correlations. Rather, the methodology allows businesses to measure customer satisfaction accurately, credibly and precisely, and can be used to point to specific areas of improvement -- to both physical retail sites and Web sites. Year after year and quarter after quarter, the ACSI demonstrates that a scientific link exists between its measurement of customer satisfaction and financial metrics such as market value added, stock price, cash flow and return on investment. In fact since 1994, changes in the ACSI have correlated with changes in both consumer spending and the S&P 500 corporate earnings.

The ACSI methodology assesses satisfaction with multiple satisfaction drivers. Each satisfaction driver is evaluated through multiple questions for greater accuracy and actionability of results. Question responses are rated on a scale of 1-10, which affords a more precise and accurate picture of the distribution of responses. This approach reveals opportunities to increase satisfaction to a higher level that will precipitate greater financial returns.

What about the ACSI methodology makes it econometric?

Econometrics is the application of statistical and mathematical methods in the field of economics to describe the numerical relationships between key economic forces such as capital, interest rates, and labor. The ACSI can be econometric in the sense that it is an aggregate economic force that has been empirically related to other macro economic variables, such as consumer spending.

More specifically, the components of the ACSI methodology that are more “econometric” are those that deal with the impacts, which help to set priorities and provide predictions about how changes will affect satisfaction and business outcomes. This would be in contrast to the “Psychometric” aspects of the methodology; such as determining which survey questions should comprise each element. This has less to do with causality and prediction and more to do with “how people think about web sites.” The ACSI methodology leverages best practices in both “econometrics” and “psychometrics”.