



Dear friends of Survey Solutions,

Below is an overview of the new features added in version 5.18. This is a major release with big changes compared to the previous versions, and it also contains smaller fixes and improvements necessary to improve reliability, stability, and security of our application. It is important to be aware of the new features to utilize Survey Solutions to its full potential:

- web-interview mode;
- export to Stata Unicode format (Stata 14);
- User-requested feature: clickable GPS location;

## 3rd Survey Solutions Online User Group Meeting

Tuesday, March 14th, 2017

9:00 am | Eastern Standard Time (New York, GMT-05:00) | 1 hr

Meeting number (access code): 738 604 216

Meeting password: 6JjGtYHM

[JOIN THE MEETING](#)

## Feature request form

This [form](#) can be completed before and after the meeting to suggest a new feature for Survey Solutions.

## Web-interview mode

The new version of Survey Solutions extends data collection modes to web surveys. The web survey mode allows collecting survey information through web interviews (CAWI). Interviewers are not part of this mode as the respondents are fully guided by the software, with which they interact through the internet. This mode is most useful when the respondents are not easily approachable, not known, or a face-to-face interview can't be easily scheduled. For example, a link to the survey may be placed at a website, where cooperating visitors may follow this link to get to the interview form.

Nothing special is required during the preparation of the questionnaire to be applied in web-interview mode. In fact any questionnaire used before may be imported and applied in web-interview mode, or a new questionnaire may be created.

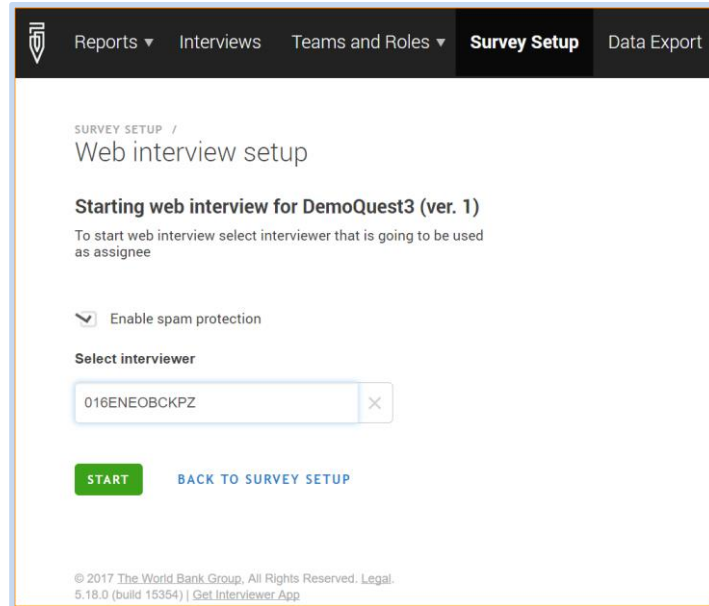
The designers of the questionnaires that will be applied in the web-interview mode need to be aware of the following:

- **self-enumeration**: the respondents will enter their information themselves without presence of the interviewer, hence navigation must be intuitive and clear;
- **instructions and questions wording**: the respondent will not be trained on the survey and may need more instructions and explanations relatively to the interviewers that had had a training on the survey;
- **error messages** must be clear, and give an indication of where the problem may be, and how it may be resolved;
- **different presentation** of some question types in the web interview (for example, barcode reading);
- interviews collected in web-survey mode **may not be rejected** back to the respondents.

### Setting up Survey Solutions web-interview mode

Web-interview mode can be understood as an additional channel through which interviews arrive to the system and extends Census mode.

On the Survey Setup page click on any survey that has been imported in census mode and select *Web interview setup*. Then select an interviewer from the list of existing interviewers:



Enabling spam protection will help defend against robot-submitted data. The interviewer that has been picked up at this point is not conducting the interviews, but will receive any completed interview that has been rejected by the supervisor. When the web-interview mode has been started, a link will be shown, which can be placed on a public web page or mass-mailed to potential respondents.

The web interview looks and behaves identical to the interview on a tablet:

Web interview #13-13-13-13      NATIONAL HOUSEHOLD SURVEY 2016/17      Original ▾    Help

SECTION 10: HOUSEHOLD ASSETS

SECTION 10B: ICT USE

SECTION 11: PROPERTY AND OTHER INCOMES DURING THE LAST 12 MONTHS

Income source: - Net actual rents received from building/household property

Income source: - Net rent received from land/equipment

Income source: - Royalties

Income source: - Interest received

Income source: - Dividends

Income source: - Income from treasury bills

Income source: - Pension

SECTION 11: PROPERTY AND OTHER INCOMES DURING THE LAST 12 MONTHS /

Income source: - Net rent received from land/equipment

P15. Did you receive any income from Net rent received from land/equipment?

Yes

No

P13. Income amount from Net rent received from land/equipment in CASH

P14. Income amount from Net rent received from land/equipment in KIND

SECTION 11: PROPERTY AND OTHER INCOMES DURING THE LAST 12 MONTHS

The respondents have to maintain internet connection while completing the interview to allow the data to be submitted to the server. If the interview process is interrupted for a prolonged period, the program will freeze the interview and require the respondent to confirm when she is ready to continue.

Your session has timed out

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Your session has timed out because you didn't do any action for 15 minutes.  
Please reload the page to continue this interview.

RELOAD

If the respondent needs to interrupt an interview for a longer time, and close the program or restart a computer, she should retain her own personalized interview link, which is created when she starts responding to the questionnaire. This is displayed at the top of the page.

The data entered as part of the web-interview is sent to the server immediately, so there is no *Save* action specifically required from the respondent. But the respondent still needs to click *Complete* to signify that there is nothing else she wants to add or change in the interview and it may be sent for validation and processing.

### Mixed mode of data collection

With introduction of web interview mode, Survey Solutions CAPI software allows reaching customers not available for face-to-face interviews, but it still allows the survey administrator to decide, which part of the survey should be conducted in which mode. In some situations one may opt for a fully face-to-face survey, while in others for a fully web interviewing, yet in others a certain proportion of the interviews may be collected using one instrument, and the rest using the other.

The mixed mode has many advantages, that our users will find useful. For example, one may start with an attempt to conduct a face-to-face interview, and upon a refusal offer the respondent to fill out a form in the internet. The data coming from both channels will be absorbed into the same database and exported as a whole, making it immediately available for quality control, cleaning and analysis.

Some of our clients may be concerned about the effects that combining of different instruments may cause. Recall, that the questionnaire is still the same (unless another version has been created for web-interviewing intentionally), which reduces the possibility for inconsistencies. But web interviewing removes interviewer-effects and biases, which actually may be desirable.

## Export to Stata Unicode format (Stata 14)

Starting with version 5.18 of Survey Solutions the data export to Stata produces data files saved in the format introduced with Stata v.14. The advantage of this format is explicit use of Unicode standard for string data allowing storage of characters from Cyrillic, Thai, Chinese, Khmer, and many other alphabets.

Even where the Latin alphabet characters were used, the users earlier could see the missing characters instead of accented letters:

```
S19_14:
 1 Cr er des emplois
 2 Faciliter l'acc s   l'instruction
 3 Faciliter l'acc s   la sant 
 4 Bitumer les routes
 5 Faciliter l'acc s au logement
 6 Faciliter l'acc s au cr dit
 7 Faciliter l'acc s   l'eau et   l' lectricit 
 8 Revaloriser les salaires
 9 Garantir les prix des produits de base
10 Lutter contre la corruption

S19_13:
 1 Oui
 2 Non

S19_08:
 1 Am lior 
 2 Maintenu
 3 D grad 

S19_07:
 1 Am lior 
 2 Maintenu
 3 D grad 

S19_06:
 1 Tr s instables
 2 A peu pr s stables
 3 Stables

S19_05:
 1 Vous arrivez   mettre pas mal d'argent de c t 
```

*previously*

```
S19_14:
 1 Cr er des emplois
 2 Faciliter l'acc s   l'instruction
 3 Faciliter l'acc s   la sant 
 4 Bitumer les routes
 5 Faciliter l'acc s au logement
 6 Faciliter l'acc s au cr dit
 7 Faciliter l'acc s   l'eau et   l' lectricit 
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 2 Maintenu
 3 D grad 

S19_06:
 1 Tr s instables
 2 A peu pr s stables
 3 Stables

S19_05:
 1 Vous arrivez   mettre pas mal d'argent de c t 
```

*now*

No special action is required from the user to take advantage of the benefits of the new format as new datasets will be saved into this format automatically, but the users must be aware that Stata 14 will be required to open datasets produced with Survey Solutions.

Newer format will also accommodate larger string content. The exact limit depends on the type of characters/alphabet being used, but is at least 500 characters.

## Clickable GPS location

The new version allows to access Google maps from a GPS question at the interview details via a clickable location button. The location recorded in the question will be indicated on a map with a standard marker.

This feature was requested by one of our users from East Asia.

## Bugfixes and improvements

We have taken steps to reduce memory footprint of our application on large and very large questionnaires (thousands of questions). At the same time we remind our users to consult the minimal requirements for the tablets presented at the support site <http://support.mysurvey.solutions> to make sure a model with suitable parameters is used.