

Mail Survey of Recipients of Bureau of Justice Statistics Print Publications, May 1997

By Jaime Green, BJS Intern, Summer 1997

BJS surveyed traditional users of BJS printed products to see whether other media might appeal to them more. (*Web Statistics--Measuring User Activity: An Analysis of BJS Web Site Usage Statistics* analyzes BJS web site use for the last four months of 1997.) The 1997 mail survey (at the end of this paper) was mailed May 15, 1997, to 61,000 BJS users: 32,746 who had ordered a printed BJS report in the previous year, overlapping with 40,607 users registered in BJS data categories (law enforcement, corrections, probation and parole, courts, sentencing, victims, drugs and crime, information systems, criminal history records, justice expenditure and employment, federal offenses and offenders, and BJS). There were 15,179 respondents, a response rate of 26%. Highlights include the following:

- 89.7% (13,623) said they still wanted to receive printed and bound reports by mail; 5.5% said they did not.
- Asked what factors influenced their need for printed copies, 54.1% said the subject; 36.4%, how often they used it; 23.6%, length.
- Of those who said length was a factor, 13.6% of them wanted paper copies of reports 25 or more pages long.
- 52.3% said they had used the Internet; 43.2% said they had not.
- Of those who had been online, 24.2% had visited the BJS site in the previous month.
- 55.4% of those who use the Internet had ever downloaded a document onto their computer.
- Respondents said the file types they most often downloaded were--
 - 15.0% ASCII or plain text (.txt)
 - 13.4% Internet (.html) pages
 - 10.9% Adobe Acrobat (.pdf) files
 - 7.6% graphics (.gif) files
 - 4.9% zipped (.zip) spreadsheets
 - 3.6% unzipped (.wk1) spreadsheets.
- 96.7% of respondents wanted to receive notices of new BJS reports.
- 87.2% wanted notices of BJS reports along with reports from other agencies.
- 78.7% wanted notices by U.S. mail; 18.7% by e-mail; 9.6% by fax.
- 73.6% said they would not want to receive BJS data and reports on a CD-ROM; 14.2% said they would; 12.2% did not answer.

Geographical distribution

<u>Region</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
U.S.	15,059	99.2%
Northeast	3,533	23.3%
Midwest	3,621	23.9%
South	4,952	32.6%
West	2,953	19.5%
U.S. Dependencies	17	0.1%
Not U.S.	47	0.3%
Unknown	56	0.4%
Total	15,179	100%

The respondents held a variety of occupations related to the criminal justice field, as determined by their address label. Half could not be determined. Of those that could be determined, the most popular professions were, in this order:

- 13.8% law enforcement
- 7.2% academics (including students)
- 4.2% corrections
- 4.1% directors of justice or health care agencies
- 3.4% nonsworn law enforcement officials such as dispatchers.

Occupations of respondents from address labels

<u>Occupation</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Unknown	7,768	51.2%
Librarians and Researchers	385	2.5%
Attorneys	268	1.8%
Academics	1,090	7.2%
Prisoners	86	0.6%
Law Enforcement	2,096	13.8%
Religious Officials	37	0.2%
Business	264	1.7%
Social Scientists	255	1.7%
Corrections	634	4.2%
Journalists	102	0.7%
Court Officials	75	0.5%
Analysts	109	0.7%
Other	520	3.4%

Other Law Enforcement	435	2.9%
Community Groups	135	0.9%
Government Officials	3	0.0%
Court Personnel	124	0.8%
Consultants	79	0.5%
Coordinators	83	0.5%
Directors	621	4.1%
Retired	10	0.1%
Total	15,179	100.0%

Asked if they wanted to receive notices of new BJS reports, 96.7% did.

Interest in receiving new BJS reports	Number	Percent
Wants new BJS reports	14,677	96.7%
Doesn't want new BJS reports	275	1.8%
Unknown	227	1.5%
Total	15,179	100%

Those who wanted notices of BJS reports along with reports from other agencies (87.2%) outnumbered those who wanted notices of BJS reports only (3.6%).

Types of notices respondents want	Number	Percent
Want BJS reports only	553	3.6%
Wants BJS and other agencies reports	13,235	87.2%
Neither BJS or other agencies reports	1,391	9.2%
Total	15,179	100.0%

Asked whether they wanted notices by E-mail, fax, or U.S. mail,
78.7% wanted U.S. mail;
18.7% e-mail;
9.6% fax.

The majority, 81.3%, did not list an e-mail address;
90.4% did not list a fax number.

The categories overlapped somewhat:

<u>Respondents' preference</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
E-mail only	1,663	11.0%
Fax only	522	3.4%
U.S. mail only	10,385	68.4%
E-mail and fax	173	1.1%
E-mail and U.S. mail	797	5.3%
Fax and U.S. mail	567	3.7%
E-mail, fax, and U.S. mail	198	1.3%
None	874	5.8%
Total	15,179	100.0%

Asked if they would want to receive BJS data and reports on a CD-ROM,
73.6% said no;
14.2% said yes;
12.2% did not answer.

Of the 14.2% who said yes,
6.3% said they would pay a \$15 shipping and handling charge;
2.3% said \$20;
1.0% said \$30;
0.7% said \$25.

Academics were more willing to pay postage and handling for CD-ROM's than any other profession.

Asked if they have ever used the Internet,
52.3% of respondents said yes;
43.2% said no.

Of respondents who had been online,
24.2% had visited the BJS site in the previous month;
28.9% had not;
47.0% did not answer.

Of those who had visited the BJS site,
1,649 people visited the site while at home, an average of 3.8 times a month;
2,285 visited the BJS site while at work, an average of 4.2 times a month.

Adobe Acrobat portable document format (pdf) files show reports the way they look when printed. These files are viewable on any computer and printable on any printer. The software is free. Of those respondents who used the Internet,

- 18.1% did not use Adobe Acrobat;
- 12.4% did;
- 9.1% did not respond.

Asked if they have ever downloaded a document onto their computer, 55.4% of those who use the Internet said yes. The most popular file types they downloaded were--

- 15.0% ASCII (.txt) or plain text
- 13.4% Internet (.html) pages
- 10.9% Adobe Acrobat (.pdf) files
- 7.6% graphics (.gif) files
- 4.9% zipped (.zip) spreadsheets
- 3.6% unzipped (.wk1) spreadsheets.

- 14.5% said there was no limit to the file size they could download;
- 2.0% had limits.

Asked if they still want to receive printed and bound reports by mail, 89.7% (13,623) said yes; 5.5% said no.

Asked what factors influenced their need for printed copies, 54.1% said the subject; 36.4% said how often they used it; 23.6 % said length.

Of those who said length was a factor, 13.6% of them wanted paper copies of reports 25 or more pages long.

Comparing Internet use by region, 34.2% of respondents in the South had been online; 22.8% in the Midwest; 22.4% in the Northeast; 20.5% in the West.

Occupations that used the BJS site were-- 13.0% law enforcement; 9.1% academics; 3.7% directors.

Those who used the BJS site were mostly in the South, followed by the Northeast, the Midwest, and the West.

Most professions, including academics, wanted report notices--
by U.S. mail first,
then by E-mail,
then by fax, and finally,
a combination of the three ways.

Comparison with the fall 1993 survey of BJS print product users

According to the report on the fall 1993 BJS user survey, "Flow of Criminal Justice Statistical Information by Electronic Means," 36,000 surveys were mailed and 5,811 were received, a response rate of 16%.

The survey sample was larger in 1997 (61,000), as was the rate of response (26%). The geographic distribution was the same; most of the BJS users were in the South.

In 1993, 46% of respondents preferred to receive reports by paper, compared to 89.7% in 1997.

In 1993, 19% of the respondents preferred faxed copies; in 1997, 9.6% wanted notices of reports by fax.

User Comments

Many users used this section to request information. Many expressed satisfaction with BJS reports and staff (see attachments).

1997 Bureau of Justice Statistics User Survey: Comments by Respondents

1. "Thank you for providing this information." --Silver Spring, Md.
2. "You guys and gals are great! Thanks."
--Human Rights Campaign, D.C.
3. "BJS does a great job providing information. Keep up the great work!"
--College Station, Texas
4. "Thank you for your outstanding service." --San Antonio, Texas
5. "I have thoroughly enjoyed the service of BJS." --Shawnee, Okla.
6. "You do an excellent job in handling my information that you send to me in the mail. I have found each and every piece a real value for my use in my text. Thank you for your help."
-- Cleveland, Ohio
7. "The data I receive from BJS greatly assists me in...educational presentations." -- Boothwyn, Pa.
8. "Your service is very much appreciated." --County clerk, Washington State
9. "The information is excellent for teaching. 'Keep 'em coming!' Thanks!"
--Silver Spring, Md.
- 10 "We are very grateful for this service and our collaboration with you."
--South Huntington, N.Y.
11. "BJS has been exceptionally prompt in replying to my FAX requests for printed materials. This information has been included in a New York State curriculum (for correction officers in NY State prisons) on "Tuberculosis and Bloodborne Pathogens: Transmission Prevention." The up-to-date statistics from a reliable source have been well received in direct training of correction officers and state correctional staff. Thank you very much for providing this credible, efficient service."
--Buffalo, N.Y.
- 12 "Thank you! You're doing an excellent job!" --Teacher, Erie, Pa.
13. "This information has been very helpful to our agency. It has assisted us in obtaining statistical information required for reports." --Lake Mary, Fla.
14. "Keep up the good work."
--Hopkins, Minn.
15. "Your Web site is great. Using Acrobat the file size is small even for a large report. I downloaded the document... and printed several copies. If the material is not what I thought it was, I can just delete it and save us all money." --Las Vegas, Nev.
16. "Your reports and bulletins are great assets for statistical data and verification. They have especially helped my graduate research on Domestic Violence and Violent Crime. Thanks! Keep up the good work!" --Providence, R.I.
17. "Always appreciate the short time it take to get a publication from you. Thanks." --Lancaster, Pa.
18. "The information you provide is excellent. I appreciate what you do as an educator, consultant, and in my works environment. Thank you."
--San Antonio, Texas
19. "I am very grateful for the information I have received from you. I have used BJS information in many of my college research papers." --Galena, Mo.
20. "Thank you for all your assistance and cooperation in sending statistical research and follow-up material on latest

BJS User Survey Comments (continued)

status of criminal justice issues. Please keep it up! Most appreciated!"

--Investigator, Laredo, Texas

21. "I am generally satisfied; only problem is that I order things for work and for personal use but the orders get confused. Ability to have 2 accounts for 1 person would be nice. Also, more studies funded by BJA/OJP grants would be great to read even if the results are not earth-shaking." --Baltimore, Md.

22. "I find the material extremely helpful in my work as a researcher writer and often pass on relevant information to graduate students and others interested in the info sent." --Tallahassee, Fla.

23 " All of the BJS materials rec'd are extremely valuable to me in research, writing, and teaching." --Professor, Boston, Mass.

24. "Our publishing company is very grateful for the information you provide us. The data from your materials is used by our Product Development staff to produce booklets used by police agencies, courts, community crime watch groups, public schools, etc.... to educate the public on how to be safe, don't use drugs, the hazards of alcohol and driving, and so on... Again, thanks so much for the service you provide."

--Marketing Director, South Deerfield, Mass.

23. "Very interested to hear from you folks. Your data is always very helpful."

--Coral Springs, Fla.

24. "Only comment is Thank You! :)"

--Helena, Mont.

25. "The information from BJS has been of much help to me. I have been on the board of N.C. Van 11 years and your

information has been helpful for 9 years. I am a victim of crime paralyzed from the waist down and have been in a wheelchair for 19 years. Thanks so much for your support." --Statesville, N.C.

26. "These reports are invaluable for teachers. They allow us to stay up-to-date and assist students (as well as teachers) with research projects."

--Fayetteville, N.C.

27. "This is one of so very few remaining sources where objectivity is the key and not a preconceived idea which drives the researchers to 'prove' that preconceived, biased opinion."

--Lt. Col., Gladwyne, Pa.

28. "I love the on-line sourcebook--it's great to just search on 'firearm!'"

--Research Associate, Washington, D.C.

29. "Justice is the heart of America. It is of paramount importance to share your information with fellow citizens. Unfortunately many citizens can't even afford a small postage or handling fee. Really! Keep the faith and keep your good work coming. Thanks!" --Etiwanda, Calif.

30. "With thanks for sending me highly informative materials that are useful in my teaching." --Associate Professor, Ada, Ohio

31. "I appreciate the service you provide and it is most helpful to my organization. Please maintain this public service."

--Institute of Firearms, Toledo, Ohio

32. "Thank you so much for your wonderful publications. I don't know what I would do without them!"

--Professor, Murfreesboro, Tenn.

33. "This information that is provided is one of the greatest educational tools that an instructor can use, for current and future reference. The sourcebook is the greatest!" --Citrus Springs, Fla.

BJJ User Survey Comments (continued)

34. "Your information in the form of sheets are a valuable link for others to what is happening in other parts of the country. We are able to draw on some of the resources you share to be sure we don't 'reinvent the wheel' but rather focus our limited time and energy toward working with our juveniles and families."
--Concord, N.H.

35. "These reports have been an extremely valuable tool in my school work." --Fort Campbell, Ky.

36. "Our department greatly benefits from your work and we deeply appreciate you. Thanks." --Deputy Probation Officer, Santa Ana, Calif.

37. "Keep up the good work. Whenever I call on the phone for a report, your personnel are very helpful." -- Sergeant, Livonia Police, Livonia, Mich.

38. "Thanks for asking! Not only do you put out excellent documents; you also care about your customers."
--Silver Spring, Md.

39. "The material has been invaluable in the classroom. Storage is always a problem. CD-ROMs would solve the storage problem. Personal thanks to BJJ and all those who make the material available." --Professor, Sommerville, N.J.

40. "Information is used at our meetings and for legislative support in certain purposed laws." --Director, Kentucky Voice for Crime Victims, Inc., Louisville, Ky.

41. "Find the Internet and Fax to be the most desirable method to find and receive info. However, an occasional 'snail mail' catalog would be beneficial."
--Administrative Officer, Cary, N.C.

42. "Excellent service; up-to-date information on research projects and data collections in the criminal justice field." --Investigator, State Public Defender, Hudson, Wis.

(Mailing label)

Tell us how you want to get information from BJS

More and more people are asking for information electronically--fax, e-mail, Internet, CD-ROM. To help us better serve your needs--

Please mail or fax this form by June 20, 1997. Thanks!

1. Do you want to receive notices of new BJS reports?
 yes no (if no, skip to item 2)

a. If yes, do you want to get notices of (pick one)--
 BJS reports only, or
 reports by BJS and other justice agencies

b. If yes, do you want to receive notices of reports by--
 e-mail? If so, write your e-mail address clearly here: _____
 fax? If so and your fax is on all the time and receives at night when long-distance rates are low, write your fax number here: (_____) _____
 U.S. mail?

If so, and the mailing label above needs correcting, please write the corrections beside the label and cross out the wrong information.

If so, check here to get a registration form for the 24-page National Criminal Justice Reference Service Catalog (free, every 2 months), with abstracts and order forms for reports by BJS as well as the National Institute of Justice, Bureau of Justice Assistance, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, other justice agencies, and private publishers.

2. Do you want BJS data and reports on a CD-ROM (compactdisk) you can view or load on your computer?
 yes no (if no, skip to item 3)

If yes, would you pay postage, handling, copying, and packaging costs up to--
 \$15 \$20 \$25 \$30

3. Do you use the Internet World Wide Web?
 yes no (if no, skip to item 4)

a. If yes, have you in the past month visited the BJS site at <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/> ? Check all that apply:
 yes: at home about times
 at work about times
 not at all

b. If yes, do you use the Adobe Acrobat Reader to view reports the way they look when printed?
 yes no don't know

c. If yes, have you ever downloaded a document onto your computer? If so, check all types of files that apply:
 ASCII (.txt) spreadsheet (.wk1)
 Adobe Acrobat (.pdf) zipped spreadsheets (.zip)
 graphics (.gif) Internet page (.html)

If yes, is there a limit to the file size you download?
 no limit yes, _____ megabytes

4. Do you still want to receive printed, bound reports by mail?
 yes no (if no, list your preferred other methods):

If yes, check which factors influence your need for printed copies:
 length
 subject
 frequency of use

If length is a factor, do you want printed copies only: of reports more than--
 25 pages long?
 50 pages?
 75 pages?
 96 pages (with a spine)?
 other: _____?

Other factors that influence your need for printed copies:

Your preferences are important to us. We look forward to serving your future needs for our information. Please write other comments on the back. **By June 20, 1997**, please fax this form to 410-792-4358 or mail it to the address below. Thank you!

Fax to 410-792-4358 --

or fold on this line, seal with tape, stamp, and mail to:

**Bureau of Justice Statistics Clearinghouse
P.O. Box 179
Annapolis Junction, MD 20701-0179**

Please tell us how you want to get information from BJS

Please fill out the form on the back and mail or fax
before June 20, 1997. Thanks!

Additional comments
