

**Author:** Lisa Heidell, SERA

**Presentation Title:** Advances In Surveys Proven And Effective 'Hands-Off' Approaches In A Period Of Covid

**Abstract:** A wide variety of evaluation projects and saturation studies rely on self-report data from program participants and non-participants. More and more of these surveys are administered via web because phone survey response rates have declined, and the costs of on-sites are prohibitive. We conducted a review of the literature to identify examples of validation studies, and conducted several in-field studies to explore successful and unsuccessful efforts using web surveys and correction factors as evidence of success. The authors conducted five studies in different states to gather data via web / phone, and also check the accuracy of self reports on the presence, and type of thermostats in place in households and commercial locations, and other thermostat data. We then compared the self-report data against two methods of validation work to check the accuracy: 1) on-site visits to a sample of households and businesses; and 2) camera phone photos from a random set of respondents. We also conducted a validation of a web survey of a dozen consumer electronics in the Northeast. On-site data collection is expensive, so we examined results from four different methods to validate data gathered from the main web survey: 1) camera phone photos, 2) email requests for re-counts from random respondents, 3) phone interviews with random respondents, and 4) limited on-site validation work. Finally, we reviewed integrated walk-through survey tools that combine web and photo upload procedures that can be administered by phone, tablet, or computer and examine the advantages, disadvantages, time, cost, and effectiveness. In addition to findings on accuracy and correction factors and the importance of validation work, we provide recommendations on data collection options that may save money over on-sites for certain kinds of energy efficiency and other projects and that can be administered "touchless", which has definite advantages in the post-covid world.