QDS NEWSLETTER

QDS™ Version 2.4 Released

After two years of development and enhancements based on user input, NOVA Research Company is proud to announce release of QDS™ Version 2.4. Almost twenty new features have been added, and existing features have been enhanced. We are especially excited about the new HAPI™ module that allows users to administer questionnaires on Pocket PCs. You can read more about HAPI™ on page 2, including NOVA's collaborative South Africa study using the new module.

Due to numerous user requests we have implemented 128-bit encryption and password protection for all modules. The Design Studio, survey administration modules, and Warehouse Manager now use encryption with passwords to prevent unauthorized users from viewing, exporting, or modifying collected data. In addition to enhancements in data security, users can now generate customized reports at any point during administration of a questionnaire by inserting Report elements. Report elements support new types of substitution tokens that can retrieve question text, probes, and interviewer comments from the current interview.

Another new feature supports launching a second questionnaire within a data collection module. This feature allows identifier variables from the first questionnaire to be automatically copied to the second. Also, the questionnaire designer can designate a non-identifier variable to be copied to the second questionnaire. This feature is particularly useful when using an eligibility screener before administering the main survey instrument.

These new features work in all data collection methods including ACASI, CAPI, and the new HAPI™. Please visit www.novaresearch.com/Products/qds/v24_enhancements.pdf for a full description of these new features.

Substitution Tokens

You can use Substitution Tokens to customize your questions for automated interviews. For example, you may want to ask some questions about a particular person whom the respondent has already named—e.g., friend Sarah. **How long have you known this person?**

Using Substitution Tokens, you can insert the name. In the question text, include a Substitution Token for the Variable used to collect the friend's name (FRIEND): **How long have you known &[FRIEND]?**

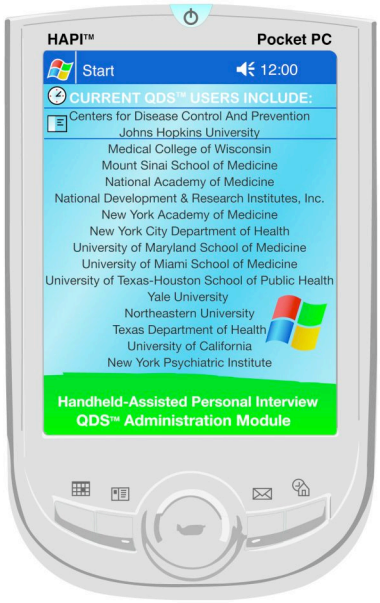
When the interview is conducted, the question will appear as:

How long have you known Sarah?

New types of substitution tokens support a new Report feature to retrieve question text and interviewer-entered comments or to launch a 2nd questionnaire from within an eligibility screener and automatically copy identifier variables from the screener to the main survey instrument

NEW!! HANDHELD ASSISTED PERSONAL INTERVIEW (HAPI™) MODULE

Use of handheld computers continues to increase among clinicians and researchers seeking to enhance data collection processes for research, patient care, and medical record keeping and billing systems. With rapid improvements in capability and capacity PDAs provide researchers with the ability to administer questionnaires with greater ease. Funded by a Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) grant from the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), NOVA developed the Handheld Assisted Personal Interview (HAPI™) module within the existing QDS™ framework. The portability of the handheld module increases flexibility and adaptability in field interviewing. Users are able to develop any diagnostic or survey instrument using QDS™ and administer it using the Pocket PC. Other enhancements to QDS™ V 2.4 include addition of encryption password and an integrated audit trail feature to comply with FDA guidelines, automatic file rename feature to prevent loss of data, auto launch of other instruments based on recruitment eligibility screening forms or diagnostic data results, and on-screen summary reports of assessment scores for diagnosis.



NOVA staff are collaborating with The Medical Research Council of South Africa (equivalent to the NIH in the U.S.) and the University of Capetown, where NOVA's QDS HAPI™ is being used to conduct a validity and reliability study of the Problem Oriented Screening Instrument for Teenagers (POSIT) and a new HIV/STD risk-of-exposure screening supplement with approximately 1000 at-risk youth ages 12 through 19. The POSIT is a screening instrument developed at the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) by Dr. Elizabeth Rahdert (currently NOVA Project Director) to identify potential problem areas that require further in-depth assessment. It was designed to identify potential problems and service needs in 10 areas, including substance abuse, mental and physical health, and social relations. In South Africa, NOVA's researchers are adding a supplement on HIV and STDs in order to initiate early prevention interventions with high-risk adolescents. The POSIT study, with its HIV/STD risk-of-exposure screener, will most likely be conducted in South African English, Afrikaans, and Xhosa, the language of the original tribe from the Capetown area, starting this summer.

Researchers are excited by the benefits of using handheld devices running HAPI™ to administer surveys in the field. NOVA staff took ten PDAs to South Africa to train staff at The Medical Research Council and the University of Capetown. They found that handhelds were much easier to carry and distribute than laptops, especially when working with concurrent subjects. Pocket PCs are also much more affordable than laptops, making it possible for researchers to conduct surveys with multiple subjects at one time even with a tight budget.

Which Handheld Should I Use?

NOVA staff took Hewlett-Packard iPAQH2215s to South Africa. Microsoft™ controls the specifications of the Pocket PC; thus, there are no issues with compatibility between manufacturers. HAPI™ requires a Pocket PC running version 2002 or later.

USER PROFILE: CENTER FOR HIV EDUCATIONAL STUDIES AND TRAINING

Jeffery Parsons founded the Center for HIV Educational Studies and Training (CHEST) in 1996 to conduct research on social and psychological factors that contribute to HIV transmission, with a particular emphasis on the promotion of sexual health. Parsons, a graduate of the University of Houston, currently serves on the faculty at Hunter College as an Associate Professor in the Department of Psychology. His first professional position focused on HIV behavioral interventions and he is passionate about making a difference in communities ravaged by HIV and AIDs. CHEST is currently affiliated with Hunter College and has a collaborative relationship with researchers at the New York State Psychiatric Institute (NYSPI) at Columbia University Medical Center (CUMC), and New York University (NYU). About twenty-five staff members work at CHEST and twenty interns help conduct research. In a year they survey approximately 300 at-risk and HIV-positive individuals.

Studies at CHEST seek to identify and promote strategies that prevent the spread of HIV and improve the lives of people living with HIV. CHEST staff members have published the results of their surveys in over sixty academic papers, and have two books in press: *HIV + Sex : The Psychological and Interpersonal Dynamics of HIV-Seropositive Gay and Bisexual Men's Relationships* and *Contemporary Research in Sex Work*. One of the main tools Parsons and his colleagues use to conduct research is QDS™.

CHEST has been using QDS™ since the 1990s when they were approached by the CDC to be a beta-test site for version 1. At that time Parsons and his staff merely administered pre-programmed questionnaires, but now the office programs its own. The entire office uses QDS™ for data collection, and about seven employees are responsible for the programming. Parsons is very enthusiastic about using a computer to collect research data using QDS™. He believes subjects are engaged by the novelty of the computer and tend to be more honest with their responses because of the anonymity of ACASI. He also appreciates how well QDS™ handles skipping; CHEST produces surveys with very complex skip patterns. Before they started to use QDS™, there was a high incidence of user error and data had to be thrown out.

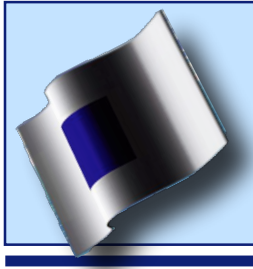
Parsons and his staff conduct many of their surveys at their headquarters in Manhattan, but they also take laptops running QDS™ into HIV clinics, gay bars, and bath-houses for initial screening. The staff at CHEST are looking forward to an Internet-based version to expand their reach even further.

Where to see QDS™

- **May 10-12, 2005**
  CDC Public Health Information Network (PHIN) Conference: Atlanta, GA
  http://www.cdc.gov/phin
- **June 12-15, 2005**
  National HIV Prevention Conference: Atlanta, GA
  http://www.2005hivprevconf.org/index.asp
- **September 12-17, 2005**
  U.S. Dept. of Commerce Trade Mission in Healthcare Technologies Melbourne, Sydney, Australia, & Auckland, New Zealand
  http://www.export.gov/comm_svc/tradeevents.html
- **November 5-9, 2005**
  American Public Health Association Conference 2005: New Orleans, LA
  http://www.apha.org/meetings/

QDS-WEB™ IN DEVELOPMENT

NOVA Research Company is currently working on a data-collection module for the Internet—QDS-Web™. It will work seamlessly with QDS™ Design Studio to conduct interviewer or self-administered surveys. QDS-Web™ currently supports a limited set of the elements found in the Design Studio, but will support all QDS™ element types upon release in Winter 2005. The QDS-Web™ Administrator Tool is being developed to allow survey designers and administrators to deploy their own surveys on the Web without needing to go through their IT staff each time. System administrators will only need to install and configure the QDS-Web™ application once. After configuration, survey designers will be able to log directly into the Administration Tool to deploy new questionnaires. QDS-Web™ will use a standard file opening dialog box to locate and upload a SQL script file generated by QDS™ Design Studio directly to a secure server. Respondents will simply navigate to a banner ad or online recruiter-designated Web page and begin taking the survey; this will make data collection easier and more cost-effective for research studies targeting difficult to locate and remote area populations and international studies. Collected data will be integrated with the QDS™ Warehouse Manager.



How are you using QDS™?

We would like to know! Please e-mail Mr. Paul Young, Research Director, at PAYoung@novaresearch.com with citation information for published papers using QDS™. We will post your citation on our Web site. You could also be featured in the next QDS newsletter!

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