DEVELOPMENT OF SEARCH AND RETRIEVAL SOFTWARE AND TOOLKIT FOR SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC DATA
PHASE II

This project was a Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) Phase II grant from the National Science Foundation. During Phase I (see Project 23), Sociometrics established the feasibility of two related search and retrieval software products for use with social science data. The first was designed for use with entire data archives produced according to Sociometrics' standard archiving procedures. It permitted the user to search for variables by topic, type, keyword, and data set; to use complex criteria to guide the search; to search the entire archive or subsets based on previous searches; and to produce SPSS or SAS system files of subsets of variables identified in a search. The second product was a software toolkit adapted for the first product that would permit a user to apply the same capabilities to the user's own data sets or archives.

The Phase II project developed the prototype software of Phase I into finished software products that were suitable for distribution to users. Furthermore, the products were improved to include additional capabilities, such as providing a link to image files of the questionnaires upon which variables were based, and providing the capability of searching value labels as well as variable labels. In addition, the products operated more efficiently. The necessary archiving work was completed to permit the use of the first product with all of Sociometrics' data sets and archives; the various subroutines were integrated into a master program; and user's manuals were written. In addition, the Phase II project developed a third derivative product—search and retrieval software that could be applied to single, large data sets.

This search and retrieval software was expected to improve the ease and quality of accessing and retrieving shared sociodemographic data, and thus was marketable to both users and distributors of shared data (government agencies, universities, research centers, individual researchers, classroom instructors, and other data archivists).

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