

Occupational Information Development Advisory Panel

Findings Report:

**A Review of the National Academy of Sciences Report
A Database for a Changing Economy:
*Review of the Occupational Information Network (O*NET)***

June 28, 2010

Report to the Commissioner of Social Security

OCCUPATIONAL INFORMATION DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY PANEL REVIEW OF

THE NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES 2010 REPORT *A DATABASE FOR A CHANGING ECONOMY: REVIEW OF THE OCCUPATIONAL INFORMATION NETWORK (O*NET)*

Executive Summary

Based on a January 2010 request from the Social Security Administration (SSA), the Occupational Information Development Advisory Panel (OIDAP or Panel) reviewed the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) report, *A Database for a Changing Economy: Review of the Occupational Information Network (O*NET)*,¹ for relevance and lessons learned useful to SSA's development of an occupational information system (OIS) to replace the aging *Dictionary of Occupational Titles* (DOT) in the disability adjudication process. The OIDAP describes the background of the request, the OIDAP methodology for reviewing the O*NET Report, its findings and lessons learned, and offers SSA areas for consideration.

Common Ground: NAS Panel and OIDAP Areas of Agreement

- 1. The NAS panel's review of the use of the O*NET in disability adjudication reached the same conclusion as that of other national governmental bodies, the OIDAP, and SSA in that the O*NET in its current form is not suitable for disability adjudication.**² (See pp. 7-8 of this report)
- 2. The NAS and OIDAP reports reached the common conclusion that significant changes would need to be made to the O*NET in order for it be suitable for disability adjudication.** For example, changes to the O*NET content model, the Behaviorally Anchored Rating Scales (BARS), and the level and unit of analysis would all be required. These changes would involve a costly revalidation of the entire O*NET system and have the potential of negatively impacting the ability of the O*NET to serve the purposes for which it was designed. (See p. 8 of this report)
- 3. The O*NET Report included a variety of important conclusions regarding occupational database maintenance that were similarly reached by the OIDAP for the OIS's development including:**

¹ Given how past and current studies of occupational databases are referred to by the audiences who may read this report, the OIDAP has chosen to refer to the O*NET review as being conducted by the NAS not by the National Research Council as it is also sometimes referenced.

² p. 161, National Academy of Sciences (NAS) report, *A Database for a Changing Economy: Review of the Occupational Information Network (O*NET)*,

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- focusing on collecting, maintaining, and publishing high-quality data;
 - considering input from the scientific and user communities on the research and usability processes;
 - developing plans and procedures for refreshing the occupational database;
 - using technology for communication or for the delivery platforms to users; and,
 - exploring the use of Internet-based methods for developing an online user community. (See p. 9 of this report)
4. **The NAS staff deferred to the expertise of the OIDAP for SSA's occupational data needs.** The NAS panel did not contain a subject matter expert in SSA disability adjudication, in private sector disability adjudication needs, or in the use of occupational information in disability applications in general. (See pp. 9-10 of this report)

Going Forth: OIDAP Areas of Future Exploration

5. **The application of O*NET in SSA's disability adjudication process would require SSA to change its definition of "skills" as well as the way skills are assessed in SSA's disability programs.** The manner in which O*NET defines skills and conceptualizes skills transference conflicts with SSA's disability program requirements, its regulatory definition of skills, and the regulatory rules by which skills are considered in disability claims. (See pp. 10-11 of this report)
6. **The O*NET is a general purpose database addressing the needs of the primary users (e.g., workforce development, economic development, career development, academic and policy research) for which it was designed. The disability adjudication data needs and purposes are very different and not a subset of the general purpose database.** (See pp. 11-16 of this report)

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7. **The O*NET Report did not articulate the evaluation criteria that the NAS panel may have used for its evaluation of the O*NET.** (See p. 16 of this report)
8. **The forensic defensibility of using O*NET data for disability adjudication was not addressed by the NAS panel.** (See pp. 16-17 of this report)

Considerations³

Based on these findings, and our review of the O*NET Report in general, the OIDAP upholds its September 30, 2009 recommendations to SSA. The OIDAP further advises that SSA should consider:

Internal Expertise Unit

1. **Cautious progress on the R&D agenda for the OIS until the scientific expertise unit recommended by the OIDAP in its September report has been established.** As noted in the O*NET Report, developing a research agenda and its priorities would be advisable.

Information Sharing with Other Government Agencies

2. **Continued and expanded SSA and DOL cooperation on mutually beneficial areas, such as sampling and/or data collection. This cooperation may include examining how DOL has historically developed and used occupational data for its own labor-related adjudicative needs.**
3. **Collaboration with other Federal agencies, such as the Department of Defense, Office of Personnel Management, Rehabilitation Services Administration, and the Census Bureau, regarding work analysis methods or other studies, surveys, or information of value to the development of the OIS.**

³ See pp. 17-18 of this report for discussion.

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Ethical and Legal Concerns Regarding O*NET and DOT

4. **Consideration of potential ethical and legal concerns that might arise from repurposing O*NET or by pursuing an update to the aging *Dictionary of Occupational Titles* framework for use in the disability adjudication process.**

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Introduction

At the OIDAP's inaugural meeting, Commissioner Astrue requested that the Panel provide the SSA with its content model and classification recommendations by the end of FY 2009. The Panel delivered the *Content Model and Classification Recommendations for the Social Security Administration Occupational Information System* report to Commissioner Astrue on September 30, 2009.⁴

As the OIS project transitioned into the research and development (R&D) phase, a January 19, 2010 letter from Commissioner Astrue requested further advice and recommendations from the OIDAP regarding the:

1. development of sampling and data collection plans for R&D;
2. creation of a process for recruiting job analysts, including methods for certification criteria and training;
3. assistance in establishing associations between human function and the requirements of work; and,
4. review of relevant documents or reports SSA identifies that may affect or inform its work on the OIS.

This report addresses a request made by SSA at the January 2010 quarterly meeting that the OIDAP review the NAS report, *A Database for a Changing Economy: Review of the Occupational Information Network (O*NET)*⁵ (herein referred to as the "O*NET Report"). The purpose of the review was to examine data quality, sampling, and other issues that might be useful to the development of SSA's OIS.

The O*NET Report also contains topics that may be helpful to future OIS R&D activities. Thus, these technical topics will be addressed in subsequent OIDAP reports as appropriate, such as in the areas of measurement, sampling, data collection, and evaluation metrics.

⁴ Because of the OIDAP's Federal Advisory Committee Act status, subcommittees do not recommend directly to SSA, but to the OIDAP. These recommendations are deliberated and voted upon by the entire Panel. The subcommittee reports contained in the OIDAP's report appendices were finalized on September 1, 2009 for Panel deliberations and voting on September 16-17, 2009. Therefore, the recommendations by the OIDAP to Commissioner Astrue on September 30, 2009 are in the *Final Report and Recommendations* section, or the first 68 pages of the report, not in the appendices. The recommendations for the content model data elements were meant as a starting point for further development and refinement by SSA through the R&D process. The OIDAP report can be retrieved from http://www.ssa.gov/oidap/panel_documents.htm

⁵ O*NET Report, Retrieved from http://www.nap.edu/catalog.php?record_id=12814

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Background

A decade after the release of the O*NET, the Employment and Training Administration of the US Department of Labor (DOL) commissioned a review of the database by the NAS. This was the first time in three decades that an independent body reviewed a civilian occupational information database in the United States since the NAS conducted a similar review of the DOT in 1980.⁶

The OIDAP applauds the DOL for opening the O*NET to user, stakeholder, and public review and critique. The process can only serve to strengthen the database for the workforce development and similar purposes for which it was primarily developed.⁷

OIDAP Methodology for Review of the O*NET Report

The Prepublication Copy/Uncorrected Proofs of the O*NET Report were released by the NAS to the public on December 4, 2009. On January 8, 2010, in their professional roles outside of the OIDAP, two Panel members (Mary Barros-Bailey, PhD and Mark Wilson, PhD) met with the NAS O*NET study staff to clarify factual inaccuracies in the O*NET Report. In addition, two Social Security Administration staff (Associate Commissioner Richard Balkus and Occupational Information Development Project Director Sylvia Karman) met with the NAS staff on January 12, 2010 to provide information regarding the disability adjudication process that was inaccurately reflected in the O*NET Report. At both meetings, the NAS staff indicated that only factual inaccuracies could be corrected because the O*NET review panel had already disbanded.

At the January 22, 2010 OIDAP quarterly meeting, the Panel discussed inviting NAS staff to present their findings at the next OIDAP meeting based upon SSA's request to the OIDAP to review the O*NET Report. Between quarterly meetings, the OIDAP Chair requested that the Panel review the O*NET Report in its entirety in preparation for a presentation by NAS staff at the next March quarterly meeting.

On March 25, 2010, Ms. Margaret Hilton, Study Director, and Mr. Tom Plewes, Associate Study Director at the NAS for the O*NET panel, presented to the OIDAP.

⁶ This report is often called the "Miller Study." Retrieved from http://www.nap.edu/openbook.php?record_id=92&page=R1

⁷ pp. 12, 24, 25, 36, and 37, Appendix B.

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See Appendices A and B for the NAS presentation materials and transcript. The final O*NET Report became available to the public and to the OIDAP on May 11, 2010. The preliminary report drafted by the OIDAP Chair was reviewed by the Executive Subcommittee on June 9, 2010 and deliberated upon by the full Panel on June 10, 2010.

A Word about Timing

An important insight arising out of the March 2010 presentation by Ms. Hilton and Mr. Plewes centered on the timing of the O*NET panel's deliberations and recommendations that were completed by the end of April 2009,⁸ or five months before the OIDAP September 30, 2009 report was available.⁹ Indeed, the NAS panel had disbanded by August 2009 – when their report entered NAS's internal review process. The O*NET Report was not released in the prepublication format until nearly three months after the dissemination of the OIDAP report. The timing of both panel processes and reports could lead to the mistaken impression that the NAS panel took OIDAP's findings and recommendations into account when it actually did not.¹⁰

The NAS staff referenced the OIDAP report and recommendations as an attempt to be complete in the literature citing;¹¹ however, the technical working papers and other research considered by the OIDAP, as well as the OIDAP report and recommendations, were never read or considered by the O*NET panel in its deliberations or when arriving at its recommendations. The NAS staff clarified the timing and referencing of the OIDAP report when presenting in March 2010 and via a footnote¹² in the final copy of the O*NET Report. Ms. Hilton indicated that, should the NAS panel have considered OIDAP's findings, these would presumably have affected their conclusions.¹³ For a timeline of each panel's process, see Appendix C.

⁸ p. 61, Appendix B.

⁹ pp. 60, 129, and 130. Appendix B.

¹⁰ pp. 16, 130-131, and 146, Appendix B.

¹¹ p. 61, Appendix B.

¹² p. 161, O*NET Report.

¹³ p. 62, Appendix B.

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OIDAP Findings

Review of the O*NET Report by the OIDAP resulted in eight general findings that are detailed in this section.

Common Ground: NAS Panel and OIDAP Areas of Agreement

FINDING #1: The NAS panel's review of the use of the O*NET in disability adjudication reached the same conclusion as that of other national governmental bodies, the OIDAP, and SSA in that the O*NET in its current form is not suitable for disability adjudication.

Pages 11 and 12 of the OIDAP report identify the occupational data requirements of SSA's disability programs including the need to:

1. reflect national existence and incidence of work;
2. reflect work requirements;
3. be legally defensible; and,
4. meet the following technical, legal, and data requirements:
 - a) occupations aggregated at a level to support individualized disability assessment;
 - b) a cross-walk to the Standard Occupational Classification;
 - c) precise occupationally-specific data;
 - d) core work activities;
 - e) minimum levels of requirements needed to perform work;
 - f) observable and deconstructed measures;
 - g) a manageable number of data elements;
 - h) sampling methodology capturing the full range of work;
 - i) inter-rater agreement justifying data inference;
 - j) data collection of high quality data;
 - k) valid, accurate, and reproducible data;
 - l) whether core work activities could be performed in alternative ways; and,
 - m) terminology that is consistent with medical practice and human function.

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¹⁴ See SSA working papers *Developing an Initial Classification System* and *Social Security Administration's Legal, Program, and Technical/Data Occupational Information Requirements*. Retrieved from http://www.ssa.gov/oidap/panel_documents.htm and also see p. 50, Appendix B.

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The NAS panel did not consider these occupational data needs for SSA's programs, as confirmed in their staff's presentation to the OIDAP in March 2010.¹⁵ Like SSA and many other independent and government bodies that have previously arrived at the same conclusion (General Accounting Office, 2002a, 2002b; Institute of Medicine, 1998, 2002; OIDAP, 2009; Social Security Advisory Board, 2001), the O*NET Report¹⁶ agrees that "... disability determination was an important use of the DOT and because O*NET was created to replace the DOT, it seems fair to conclude that O*NET has failed to replace the DOT in this particular usage." (p. 161, O*NET Report)

The NAS staff added that, "... we didn't look in-depth at this whole disability question. We took a quick look, and we thought it needed further study."¹⁷

FINDING #2: The NAS and OIDAP reports reached the common conclusion that significant changes would need to be made to the O*NET in order for it be suitable for disability adjudication.

Both the O*NET Report and the OIDAP conclude that a variety of measurement and scaling issues of descriptors in O*NET would be highly problematic for disability adjudication. The NAS staff and the OIDAP specifically focused on the application of BARS within the O*NET during the March 2010 NAS presentation.¹⁸

The O*NET Report correctly identifies the problematic issues (e.g., dichotomous definitions, complex terminology, confounded difficulty levels, no clear continuum, etc.)¹⁹ associated with BARS in general, and specific to disability adjudication.²⁰ However, the staff could not identify a way in which these BARS could be changed with disability adjudication occupational information needs in mind without revalidating the entire O*NET database that cost \$75M over the last dozen years, not including the cost of its development.²¹ Neither could we. Future costs associated with the disruption this redesign would have upon the primary users identified by the O*NET's mission is incalculable. To the extent that SSA would

¹⁵ p. 50, Appendix B.

¹⁶ p. 161, O*NET Report.

¹⁷ p. 78, Appendix B.

¹⁸ pp. 30, 67-76, and 110, Appendix B.

¹⁹ pp. 63, 74, 75, 76, 87, 166, 177, 196, O*NET Report.

²⁰ p. 30, Appendix B.

²¹ pp. 69, 71, and 110, Appendix B. Note that on p. 71, Mr. Plewes indicated, "I don't believe you can fundamentally change the anchors and retain the system as it is. But the panel didn't look at that." The discussion on p. 110 indicates how changing the problematic BARS would mean having to revalidate the ratings across the entire O*NET system.

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consider the use of BARS, it would need to ensure when and how BARS would be suitable for an OIS developed for disability adjudication.

FINDING #3: The O*NET Report included a variety of important conclusions regarding occupational database maintenance that were also similarly reached by OIADP for the OIS's development including:

- ***focusing on collecting, maintaining, and publishing high-quality data;***
- ***considering input from the scientific and user communities on the research and usability processes;***
- ***developing plans and procedures for refreshing the occupational database;***
- ***using technology for communication or for the delivery platforms to users; and,***
- ***exploring the use of Internet-based methods for developing an online user community.***

FINDING #4: The NAS staff deferred to the expertise of the OIADP for SSA's occupational data needs.

The NAS panel did not include a subject matter expert with a specialty in disability adjudication in the private or public sectors,²² or in particular to SSA's disability program needs. On March 26, 2009, Ms. Sylvia E. Karman, the Director of the Occupational Information Development Project, presented to the NAS panel about the need for occupational information in SSA's disability programs.²³ Beyond the one-hour presentation, the NAS panel did not review or consider other currently-available working papers or reports specific to the occupational information needs for disability adjudication; therefore, during the March 2010 presentation to the Panel, the NAS study staff deferred to the OIADP for expertise in the use of occupational information as pertinent to the disability adjudication process.²⁴

The O*NET Report's first recommendation in Chapter 8 called for the development of an interagency task force whose first order of business would be to study SSA's occupational information needs. According to Mr. Plewes, this recommendation has

²² p. 16, Appendix B.

²³ p. 160, O*NET Report.

²⁴ pp. 33, 55, and 59, Appendix B.

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already been performed by the OIDAP's review.²⁵ Based on the review of SSA's needs, the OIDAP voted unanimously in 2009 that a new OIS was needed to replace the DOT in disability adjudication. O*NET was not recommended as that replacement.

Going Forth: OIDAP Areas of Future Exploration

FINDING #5: The application of O*NET in SSA's disability adjudication process would require SSA to change its definition of "skills" as well as the way skills are assessed in SSA disability programs.

The NAS panel cited various conflicting and confounding definitions of skills within the O*NET content model.²⁶ Broad conclusions regarding transferability of skill may make sense for the primary users of O*NET data, such vocational rehabilitation counselors who may need to consider broad brushstrokes of occupational information as a starting point in the vocational exploration process to which they may add other information (e.g., results of psychometric assessments or employer contacts) when developing a rehabilitation or return-to-work plan that may include educational or other vocational interventions to develop a client's or evaluatee's vocational potential. However, the same conclusions are contraindicated for disability adjudication. For example, the O*NET Academy²⁷ describes a transferability of skill tool called TORQ that was used in Indiana to assist laid off workers in exploring skills transference to other work. The podcast describes a case of a recreational vehicle team assembler and finds transferability of skill to the work of a dental hygienist. This conclusion of transferability of skill is highly problematic for SSA as its process does not allow for considering retraining, accommodations, or other vocational rehabilitation interventions in disability adjudication.²⁸ The NAS panel did not consider transferability of skill within the disability adjudication process or how the design of the O*NET could results in data that could be highly problematic for work experience and transferable skills analyses at Steps 4 and 5 in the sequential evaluation process.²⁹

²⁵ p. 33, Appendix B.

²⁶ p. 32, O*NET Report.

²⁷ O*NET Academy is accessible at <http://www.onetacademy.com/faq/contentpartner.cfm>

²⁸ pp. 116-117, and 120, Appendix B.

²⁹ p. 117, Appendix B.

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The treatment of skills and skills transferability with the use of a general purpose database such as the O*NET could potentially result in inaccurate decisions and increased denials in the sequential evaluation process. Again, the O*NET was not designed to meet disability adjudication needs. Changing the O*NET for disability adjudication needs would make it problematic as a tool for the purposes for which it was created and where this kind of transferability of skills method may be helpful.

With respect to the issue of skills and skills transference in its September 2009 report, the OIDAP recommended data elements to include in the content model and data collection effort that best fit with the disability adjudication process. Specifically, by its recommendations, the OIDAP attempted:

to distinguish the essential components of the definition of what a skill is and how a skills analysis or work experience analysis is performed and [to] separate them into those elements or processes for which occupational data could be gathered. By doing so, we are able to study the resulting data collected vis-à-vis current paradigms of how skills transfer or could transfer, as well as to provide the opportunity to potentially explore other methods that might result in greater face and predictive validity that are based on empirical data. We note that SSA uses the “transferability of skills analysis” at Step 5 in very limited circumstances. We mean to include the consideration of an individual’s ability to do past work or other work as currently conceived by SSA (unskilled, semi-skilled, or skilled).³⁰ (p. 48, OIDAP Report)

FINDING #6: The O*NET is a general purpose database addressing the needs of the primary users (e.g., workforce development, economic development, career development, academic and policy research) for which it was designed. The disability adjudication data needs and purposes are very different and not a subset of the general purpose database.

Different Missions, Different Users

The assumption that the creation on an OIS would be parallel, duplicative, or redundant³¹ to the existence of the O*NET is incorrect and does not consider the

³⁰20 CFR 404.1568(d) and 416.968(d) for SSA definition of skills and transferability of skills.

³¹ p. 161, O*NET Report.

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differing missions, user needs, purposes, or other design considerations of each occupational database. The NAS panel inferred the O*NET's mission as DOL needing to "[m]eet the competitive labor demands of the worldwide economy by enhancing the effectiveness and efficiency of the workforce development and regulatory systems that assist workers and employers in meeting the challenges of global competition." (p. 6, O*NET Report). On the other hand, the mission of SSA's OIS is to provide specific physical and mental job demands and measures that are directly related to SSA's evaluation of limitations resulting from disability claimants' impairments.

Consequently, unlike the OIS that is being developed by the SSA specific to one purpose – the disability adjudication process and the users specific to that system – the first paragraph of the O*NET Report states that the O*NET was developed by the DOL not only for use within some of its programs, but also for many users in the national economy identified as:

- workforce development
- economic development
- career development
- academic and policy research
- human resource management³²

Because of the many users for which the O*NET content model was designed, its development of its design took considerably longer than is anticipated for the OIS's development. O*NET users utilize the general purpose³³ data as the starting point within their processes upon which further research and information may be required whereas the OIS needs to provide very specific information to assist decision-making at the n=1 level.

Different Purposes and Needs: Econometric v. Ergometric System Designs

Understanding the occupational data needs of specific users is important to concluding whether the O*NET fits that need well. For example, a RAND

³² The O*NET Report states, "a primary goal of O*NET is to help state workforce development offices carry out their dual mission of assisting individuals in gaining challenging, rewarding work (and any required education and training) and assisting employers in recruiting, hiring, and developing skilled workers." p. 6. Also see pp. 12, 24, 25, 36, and 37, Appendix B.

³³ pp. 23, 25, 27, 29, 70, and 81, Appendix B.

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Corporation study (Hansen, Campbell, Pearlman, Petho, Plewes, & Spenner, 2008) assessing the development of a common framework for the various military occupational information systems³⁴ concluded that:

... no single existing system is likely to be fully appropriate for DoD's needs All of the existing systems ..., including the O*NET, provide information that is too general and abstract. If DoD wishes to develop a uniform [occupational analysis] system applicable across the services, their components, and the civilian workforce, the need to build the system in-house seems inescapable. This is the only way it could be substantively meaningful to users and stakeholders.³⁵ (p. 20, Rand Report)

The O*NET Report and the 2008 report by the RAND Corporation both indicated that the design of an OIS is specific to its purpose. The RAND report best describes this initial and crucial decision in the development of any occupational database when it states:

A major requirement for choosing among occupational analysis system options is understanding, in fairly specific terms, the objectives or purposes to be served by the system. Indeed, this understanding is needed before any truly meaningful discussion of key underlying systems concepts and issues can occur.³⁶ (p. xiii, Rand Report)

Further, the RAND panel posited:

When considering alternative [occupational analysis] systems ... there are no unequivocally "right" or "wrong," or "better" or "worse," choices in the absence of specification of the system's intended purposes and applications. Each type of process, job descriptor category, and level of analysis has utility for different purposes and is therefore relatively more or less suitable for different applications. Specification of such purposes is in turn a function of the particular needs of potential users. Consequently, such needs must also be

³⁴ According to the RAND study, "The Army, Navy, Air Force and Marine Corps have separate occupational systems for their officers and enlisted workforces while the civilian workforces follow the patterns of the federal workforce and use that occupational system. As a result, DoD uses over 15 different occupational systems with over 6,000 occupational definitions." (p. 32)

³⁵ RAND report. Retrieved from http://www.rand.org/pubs/technical_reports/2008/RAND_TR610.pdf

³⁶ RAND report.

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specified in some detail, or an [occupational analysis] system may not meet the needs for which it was developed.³⁷ (p. 14, Rand Report)

We agree. Thus, the purpose, program, data, technical, and legal requirements for the use of occupational information in SSA's disability adjudication process³⁸ were considered by the OIDAP in arriving at its conclusions and recommendations, but could not have been considered by the NAS panel because their members did not have access to that information at the time of their deliberation to consider such design questions as:

1. Descriptor coverage: work- and worker-oriented attributes;
2. Descriptor level of analysis: breadth or narrowness of descriptor definition;³⁹
3. Descriptor application: work, workers, both;
4. Descriptor specificity: across all jobs and/or job specific;
5. Descriptor common framework needs; and,
6. Descriptor metrics or scales.

When considering how DOL and SSA need to answer these design questions based upon their distinct purposes and data needs, the OIDAP found the answers were fundamentally different.⁴⁰ The polarity in the design and data needs between the O*NET and an OIS for disability adjudication is important to comprehend. Without recognizing the needs of each primary user or user group, broad associations of descriptors – or the data collected with these – are meaningless. For instance, the O*NET Report states that there is:

... almost perfect equivalence between the O*NET descriptors of near vision, far vision, visual color discrimination, and depth perception and the RFC⁴¹ assessment (descriptors of near acuity, far acuity, color vision, and depth perception). The scales and definition of scale points, however, are still quite different between the two scales. (p. 165, O*NET Report)

³⁷ RAND report.

³⁸ p. 33, Appendix B.

³⁹ The unit of analysis for each occupational analysis purpose is distinctly different. For the O*NET, this unit of analysis is the occupation level. For SSA, to meet its burden of proof at Step 5 of the sequential evaluation process, the unit of analysis is at the job level. This essential design decision is critical to understand in understanding whether a system is designed econometrically or ergometrically.

⁴⁰ p. 66, Appendix B.

⁴¹ p. 56, Appendix B indicates that the O*NET panel did not consider the MRFC in their review of the O*NET's use in disability adjudication.

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For the casual observer who might not understand human function vis-à-vis sensory criteria, near vision may seem almost perfectly equivalent to near acuity and far vision may also seem almost perfectly equivalent to far acuity, when in reality they are functionally different. If these data elements are included in an occupational analysis system, their measurement with respect to work activity may not be adequately captured if the differences are not recognized by those designing the system.⁴² The difference is not a matter of nuance; rather, it is a matter of understanding occupational data vis-à-vis its application in the disability context that involves the appropriate measurement of human function.

Understanding human function and disability is important to correctly determine appropriate occupational analysis design for database used in disability adjudication and to make decisions regarding the proper unit of analysis. The O*NET does not use job level data collection that is essential to the disability adjudication process. The general purpose design of the O*NET was appropriate for the needs of its primary constituents,⁴³ but not as part of a forensic decision-making process requiring greater specificity and certainty in the person-job match that is central to the individualized assessment.

These essential differences in database designs are best illustrated by understanding econometric and ergometric occupational database system designs and which results in the data needed by users. See Appendix D for a model and table indicating the differences between econometric and ergometric designs in occupational analysis systems.

The O*NET's main constituency, workforce development users, identified a need for a higher level of aggregation than exists in the present O*NET.⁴⁴ The broad and more abstract data needs of workforce development users led to higher aggregation in O*NET, a result of an econometric design approach. These broader occupational categories are mostly aligned with the SOC and, thus, can be linked with other data collected at that level. However, this level of aggregation is counter to the needs of an OIS for disability adjudication.⁴⁵ This design feature of the O*NET is appropriate

⁴² p. 31, Appendix B.

⁴³ p. 23, Appendix B.

⁴⁴ p. 37, Appendix B.

⁴⁵ pp. 55 and 108, Appendix B.

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for workforce development, but not for disability adjudication that needs an ergonomic design for data generalizability to a single individual – the claimant – not to the American workforce.⁴⁶

Regarding the overall OIS framework, the OIDAP opined in its 2009 report that the creation of an OIS for disability adjudication did not mean starting from scratch, but building upon the best features of the DOT, the O*NET, and other occupational information systems to meet the purpose and needs for which the occupational data is required.⁴⁷ Insofar as the O*NET is tied to the Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) and the OIS should crosswalk to that classification as was recommended by the OIDAP, the SOC could serve as a shared bridge to anyone wishing to connect to the O*NET-SOC descriptor framework.⁴⁸ In its 2009 recommendation to SSA regarding an initial work taxonomy framework, the OIDAP Taxonomy and Classification Subcommittee utilized the dimensions associated with the O*NET and SOC work activities as part of its framework development. These dimensions constituted approximately 30% of the recommended taxonomy.

FINDING #7: The O*NET Report did not articulate the evaluation criteria that the NAS panel may have used for its evaluation of the O*NET.

Although the O*NET Report identifies how the NAS panel went about its charge,⁴⁹ it is unclear what evaluation criteria was used by the panel in its review of the O*NET. This might have been beneficial to the reader as it was with the 1980 NAS report reviewing the DOT.⁵⁰

FINDING #8: The forensic defensibility of using O*NET data for disability adjudication was not addressed by the NAS panel.⁵¹

For human resources management applications discussed in Chapter 7 of the O*NET Report requiring the need to meet legal criteria, the O*NET was found not to be legally defensible for the same reasons it would not be defensible in disability adjudication. The O*NET was never designed to be forensically applied, nor does it

⁴⁶ pp. 37, 38, 103, and 109, Appendix B.

⁴⁷ p. 17, OIDAP report.

⁴⁸ p. 90, Appendix B.

⁴⁹ pp. 16-17, O*NET Report.

⁵⁰ See Miller, et al.

⁵¹ pp. 57 and 88, Appendix B.

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need to be for the purposes for which it was created. Furthermore, the NAS staff concluded that the various sources "... may or may not be the best representation of work that is performed ..." ⁵² although, as noted earlier, an important consideration for SSA's occupational data needs for legal defensibility is that it reflect national existence and incidence of work. ⁵³

Chapter 8 in the O*NET Report refers to a 2000 study by one of the O*NET developers, the American Institute of Research (Gustafson & Rose, 2003), that was commissioned by the SSA to review O*NET's suitability for use in disability adjudication. The article concludes that "a version of O*NET [could be] legally defensible and acceptable to decision-makers and claimants alike" (p. 15). It is unclear what premises were considered to arrive at this conclusion or if the need for ergonomically-derived data was evaluated vis-à-vis its application at the n=1 individualized assessment level. For instance, the article posits Static Strength as an example of a suitable descriptor among the 54 O*NET descriptors evaluated when SSA has routinely cited this descriptor as an example of a descriptor that is too holistic and abstract for disability adjudication purposes.

⁵² p. 39, Appendix B.

⁵³ pp. 11-12, OIDAP report.

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Additional Lessons Learned: Considerations for SSA

Of particular interest to the OIDAP was the timeline for the development of the O*NET. Because of the massive nature of the O*NET content model, the Advisory Panel for the Dictionary of Occupational Titles (APDOT) took three years to arrive at its recommendations to DOL. Eight years elapsed from the time of the APDOT's creation until DOL released its first prototype of the content model and data collection began.⁵⁴ By comparison, an OIS for SSA needs a simpler ergonomically-designed occupational analysis system with a content model inclusive of discrete descriptors, that will not require the massive undertaking of O*NET's development or the prolonged timeline. It does call, however, for a system that is designed to produce high quality, forensically-defensible data, which is a scientifically-based and designed product. General Recommendation Four in OIDAP's September 2009 report called for internal and external expertise for the development and maintenance of the OIS. As Ms. Hilton indicated, the vision for the development of the O*NET was also "... to have some permanent professional people within the Department of Labor who could oversee the development of a better and improved database for the future."⁵⁵ This type of unit was likewise recommended in 1980 with the NAS review of the DOT.⁵⁶ Such a unit has not historically existed within SSA. Because of the forensic nature of the SSA OIS, the OIDAP advises that SSA establish a steady but cautious research timeline. It further counsels against undue acceleration of the R&D agenda until the scientific expertise unit proposed in the September 2009 report has been created and the development of a plan and priority schedule for research is established.

The OIDAP understands SSA has been meeting with or briefing DOL about the OIS since before the OIDAP's inaugural meeting, including meeting with the Employment and Training Administration and more recently also the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Although it is clear that the purpose and needs of each occupational database are due to very different econometric v. ergonomic design features, nonetheless, the OIDAP finds value in the O*NET Report's recommendation calling for increased cooperation between SSA and DOL possibly involving areas of sampling and/or data

⁵⁴ p. 45, Appendix B.

⁵⁵ p. 18, Appendix B.

⁵⁶ pp. 218-219 of the Miller, et al. study on the DOT recommended that "A permanent, professional research unit of high quality should be established to conduct technical studies designed to improve the quality of the DOT as well as basic research ..." and goes on to further describe the composition of the unit to include PhD-level scientists (e.g., sociologists, psychologists, statisticians, etc.), BA- or MA-level research assistants, and support staff.

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collection that may be mutually beneficial to each agency. SSA may also wish to explore with DOL how that agency has historically developed, maintained, and applied the occupational data it collects for its own forensic and adjudicative needs (e.g., US Department of Labor, Office of Administrative Law Judges for labor-related immigration cases). SSA may consider the development of ethical standards, data protection, or other systems to safeguard the integrity of the occupational data it collects for its disability programs. SSA may also benefit from collaboration with other Federal agencies, such as the Department of Defense, Office of Personnel Management, Rehabilitation Services Administration, and the Census Bureau, regarding work analysis methods and other information of value to the development of the OIS.

Lastly, the OIADP raises concerns regarding potential research and assessment ethics⁵⁷ and legal considerations in repurposing the O*NET. The same concerns hold true in applying the aging *Dictionary of Occupational Titles* to the disability adjudication process without regard to updated and current research, psychometric, and technology opportunities to meet the specific occupational data needs implied by the individualized assessment process. Until an occupational information system is developed that can meet individualized assessment purposes, and despite the DOT's flaws, today it still remains, "... the most comprehensive set of occupational characteristics currently available."⁵⁸ (p. 195, Miller Study)

⁵⁷ See the research and assessment standards in the codes of ethics for the American Counseling Association, American Psychological Association, and the Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification.

⁵⁸ See pp. 173 and 195, Miller, et al.

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Acknowledgements

We appreciate the fortunate timing a review of the O*NET presents to the OIDAP when we are at the genesis of providing SSA with our advice and recommendations regarding the OIS's R&D. We are grateful for DOL's willingness to make the database available for professional and public review and critique.

The contents of this report are not meant as a criticism of the use of the O*NET for the primary purpose for which it was created and should not be interpreted as such. Based on our study and review of SSA's occupational information needs, the purpose of this report was to review lessons learned through the O*NET's database study by the NAS that might be helpful to our advice and recommendations to SSA. Emerging needs in the OIS's R&D process may warrant further review of the O*NET Report to inform OIDAP future discussion and deliberations on technical matters.

We especially appreciate the NAS panel's acknowledgement of the unique needs of SSA for occupational data that are not met with the econometric design of the O*NET. Despite having completed their recommendations and disbanding as a panel before they had the opportunity to review SSA working papers or OIDAP's recommendations, the NAS panel elevated the issue of occupational data specific to disability adjudication to a national level that has served to ultimately clarify the need for the development of an ergonomically-based OIS for SSA's disability adjudication process. We thank the NAS study staff for their graciousness and willingness to present to the OIDAP, and particularly for their inclusion of footnotes in the final report to settle potential misunderstandings conveyed by the timing of their process and the publication of their uncorrected proofs and final reports.

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Conclusions

Understanding the differences in occupational systems designs is inherently a technical subject. Casual observers who do not have intimate knowledge and understanding of work analysis as applied to the residual functional capacity of an individual may not grasp the nuances in system design and data quality, or how this may affect generalizability to the claimant in SSA's individualized assessment. We suspect that this chasm in knowledge will continue to occasionally bring those who do not understand why the O*NET and OIS designs are very different, almost complementarily so based on the needs of their primary users, to ask "Why not a "tweaked" O*NET for disability adjudication?"

As noted in our September report, "Undoubtedly, there are some aspects of the DOT and the O*NET occupational information systems that are helpful to the development of the OIS tailored to SSA's disability adjudication needs." (p. 19, OIADAP Report). Our recommendations in that report included some features of both systems that met SSA's legal, program, technical, and data needs and already considered 100% of the O*NET and SOC work activities in its recommended work taxonomy framework, or constituting about 30% of that recommended starting taxonomic framework. The recommendations went further by introducing features for the new OIS to allow it to function within the context of its forensic intent and application. What we learned from the O*NET Report serves to uphold our 2009 general recommendations and to provide additional insights to further assist with our mission as identified in our charter.

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APPENDIX

Appendix A: NAS Presentation Slides to the OIDAP

Appendix B: Transcript from the Occupational Information Development Advisory Panel Quarterly Meeting, March 25, 2010—Presentation of Margaret Hilton, Study Director and Senior Program Officer Center for Education, The National Academies and Mr. Thomas J. Plewes, Associate Study Director and Senior Program Officer, Committee on National Statistics, The National Academies

Appendix C: Timeline of NAS and OIDAP Processes

Appendix D: Econometric v. Ergometric Occupational Analysis Designs

TAB A

THE NATIONAL

ACADEMIES

A Database for a Changing
Economy: Review of the
Occupational Information
Network (O*NET)

Committee on National Statistics
Center for Education

THE NATIONAL ACADEMIES

Advisers to the Nation on Science, Engineering, and Medicine

National Academy of Sciences

National Academy of Engineering

Institute of Medicine

National Research Council

Study Charge from DOL

- Document and evaluate current and potential uses of O*NET in:
 - workforce development
 - HRM
 - research
- Explore linkage to SOC and other data sets

Study Charge

- Identify improvements, especially in:
 - currency
 - efficiency
 - cost-effectiveness
 - use of new technology

Panel Selection

- Consulted NRC standing committees and others to identify experts
- Balance of expertise, views of O*NET
- NAS President approved provisional slate
- Provisional slate posted for public comment
- Confidential bias and conflict discussion at first meeting
- Final approval of panel members

Panel Members

- Nancy Tippins (Chair), Valtera Corporation
- David Autor, M.I.T.
- John Campbell, University of Minnesota
- Keith Ewald, Ohio Job & Family Services
- Richard Froeschle, Texas Workforce Commission
- Les Janis, Georgia State University
- Virginia Lesser, Oregon State University
- Kerry Levin, Westat
- Kenneth Pearlman, Independent Consultant
- Ann Marie Ryan, Michigan State University
- Juan Sanchez, Florida International University
- William Shobe, University of Virginia

Study Process

- Literature Review
- Workshops in March and April
- Deliberation in closed sessions
- Draft enters NRC review process in August
- Response to Review approved in November
- Transmittal to DOL in November
- Public release of prepublication draft in December:
http://books.nap.edu/catalog.php?record_id=12814
- Editing/technical corrections
- Final report in April or May

Prior NRC Studies

Review of DOT (1980)

- Criticized uneven coverage and many other aspects of DOT (pp. 9-11)
- Recommended fundamental changes, including:
 - Continuous updating (p. 13)
 - Creation of permanent, professional cadre (p. 14)
 - Outside technical advisory committee (p. 14)
 - Emphasis on cross occupational linkages (p. 15)
 - Alignment with federal job classification systems (p. 15)
- Led to creation of APDOT and O*NET

Source: NRC, *Work, Jobs, and Occupations: A Critical Review of the Dictionary of Occupational Titles*, 1980

Prior NRC Studies

Preliminary review of the SSA research plan for redesign of the disability determination process (1998)

- Concern that O*NET, as being developed, would not meet SSA's needs (p. 24)
- SSA and DOL should enter into an interagency arrangement to create a version of O*NET with information on minimum, as well as average, job requirements (p. 24)

Source: NRC, *The Social Security Administration's Disability Determination Process: A Framework for Research, Second Interim Report*, 1998

Prior NRC Studies

Review of the SSA research plan for redesign of the disability decision process (2002)

- DOL is no longer updating the DOT (p. 9)
- O*NET will not meet SSA's need to define functional capacity to work without major reconstruction (p. 9)
- Barring some resolution, SSA will be left with no objective basis for justifying decisions (p. 9)

Prior NRC Studies

Study of changes in work and occupational analysis
(1999)

Concluded that O*NET:

- Brings together most comprehensive analytical systems (p. 6)

- Is theoretically informed (p. 6)

- Is fully accessible (p. 6)

- Offers significant improvement over DOT (p. 7)

- Maps to other systems (p. 7).

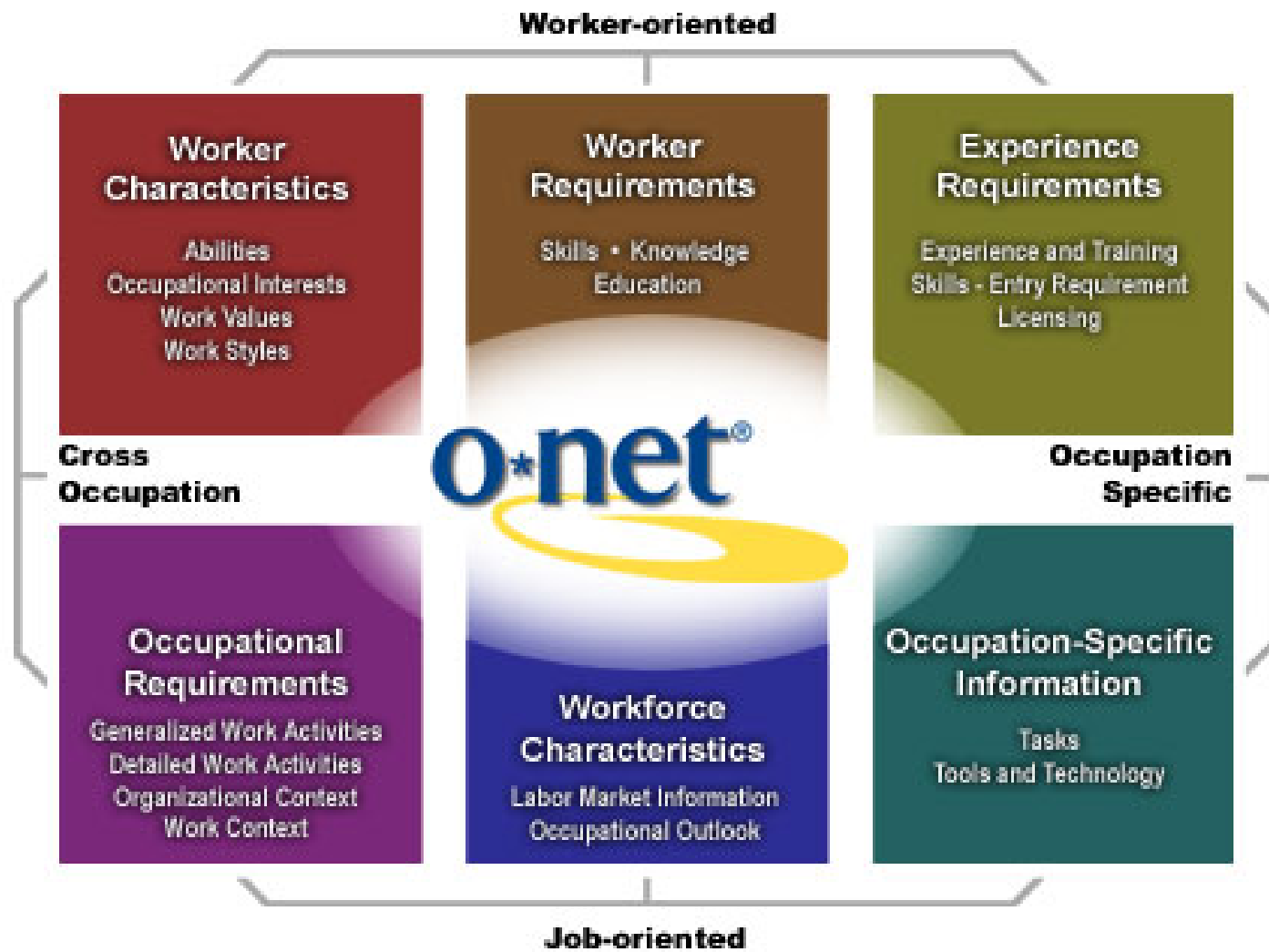
Source: NRC, *The Changing Nature of Work: Implications for Occupational Analysis*, 1999

O*NET Description

- A very large database
- Accessible online or by download
- Uses a “content model” to describe work

THE NATIONAL

ACCADEMIES



Who Uses O*NET?

1. Online Career Guidance Systems-
~37 million users in 2009
2. State workforce development experts—for job counseling
3. Human resource managers
4. Researchers
5. Vocational rehabilitation counselors

Chapter 8

- SSA uses DOT for disability adjudication
- O*NET is the successor to DOT
- Could O*NET be used by SSA?
- Compare SSA RFC approach with O*NET descriptors

O*NET Descriptors

- Abilities Domain
 - Cognitive abilities
 - Psychomotor abilities
 - Physical abilities
 - Sensory abilities
- Work Context Domain

RFC/O*NET Comparison

Physical Abilities

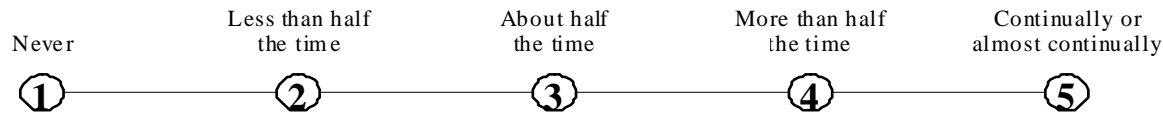
- RFC: Perform specific physical tasks, e.g., lift 20 pounds with the hands and arms
- O*NET Abilities: Less specific measures

RFC/O*NET Comparison

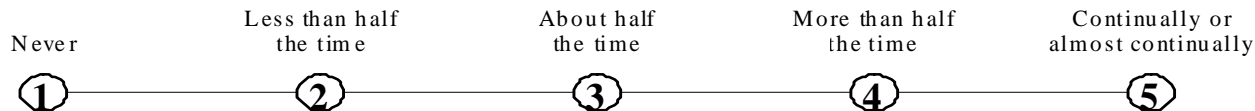
- RFC: Lifting, standing, sitting, pushing; postural limitations on balancing, crouching, crawling
- O*NET Work Context: Time spent sitting, standing, climbing, walking, etc.
- Anchors differ: RFC specific time ranges vs. O*NET relative time

O*NET Work Context Descriptors

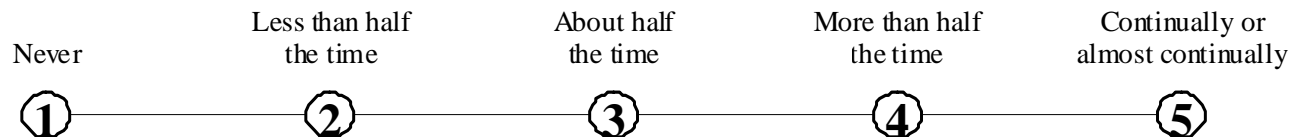
34. How much time in *your current job* do you spend sitting?



35. How much time in *your current job* do you spend standing?

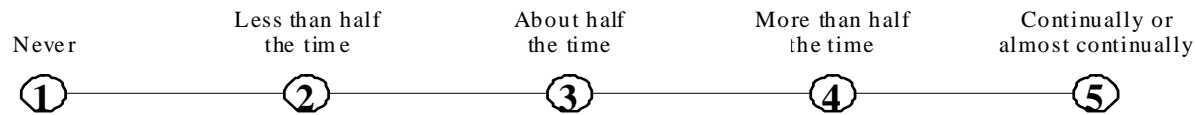


36. How much time in *your current job* do you spend climbing ladders, scaffolds, poles, etc.?

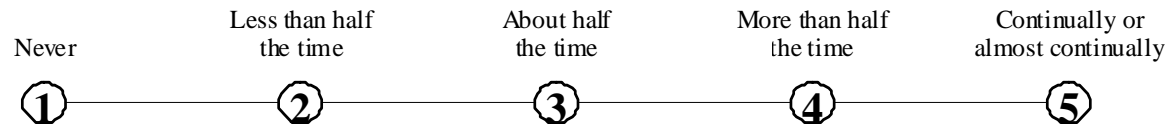


O*NET Work Context Descriptors

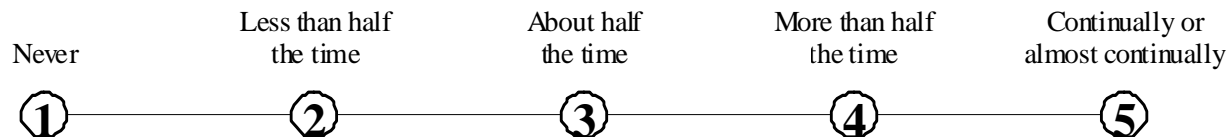
37. How much time in *your current job* do you spend walking or running?



38. How much time in *your current job* do you spend kneeling, crouching, stooping, or crawling?



39. How much time in *your current job* do you spend keeping or regaining your balance?



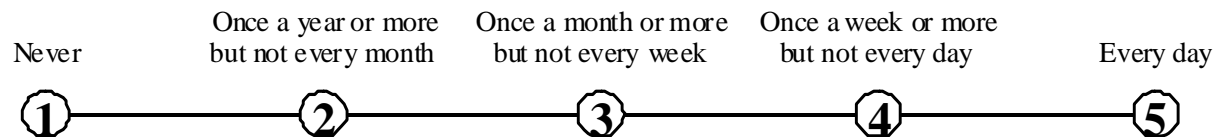
RFC/O*NET Comparison

Environmental Conditions

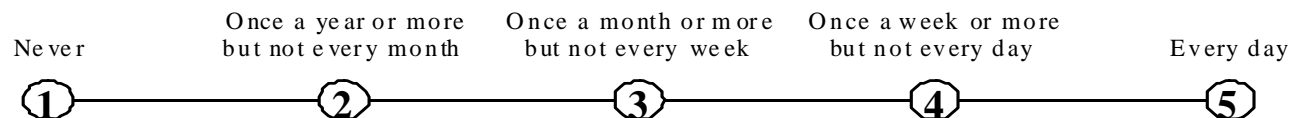
- RFC: Ability to withstand environmental hazards such as heat, cold, wetness, vibration, etc.
- O*NET Work Context: Exposure to heat, cold, contaminants, vibration
- Anchors differ: RFC “unlimited” to “avoid all exposure” vs. O*NET “never” to “every day.”

O*NET Work Context Descriptors:

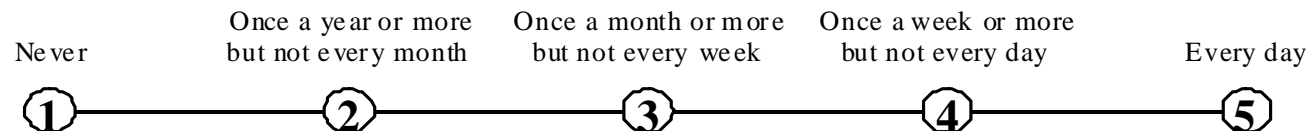
23. In *your current job*, how often are you exposed to very hot (above 90° F) or very cold (under 32° F) temperatures?



25. In *your current job*, how often are you exposed to contaminants (such as pollutants, gases, dust, or odors)?



27. In *your current job*, how often are you exposed to whole body vibration (like operating a jackhammer or earth moving equipment)?



RFC/O*NET Comparison Sensory/Perceptual Abilities

- RFC
 - Near acuity
 - Far acuity
 - Color vision
 - Depth perception
- O*NET Abilities
 - Near vision
 - Far vision
 - Visual color discrimination
 - Depth perception

Recommendation

- SSA and DOL should create an interagency task force to study the viability of potential modifications of O*NET to accommodate SSA needs
- Analyze SSA occupational information needs
- Analyze interagency cost-benefit and cost-sharing

Aggregation Issues

- O*NET now includes 1,102 occupations, collects data on 965
- SOC 2010 includes 840 occupations
- Since 2006, O*NET has added 153 new occupations-- “breakouts” of SOC occupations and green occupations
- Some O*NET users need these disaggregated data and would welcome further disaggregation
- Other users need aggregated occupational categories aligned with the SOC
- The panel did not agree about the appropriate level of aggregation

Aggregation Issues

- **Recommendation:** Assess benefits and costs of changing the occupational classification system

Including research into whether and to what extent O*NET occupations represent excessively heterogeneous clusters of jobs for the purpose of disability determination

Data Collection Issues

Conclusion: The O*NET Center uses a multimethod sampling approach, collecting data from different types of respondents who may or may not represent the work performed in that occupation. The impact on measurement error is unclear

Data Collection Issues

- **Conclusion:** The construct validity of the taxonomies of descriptors varies across the content model domains

Improving Database Quality

- **Conclusion:** Over the past decade, DOL has achieved its goal of populating O*NET with updated information, but short-term policy agendas have sometimes reduced focus on core database activities.
- **Recommendation:** Focus resources on core database activities, leaving development of most new applications and tools to others.

Improving Database Quality

- **Recommendation:** Establish and support a technical advisory board to:
 - prioritize research suggestions
 - develop RFPs for high priority research
 - review and rank proposals

Enhancing Service to Users

- **Conclusion:** A lack of effective, ongoing communication between the O*NET center and current and potential users hinders full use of O*NET
- **Recommendation:** Establish and staff an ongoing, external user advisory board

O*NET Lessons Learned

- Developing and maintaining a high-quality database requires expertise and funding
 - Development cost ???
 - Data collection costs: \$6 m/year to update 100 occupations/year

- Questions?

We will be happy to respond to your questions.

TAB B

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION

+ + + + +

OCCUPATIONAL INFORMATION DEVELOPMENT
ADVISORY PANEL

+ + + + +

QUARTERLY MEETING
DAY 2

+ + + + +

Thursday
March 25, 2010

+ + + + +

St. Louis, Missouri

+ + + + +

The Quarterly Meeting of the Occupational Information Development Advisory Panel convened at 8:30 a.m., pursuant to notice, in the Colonnade Ballroom, 13th Floor, Sheraton St. Louis City Center, 400 South 14th Street, St. Louis, Missouri, Mary Barros-Bailey, Chair, presiding.

PANEL MEMBERS PRESENT:

MARY BARROS-BAILEY, Chair, Ph.D.
ROBERT T. FRASER, Ph.D.
SHANAN GWALTNEY GIBSON, Ph.D.
THOMAS A. HARDY, J.D.
H. ALLAN HUNT, Ph.D.
SYLVIA E. KARMAN
DEBORAH E. LECHNER
DAVID J. SCHRETLEN, Ph.D.
NANCY G. SHOR, J.D.
MARK A. WILSON, Ph.D.

NEAL R. GROSS

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1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

ALSO PRESENT:

DEBRA TIDWELL-PETERS, Designated Federal
Official

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1 P-R-O-C-E-E-D-I-N-G-S

2 (8:39 a.m.)

3 MS. TIDWELL-PETERS: Good morning,
4 everyone. If you could please take your
5 seats, we are about to begin.

6 I am Debra Tidwell-Peters, the
7 Designated Federal Officer for the
8 Occupational Information Development Advisory
9 Panel, and we welcome you this morning to our
10 second meeting of 2010.

11 I am going to now turn the meeting
12 over to the Panel Chair, Dr. Mary Barros-
13 Bailey. Mary?

14 CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: Thank you,
15 Debra.

16 Good morning. I want to welcome
17 back those who were in attendance with us
18 yesterday at the start of our second quarterly
19 meeting in 2010, and also welcome those who
20 are with us for the first time this morning,
21 whether it be in person or telephonically.

22 This is just a reminder that this

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1 meeting is being recorded.

2 For those listening in remotely, to
3 follow our agenda please go to our website,
4 www.ssa.gov/oidap for a copy of the agenda.

5 As I indicated yesterday, for those
6 attending our meeting for the first time who
7 might be interested in the activities and
8 deliberations of past meetings, if you go to
9 the meeting page on our website you can click
10 on any agenda, and associated with that agenda
11 are the PowerPoints that were delivered for --
12 or to the OIDAP since our inaugural meeting in
13 February of 2009.

14 On our website you will find a
15 variety of materials, including technical
16 papers and the first report issued by the
17 panel in September of 2009 called "The Content
18 Model and Classification Recommendations for
19 the Social Security Administration,
20 Occupational Information System." The
21 Occupational Information System is also what
22 we call the OIS.

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1 It outlines our advice to SSA
2 regarding the data elements we felt essential
3 to include in the content model specific to
4 disability adjudication.

5 As we indicate at the start of each
6 meeting, the charter of the Occupational
7 Information Development Advisory Panel, OIDAP,
8 is to provide Social Security with independent
9 advice and recommendations as to the
10 development of an OIS to replace the
11 Dictionary of Occupational Titles in the
12 disability determination process.

13 To reiterate something I said
14 yesterday, our task is not to develop the OIS.

15 As our name implies, we are advisory in our
16 capacity.

17 Yesterday during her report to the
18 User Needs and Relations Subcommittee, Nancy
19 Shor encouraged public feedback and comment
20 upon the September report. I want to
21 emphasize what she said -- that we welcome
22 input from stakeholders and the public at any

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1 point along this process.

2 To help streamline input into the
3 September report, we are strongly encouraging
4 feedback through May 21st of this year.
5 Besides having the report available at our
6 website, disseminating it for feedback through
7 notices along with our meetings in the Federal
8 Register since November, notifying individuals
9 subscribed through our electronic mailing list
10 about it, and the public feedback request, and
11 speaking about it at four conferences, with
12 presentations slated at eight more conferences
13 between now and May 21st, we are attempting to
14 get the word out about the report, as well as
15 potentially including it in other means, such
16 as the Open Government website and/or
17 independently through the Federal Register.

18 What stakeholders say matters, and
19 we want you to know that what you have to say
20 we want to hear.

21 Following our review of our
22 September report, Commissioner Astrue further

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1 requested our assistance in providing SSA with
2 recommendations, and we reviewed those
3 yesterday. I will reiterate them this morning
4 for those who weren't in attendance with us
5 yesterday.

6 In January, he asked us to provide
7 SSA with advice in four areas -- in developing
8 a sampling and data collection plan for the
9 research and development process. Number two,
10 for helping with advice and recommendations
11 for the creation of a process for recruiting
12 field job analysts, including methods for
13 certification criteria and training. Three,
14 establishing associations between human
15 functions and the requirements of work that
16 would serve the disability evaluation process.

17 And, four, reviewing relevant documents or
18 reports SSA identifies that may affect or
19 inform SSA's work on the OIS.

20 In our agenda for today, we
21 specifically address the fourth request by
22 Commissioner Astrue.

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1 As identified in the September
2 report, the data elements recommended to SSA
3 were the starting point of our process, not
4 the finish line for the OIDAP. While many
5 panels are assembled to study a topic for a
6 designated time, and that culminates with a
7 report, after which time the panel is
8 disbanded, our panel is different in that we
9 have been asked for further independent advice
10 and recommendations into the research and
11 development process of the OIS development.

12 The 2009 National Academies of
13 Science report on the O*NET is the first time
14 that an independent group has reviewed an
15 occupational information system in 30 years,
16 since a review of the Dictionary of
17 Occupational Titles was conducted by the
18 National Research Council in 1980, and what is
19 often referred to as the Miller Study.

20 We commend the U.S. Department of
21 Labor for commissioning the National Academies
22 of Science Panel to independently review the

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1 O*NET upon the O*NET's tenth anniversary.
2 This is an important process.

3 It is timely that the National
4 Academies of Science reviewed an existing
5 civilian occupational information system while
6 we are providing advice and recommendations to
7 the Social Security Administration on the
8 development of an OIS. The existence of the
9 National Academies of Science panel in its
10 report provides us with the opportunity to
11 explore areas that exist in the development of
12 any occupational information system, and learn
13 from that process to better advice and
14 recommendations to the Social Security
15 Administration.

16 The National Academy of Science
17 report provides us as a panel with a great
18 chance for learning. That is the goal for
19 this morning.

20 We thank Margaret Hilton, the Study
21 Director and Senior Program Officer, and Tom
22 Plewes, Associate Study Director and Senior

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1 Program Officer with the National Academies of
2 Science for accepting our invitation this
3 morning to come and speak to us.

4 Behind Tab 3 in our three-ring
5 binders we will find the biographical sketches
6 for Margaret and Tom, and we will also find
7 copies of their PowerPoint presentations.

8 Margaret and Tom have quite a bit
9 of information to present to us this morning.

10 I will ask the panel to withhold questions
11 until after they are completed with their
12 presentation.

13 Welcome.

14 MS. HILTON: Thank you. That's it.

15 The name of our study, which is available
16 right now on our -- the National Academy Press
17 website -- is called "A Database for a
18 Changing Economy: Review of the O*NET."

19 The Department of Labor asked us to
20 do this study. As Mary mentioned, it seemed
21 like a good time to study O*NET, because it
22 was about a decade old. And they especially

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1 wanted us to document how O*NET is used, but
2 they also wanted us to evaluate those uses.
3 And they are especially interested in use in
4 workforce development, because O*NET was
5 originally created for that purpose by state
6 and local employment offices.

7 They were interested in human
8 resource management uses of O*NET, and
9 especially in business and in job matching
10 systems. And they were interested in how
11 O*NET links to other occupational
12 classification systems, in particular the
13 Federal Government's standard occupational
14 classification system.

15 The linkages are important, because
16 it is a database. It is an electronic
17 database, and it is sometimes used going back
18 to the HRM and HRM information systems, HRM/IS
19 systems.

20 They wanted us not only to document
21 how O*NET is used and evaluate it, but also to
22 identify how O*NET could be improved, and they

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1 were especially interested in the areas you
2 see listed on the slide. Currency, how up to
3 date is this information? Efficiency, are
4 there better ways to collect the data? Cost
5 effectiveness, is there any way to do it less
6 expensively? And they wondered about using
7 new technologies to collect the data.

8 We just had breakfast with Mary and
9 Sylvia and Mark. We were talking a little bit
10 about the panel selection, and you will see a
11 gold brochure at your place that talks in
12 greater depth about our whole National Academy
13 study process.

14 Basically, Tom did most of the
15 recruiting, and I think he did a great job.
16 Tom talked to the members of the Committee on
17 National Statistics. That's a standing
18 committee of the National Academies. And he
19 also just talked to people in the field.

20 And when we talk to people, they
21 identify other people, so it's a complex kind
22 of a snowball sampling process we go through,

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1 and we talked to many people and we have
2 finally come up with a slate of nominees.
3 They are only nominated. Our proposed slate
4 of staff people goes all the way up to the
5 President of the National Academy of Sciences.

6 Only Ralph Cicerone, the President,
7 can approve their membership, and yet even his
8 approve is provisional, because those names,
9 those nominees' names are then posted for
10 public comment for 20 days. And at the first
11 committee meeting we always hold a closed bias
12 and conflict discussion, and based on that
13 discussion some members may decide to
14 voluntarily drop off or there may be other
15 problems.

16 After the bias and conflict
17 discussion, we write a memo that goes to our
18 lawyers, and then, finally, when the lawyers
19 say it is okay, then they become the final
20 committee members. So it's a complex process,
21 but we try to -- we do it that way to try to
22 make sure we get the best panel members.

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1 We also are trying to balance areas
2 of expertise, and on our panel we have -- we
3 had quite a few IO psychologists, people in
4 the field of work analysis, but we also wanted
5 users of O*NET. We also tried to get a mix of
6 views of O*NET, so that we weren't having only
7 the people that were involved in the original
8 development or the people that are known to be
9 its biggest proponents, but we also tried to
10 include people who had more questions about
11 the system.

12 So these are the panel members we
13 ended up with. I am not going to read through
14 all their names, but obviously they are people
15 known in the field of IO psychology and users
16 and statisticians.

17 Our study process is that we were
18 reviewing the literature throughout the study
19 process and, of course, our panel members
20 helped us, because some of them know the
21 literature quite extensively. We did hold
22 public workshops in both March and April, and

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1 Sylvia Karman spoke at our March workshop.

2 The National Academy has a special
3 exemption from the Federal Advisory Committee
4 Act that allows us to hold some of our
5 deliberations in closed session, and we did
6 hold such deliberations. We created a review
7 draft, based on all of the information we had
8 received that entered our review process in
9 August.

10 Then, we did what's called a
11 response to review, where we talk about every
12 comment we received from the outside
13 reviewers, how we plan to address that
14 comment, and, if we don't plan to address it,
15 we have to have a very good reason not to make
16 the change.

17 Our response to review was accepted
18 in November. One thing I should mention is
19 that all of our panel members and all of the
20 outside reviewers are volunteers, so I was
21 just going to mention the name of our
22 volunteer review coordinator. That was Neal

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1 Schmitt from Michigan State University. He
2 approved our response to the review comments
3 in November, and we transmitted our report to
4 DOL in November, in pre-publication form.

5 And if you are interested in
6 reading the whole report, you can see the web
7 address right there. It is still published
8 right now in pre-publication form. Right now
9 there is final editing going on to the second
10 page proofs, and on April 22nd we expect to
11 actually receive the books, the published
12 books, from the National Academy Press.

13 At the time that we get the final
14 copies of the book, the website version will
15 also change and reflect the changes that are
16 in the final printed report.

17 We have done other studies that are
18 related to our recent O*NET study, and Mary
19 mentioned our important study in 1980 when we
20 reviewed the Dictionary of Occupational
21 Titles. And that committee found a lot of
22 flaws in DOT -- uneven coverage. There were a

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1 lot more job titles listed in the DOT from
2 manufacturing than existed in the economy,
3 because even in 1980 the economy was already
4 beginning its shift, which continues away from
5 manufacturing towards services.

6 That panel recommended a lot of
7 very fundamental changes in the Dictionary of
8 Occupational Titles. One that is actually not
9 listed on my slide was the idea of going to an
10 electronic database, because it is just going
11 to inherently be out of date if you are going
12 to create a big paper dictionary, and then
13 have to update it and print it.

14 So the vision was to have much more
15 continuous updating and to have some permanent
16 professional people within the Department of
17 Labor who could oversee the development of a
18 better and improved database for the future.

19 The panel also recommended an
20 outside Technical Advisory Committee, and the
21 only reason I mentioned that recommendation
22 from a study way back in 1980 is that our

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1 panel that met just last year makes the same
2 recommendation to the Labor Department, that
3 they should have an outside Technical Advisory
4 Committee.

5 1980 was a time when a lot of jobs
6 were being lost, manufacturing was shrinking,
7 people were being laid off, and so that
8 committee recommended looking at jobs,
9 defining them broadly and looking at what can
10 be -- what kinds of skills, abilities, and
11 other characteristics can transfer from one
12 job to another?

13 So they talked about cross-
14 occupational linkages. That panel recommended
15 that the new system be more in line with other
16 federal occupational classification systems,
17 and that study was important, because it led
18 the Labor Department to create the Advisory
19 Panel on the Dictionary of Occupational
20 Titles. And that panel led to the creation of
21 O*NET.

22 Another earlier study that relates

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1 more directly to your charge was a preliminary
2 review of a research plan to redesign
3 disability determination. That study
4 expressed a concern that O*NET, as it was
5 being developed at that time, was not going to
6 meet SSA's needs. That panel suggested that
7 SSA and DOL enter into an interagency
8 agreement to create a version of O*NET with
9 information on minimum as well as average job
10 requirements.

11 Another study, which Tom brought a
12 copy of, so I can show it to you, is called
13 "The Dynamics of Disability." And this one
14 came out in 2002. It is related to the study
15 I just mentioned to you, in that it is a more
16 final study of the same SSA research plan.

17 Basically, they observed, which we
18 all know, is that the Labor Department was no
19 longer updating the DOT, that the O*NET would
20 not meet the SSA's needs to define residual
21 functional capacity to work, without major
22 reconstruction. And that if there wasn't any

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1 resolution to this problem that SSA would be
2 left with no objective basis for justifying
3 the decisions.

4 Now, another study that is -- we
5 are getting a little more -- a little more
6 recent, still 10 years old, the time flies.
7 This book is called "The Changing Nature of
8 Work: Implications for Occupational
9 Analysis." This study was actually done for
10 the Department of Defense, which was looking
11 at a lot of different occupational information
12 classification systems.

13 This panel concluded that O*NET
14 brings together the most comprehensive
15 analytical systems. It is theoretically
16 informed. It is fully accessible and offers
17 significant improvements over the DOT, and it
18 maps well with other systems. So this panel
19 was basically encouraging DoD to consider
20 O*NET as a framework as it tries to bring its
21 occupational systems closer together.

22 And now I'm going to turn it over

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1 to Tom to tell you more about O*NET.

2 MR. PLEWES: Thank you. And let me
3 just say that more recently there was a Rand
4 panel that took a look at the DOT -- that took
5 a look at the possible use of the O*NET and
6 other classification systems for DoD purposes,
7 and recommended that DoD take a look at O*NET.

8 So that work keeps on going on. I know about
9 that, because I happened to be lucky enough to
10 serve on that panel.

11 Let's see here. Here we go, okay.

12 So what is O*NET? I really don't have to
13 tell this group that, but let me just start
14 out with some very basics here. It is a very
15 large database. It is probably not as big as
16 some people would like, but it is a lot bigger
17 than a lot of users would like to see when
18 they open up those files.

19 It is accessible online or by
20 download, and it uses this thing called a
21 content model to describe work. Pretty basic
22 stuff, but I just want to kind of start out

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1 this way, because I think it's important that
2 we understand that.

3 There is a rigor to what O*NET --
4 how O*NET approaches it. The folks who
5 developed O*NET took a look at all of the
6 literature at that time, and came up with, if
7 you will, this quadrant, taking a look at not
8 only work-oriented but job-oriented kind of
9 characteristics of work that wanted -- they
10 wanted to have incorporated.

11 We will get into the evaluation in
12 just a minute here.

13 The important thing I think that we
14 need to understand is that O*NET is a general
15 purpose kind of a classification system. It
16 has a wide variety of users and uses, and we
17 drilled into some of these in the report that
18 we published. Some of the data that we were
19 able to assemble, that really wasn't well-
20 known before, was quite astounding as a matter
21 of fact.

22 For example, over 37 million

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1 individual users did some access to an online
2 career guidance system, which is in turn
3 driven by O*NET in 2009. That was a very
4 large number, and it caused some people to
5 think, gee whiz, maybe if we just owned O*NET
6 we would really be rich.

7 But the fact of the matter is is
8 that there are a lot of folks out there who
9 use it for career guidance and have built it
10 into these career guidance systems -- state
11 workforce development, for job counseling and
12 the more traditional roles that O*NET and the
13 DOT and O*NET itself were originally designed
14 for.

15 They had two experts, as you know,
16 from state labor market information
17 organizations that helped provide this
18 information to those folks who are trying to
19 match workers with jobs out in the field,
20 human resource managers, researchers, and
21 then, importantly, vocational rehabilitation
22 counselors, who are of course represented by

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1 your Chair and other members of this panel.

2 Those are the folks who use O*NET.

3 In fact, I think that if someone asked me
4 that question, who uses O*NET, I would say
5 you. You may not know it, but in some way
6 this structure called O*NET fits into many of
7 the things that you do on a daily basis, and
8 in a wide variety of areas.

9 The important thing is is that --
10 to understand is that it is designed to meet a
11 wide variety of uses, but in each case there
12 probably is a better system that could be
13 developed for that particular use. But it is
14 a general purpose system, and it does not try
15 to fulfill all of the needs of all of the
16 users, but it tries to, if you will, provide a
17 basis for all users to understand and to view
18 an occupational information system.

19 So what did we say here? First of
20 all, why did we get into this SSA business?
21 People have asked that question. Why did the
22 panel choose to look at this? If you look at

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1 the original charge that the panel came up
2 with, it does not specifically say, "Now, you
3 take a look at whether or not O*NET meets the
4 disability -- you know, the requirements of
5 SSA for the disability adjudication work that
6 they do." It just wasn't there.

7 But as the panel began to look at
8 the major uses and the previous studies that
9 were done by the National Research Council and
10 the Institute of Medicine, it became very
11 obvious that a major interface between O*NET
12 and a user system was represented by the need
13 that you are looking at now, the Social
14 Security Administration's need.

15 They didn't feel that they could --
16 that they could put out a report without at
17 least addressing that interface, and so you
18 saw Chapter 8 in our report.

19 We did not have on the panel a
20 person who was an expert in Social Security
21 Administration disability adjudication, and we
22 did not look at all of the issues that your

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1 panel is looking at, nor in the depth of
2 hands-on experience that you are taking.

3 So Chapter 8 has to be looked at in
4 a slightly different view than the work that
5 you are doing, it seems to us. And that view
6 is, if you are developing a general purpose
7 occupational information network system, here
8 is a major user, and are there opportunities
9 to serve the needs of this particular user,
10 given what we understand to be the needs of
11 the user and the functionality that O*NET
12 provides. So we need to make that very clear.

13 Now, the panel was not you, and it
14 did not bring the same expertise to bear on
15 the issue. But I was pleased to note from the
16 report that you put out in January that they
17 faced and they approached the issues in many
18 of the same ways that you have approached the
19 issues -- by taking a look, if you will, at
20 the ability of O*NET to fulfill some of those
21 particular functions.

22 So they actually said, okay, could

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1 O*NET be used by the Social Security
2 Administration for this? Well, what you need
3 to do, if you are going to make that kind of
4 decision, is that you need to take a look at
5 your residual functional capacity approach,
6 and you need to take a look at the O*NET
7 descriptors, and so let's do that
8 systematically.

9 You've done a lot of that work here
10 in your report, and I will not spend a lot of
11 time at it. But I do want to let you know
12 what the panel came up with.

13 First of all, here are the O*NET
14 descriptors. They are a mix of the cognitive,
15 psychomotor, physical abilities, sensory
16 abilities, a mix of the traditional, if you
17 will, occupational classification, with some
18 of the work in fact taken directly from
19 Fleishman's work on the physical ability side.

20 But it covers a wide range of
21 domains, and it doesn't focus on the
22 domains of absolute most interest to you.

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1 Okay? It is, again, a general purpose. And
2 there is, of course, the work context domain,
3 which we won't spend too much time on.

4 So we took a look at comparing, as
5 best the panel could, the residual functional
6 capacity with O*NET comparisons. And the
7 first thing they looked at was physical
8 abilities. We took as a given the residual
9 functional capacity requirements that have
10 come up with -- that the Social Security
11 Administration has come up with.

12 And it was very obvious that when
13 taking a look at physical abilities that O*NET
14 has much less specific -- specificity in the
15 measures. There is not the kind of
16 specificity that is necessary to meet the
17 current RFCs for physical disabilities. And,
18 interestingly enough, that is exactly what
19 your report found as well.

20 And this is just an example. The
21 same example is in your report. I won't dwell
22 on this. It's in our presentation.

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1 In terms of comparing the RFCs for
2 lifting, standing, sitting, pushing, you can
3 read all those. Again, there are specific
4 time ranges versus a relative time used in
5 O*NET. The anchors are very different, and it
6 causes, if you will, a not direct
7 transferability of the O*NET work context to
8 meet. It is the RFCs of Social Security, and
9 here are some of the examples in O*NET, and
10 you can see that. We'll just go through this
11 very quickly.

12 In terms of environmental
13 conditions, the RFCs are quite specific in
14 terms of ability to withstand environmental
15 hazards. There is -- the O*NET work context
16 has exposure to heat, contaminants, vibration,
17 and so forth.

18 I would call this -- you may not
19 agree with me -- I would call some of these
20 differences between O*NET and the RFCs used by
21 Social Security to be marginal. They aren't
22 critical to say O*NET will never ever meet

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1 that, but it is a matter of your judgment.
2 And I think you should -- you need to take a
3 look at that, and here are the O*NET anchors
4 there.

5 In terms of sensory perception and
6 abilities, we have just gone through again
7 near acuity, near vision, far acuity, far
8 vision. Is that nuance, or is that terribly
9 important? If you are sitting in the field
10 and you've got to make a judgment, perhaps it
11 is terribly important, and you need to have
12 something much more specific or different than
13 O*NET is offering you.

14 And so what did we come up with?
15 What did the panel come up with? I think that
16 there was -- there is a general concurrence on
17 the panel with the findings of the previous
18 National Research Council reports that O*NET,
19 in and of itself, cannot be used in the way it
20 is for the purpose that you need to use it.
21 It just -- it is not -- it is not fully
22 capable of serving that purpose.

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1 However, there are those good
2 things we talked about in terms of O*NET --
3 its tie-in with other classification systems,
4 particularly with the standard occupational
5 classification structure, the rigor that is
6 used in building O*NET.

7 Some of that rigor is based on
8 surveys of workers in establishments that may
9 have some issues with response rates, and so
10 forth, and we looked at that also. And, yes,
11 we recommended some revisions in the way that
12 those surveys are done.

13 Some of that has to do with the way
14 in which experts, job analysts, provide their
15 input to this. And, again, there has to be a
16 reconsideration of some of -- the way in which
17 that particular business is done, and we --
18 the panel made recommendations in that as
19 well.

20 But I think that they saw enough
21 goodness in O*NET that they recommended that
22 the Social Security Administration and the DOL

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1 create an interagency task force to study the
2 viability of modifications of O*NET to
3 accommodate the needs of the Social Security
4 Administration.

5 It didn't say, "Social Security
6 Administration, change the way you do business
7 to meet O*NET." There are some things that
8 could be changed within O*NET, for example,
9 that would help make that system much more
10 reflective of -- or much more consistent with
11 where the Social Security Administration wants
12 to go with disability adjudication.

13 It asks that there be an assessment
14 of SSA occupational information needs.
15 Whoops, we didn't recommend your panel, but
16 that's certainly a contribution that we
17 believe that you are making. And then,
18 analyze interagency cost-benefit and cost-
19 sharing.

20 These things don't come without
21 cost, both to DOL in terms of the kind of work
22 that must be done to make O*NET somewhat more

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1 friendly to this particular use, nor certainly
2 to the Social Security Administration as it
3 would try to work with Department of Labor to
4 make O*NET much more friendly to the
5 disability adjudication and the disability
6 adjudication system -- information system much
7 more friendly to O*NET.

8 So there is a cost-benefit that has
9 to be made. We did not make that cost-
10 benefit. The panel did not -- didn't have the
11 time, the input, but we recognized -- the
12 panel recognized that you don't make these
13 decisions based on what is nice to have. You
14 make the decisions based on what is practical,
15 what is affordable, and what is consistent
16 with the ultimate need of the user. And I
17 think that was the recommendation.

18 So a lot of the work that was
19 suggested by the panel has been handed back to
20 the Department of Labor, and not just to
21 Social Security Administration. So, and we
22 are still waiting to hear what Department of

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1 Labor's response to that particular
2 recommendation is.

3 MS. HILTON: Thanks, Tom. That was
4 a very good explanation of where the panel is
5 and what we recommended.

6 When Debra Tidwell-Peters invited
7 us to speak, she mentioned some specific
8 issues that she would like us to address,
9 because our report is very broad, so I just
10 wanted to try to address some of the specific
11 questions she asked about.

12 One is the aggregation issue, which
13 I know you all are very familiar with. I
14 mean, obviously, DOT had 14,000 jobs. Right
15 now, O*NET has 1,100 occupations, so that's --
16 it's a huge difference.

17 The O*NET is aligned with SOC. It
18 does have a coding system with digits, so that
19 you can relate any O*NET job to an SOC job.
20 Nevertheless, it is not perfectly aligned.
21 The SOC has just revised. It has 840.
22 Obviously, O*NET has over 1,000.

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1 Since 2006, O*NET has added 153 new
2 occupations. These are what they call
3 breakouts of SOC occupations. In other words,
4 it is becoming more disaggregated. Part of
5 the breakouts are related to the search for
6 green occupations.

7 What our panel observed is that for
8 some of the users of O*NET they really want
9 this disaggregated data. People in career
10 guidance want to be able to direct young
11 people towards a more specific job, not
12 towards such a broad occupation.

13 Obviously, your users would like
14 more disaggregated data. On the other hand,
15 there are other users, and specifically in
16 workforce development. And that is the core
17 constituency that is why, first, DOT was
18 created, and then O*NET was created.

19 It was to serve state workforce
20 development people who are trying to place
21 people in jobs. And they like the broader
22 occupations, because they are completely

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1 aligned with SOC occupational codes and they
2 can then link this occupation with a lot of
3 data collected by the Bureau of Labor
4 Statistics and state and local agencies, and
5 that is all collected at the SOC level.

6 So the panel observed these -- some
7 people want more disaggregation, some people
8 want less disaggregation, and the panel didn't
9 agree. I think that shows that our panel was
10 well balanced. I mean, you could say it's a
11 problem that they can't agree, but it just may
12 reflect the reality.

13 The panel -- although the panel
14 didn't agree what the level of aggregation
15 should be, again, just as in the case that Tom
16 just mentioned, our panel met for a certain
17 amount of time and then it quit -- that was
18 the end of our time, money, and effort, and so
19 the panel felt very, very strongly that this
20 aggregation issue was critical for the future
21 of O*NET and for the usefulness of O*NET.

22 And so they recommended that the

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1 Labor Department either conduct or commission
2 research to look at the costs and benefits of
3 changing it, of either making it bigger or
4 making it smaller, and, you know, what would
5 be the result of making it bigger, what are
6 the pros and cons, what are the results of
7 staying smaller, closer to SOC, what are the
8 pros and cons.

9 One element of our recommendation
10 on this aggregation issue, and it's a long
11 recommendation -- we had many long
12 recommendations. So one element was
13 specifically calling for some research into
14 whether O*NET is too disaggregated for the
15 purposes of disability determination, and to
16 what extent.

17 There is the recommendation. Sorry
18 I didn't put it up there, but it seems -- I
19 know you have this all right in front of you
20 anyway, so -- okay.

21 Data collection -- now that was
22 another issue, and Tom just started to mention

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1 it briefly. Right now, O*NET is using --
2 collecting data using a lot of different
3 methods and a lot of different sources. It is
4 collecting data from many different types of
5 respondents, including job incumbents.

6 Then, there are people they call
7 occupational experts, people who may have
8 worked in the occupation at one time, but now
9 they might be trainers or doing something else
10 related. That is another group. And then,
11 the third group are the occupational analysts.

12 Our conclusion was that these --
13 all these different sources may or may not be
14 the best representative of the work that is
15 performed, and that the impact on measurement
16 error is unclear, because with every method
17 you introduce new error.

18 Specifically on the issue of the
19 use of occupational analysts, here again this
20 was an issue where our panel did not entirely
21 agree, and all you have to do is read Chapter
22 2. You can tell it. But you can especially

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1 tell it because there is a dissent at the end
2 of our report, where two of our panel members
3 dissented on about a few issues, but they were
4 -- one of the issues was this use of
5 occupational analysts where they felt that
6 giving paper descriptions of an occupation to
7 a trained occupational analyst would not
8 result in an accurate rating.

9 Another data collection issue that
10 we identified was that the construct validity
11 of the taxonomies of descriptors varies across
12 the different domains of the content model.
13 Tom showed you a picture of the content model.

14 It is very, very big. There are many
15 domains. Within the domains, there are many
16 specific descriptors. And some of those
17 descriptors have a strong research base.

18 Tom mentioned the abilities
19 descriptors. They are drawn from Fleishman.
20 They are widely accepted as some of the best
21 descriptors of abilities, with the strongest
22 research base. Some of the other taxonomies,

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1 skills, and knowledges there is less support
2 in the research.

3 So to the database quality, another
4 conclusion was that DOL has achieved its goal
5 of populating the O*NET with updated
6 information over about a decade. We did see a
7 problem that there were some short-term policy
8 agendas that were sometimes reducing the focus
9 on the core database activities.

10 And to mention some specific
11 concerns there, the Labor Department and the
12 O*NET center, trying to make it more user-
13 friendly, put a lot of things onto O*NET
14 Online, which some of the users in the field
15 don't entirely agree with, especially trying
16 to define an in-demand occupation, define it
17 nationally, and yet we had state people
18 speaking at some of our workshops saying they
19 did not like it that O*NET Online puts little
20 flags and highlights certain occupations to
21 suggest that, you know, these are growth
22 areas, this is where you can place people in

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1 jobs, and so forth, and especially now with
2 the recession.

3 So basically that is an example of
4 a short-term policy agenda, and certainly the
5 current focus on the green jobs, where they
6 are adding a lot of green jobs, but how
7 representative are those jobs of the whole
8 economy.

9 So our recommendation here was that
10 DOL should be focusing its resources on the
11 core database activities, and not getting so
12 involved in developing the applications and
13 tools and trying to become more user-friendly.

14 Related to that, as Tom mentioned,
15 many people just take the whole O*NET database
16 and they make it more user-friendly anyway,
17 especially these online career guidance
18 systems. So Labor Department doesn't need to
19 spend its own time and money creating these
20 applications.

21 Our most important recommendation
22 for improving the quality of the O*NET

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1 database was that we strongly believe that the
2 Labor Department should establish and support
3 a Technical Advisory Board. That advisory
4 board we think should be prioritizing research
5 suggestions that come from the field or from
6 within DOL. They should develop RFPs for the
7 high priority research items, and then they
8 should review and rank proposals from outside
9 researchers to conduct that research.

10 As I mentioned, we have many
11 recommendations in our report. We have a lot
12 of long recommendations. But since many of
13 our recommendations relate to research, this
14 is our top priority.

15 If you are interested in how we see
16 the priority of all of our many
17 recommendations, I would recommend that you
18 read Chapter 10. In Chapter 10 of our report
19 we rank all of the research and development
20 recommendations.

21 We also noticed there were problems
22 in terms of the users and the communication

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1 back and forth between the database developers
2 and the users. We didn't think there was
3 enough ongoing communication. The
4 example I just gave to you of the O*NET center
5 identify nationally in-demand occupations when
6 people at the state level don't even think
7 those are in demand is an example of a lack of
8 communication. So here we recommended that
9 they establish and staff an ongoing External
10 User Advisory Board.

11 When we met not long ago with the
12 SSA Subcommittee of House Ways and Means, they
13 wondered, are there any lessons learned from
14 the development of O*NET that could be
15 applicable as you start to create your own
16 occupational information system? Our main
17 conclusion would be that developing and
18 maintaining a high quality occupational
19 database takes a lot of expertise, and it
20 requires money.

21 We were not able to develop an
22 estimate of how much it costs to create the

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1 content model, but that was a very, very
2 extensive research project that went on for
3 five years -- developing it, developing the
4 constructs, the taxonomies -- and then going
5 to the field and pilot testing it.

6 We do know that the data collection
7 costs right now are about \$6 million a year,
8 and that updates 100 occupations a year. So
9 that gives you some idea.

10 And one other thing I'll mention
11 related to data collection costs is that
12 whenever O*NET adds more occupations, whenever
13 it becomes less aggregated, more
14 disaggregated, as it has done, that is always
15 going to increase your data collection costs,
16 because you have more occupations to go after,
17 and that means that same money that could have
18 been used to refresh your existing occupations
19 more frequently is going to chase more
20 occupations. So there is always a tradeoff in
21 any kind of database like this.

22 And that's it. Now we're ready to

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1 take your questions.

2 CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: Thank you,
3 Margaret and Tom, for your words and your
4 presentation. I think this is very useful to
5 us this morning.

6 Before I open up questions to the
7 panel, I have some questions I would like to
8 ask. And I know that we have mentioned that
9 Mark and I met with you independently outside
10 of the OIDAP, and Mark outside of his
11 university, me outside of my previous IOTF
12 representation, and we also understand that
13 SSA has met with you as well.

14 So in terms of the version of your
15 report that is online, on the website, in
16 terms of the pre-publication copy, and you
17 mentioned in your slides that you are going to
18 have the final report available in April or
19 May, what are the changes that are in the
20 final copy of the report?

21 MS. HILTON: I can't -- I mean, I
22 just can't give you that answer. We made

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1 changes throughout -- well, we made some
2 changes to almost every chapter, as a result
3 of the feedback we got both from DOL, from the
4 O*NET center, and from you.

5 But, you know, without having a
6 copy in front of me, because every change --
7 as I mentioned to you at breakfast, there was
8 a lot of internal discussion, because our
9 policy is that we don't change major
10 conclusions or recommendations. So that I can
11 say, that the major conclusions and
12 recommendations, including the recommendation
13 that Tom shared with you about an interagency
14 task force, have not changed.

15 CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: How about for
16 Chapter 8? What were the specific input that
17 you received that might have changed anything
18 in Chapter 8?

19 MS. HILTON: We did make some small
20 changes to Chapter 8 in response to our
21 meeting with you and with SSA.

22 CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: What were

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1 those?

2 MS. HILTON: Like I said, I can't
3 -- without having the, you know, copy in front
4 of me where I see the redline strikeout, I
5 can't say.

6 CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: So were they
7 editorial in nature?

8 MS. HILTON: I would say they are
9 more editorial in nature.

10 CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: Okay.

11 MS. HILTON: As I mentioned, our
12 policy is not to change major conclusions or
13 recommendations.

14 CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: Okay. Thank
15 you. And then, in terms of how I came at the
16 report, and as a panel member, what guided my
17 evaluation of the report was our own
18 evaluation of the occupational information
19 needs of SSA. And I know that Tom has a copy
20 of the report, and I know that's outlined in
21 pages 11 and 12 of the report.

22 And so for anybody who is listening

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1 in and wants to access a copy, I mentioned at
2 the beginning of the meeting that you can go
3 to our website, the home page, and access the
4 report.

5 The occupational information needs
6 that are outlined in pages 11 and 12 of our
7 report include four categories of what an
8 occupational information system must contain
9 to meet SSA's needs. I would like to ask some
10 questions specific to the recommendation that
11 the National Academies of Science panel has in
12 terms of occupational information needs for
13 SSA in Chapter 8 for disability determination
14 as they relate to these four areas.

15 One of the things -- the very first
16 thing that is -- the bullet says reflect
17 national existence of incidence of work. It
18 says a new occupational resource must show
19 that work exists and that work exists in
20 numbers sufficient to indicate that it is not
21 obscure.

22 One of the things -- the last

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1 things that you just mentioned was the
2 inclusion of green jobs and whether, you know,
3 that overemphasis is really reflective of work
4 as it exists in the national economy.

5 So how did the NAS panel consider
6 this occupational information need for SSA in
7 terms of the disability determination process
8 in its recommendations for Chapter 8?

9 MS. HILTON: We didn't specifically
10 address, you know, the specific need of the
11 work identified in numbers, or specific -- we
12 did not identify that question specifically
13 within the context of the need for disability
14 determination, and we didn't even make a
15 specific conclusion or recommendation.

16 But I think it's fair to say that
17 our panel believes that the current
18 occupations that are in O*NET are pretty well
19 representative of the occupations in the
20 national economy. I think it's fair to say
21 also that some -- well, I don't -- we didn't
22 really reach consensus, as I mentioned, about

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1 the recent growth and the new occupations that
2 are added, with some panel members feeling
3 like these are being added for political
4 reasons, if they are green jobs, and other
5 panel members saying that it is very important
6 that any occupational system remain up to
7 date. And if jobs are changing, and if new
8 jobs are being created, they should be
9 reflected.

10 So I'm sorry that is not an exact
11 answer to your question.

12 MR. PLEWES: Without directly
13 addressing this point that you make here in
14 terms of reflecting national existence and
15 incidence of work, I think the panel did talk
16 to that, and consider that, in terms of
17 reaffirming the need for the linkage to the
18 standard occupational classification
19 structure.

20 The standard occupational
21 classification structure is that structure
22 which allows you to link to those databases

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1 which tell you about the trends in the
2 occupations out in the field, the new and
3 emerging occupations, and so forth. The
4 standard occupational classification structure
5 is updated on a recurring cycle, a regular
6 cycle, so there is a built-in updating
7 mechanism there.

8 So those two aspects of O*NET I
9 think are -- commend themselves to being able
10 to reflect the national existence and
11 incidence of work. Whether they do or not in
12 practical aspect as they are applied, as the
13 O*NET information flows into -- I'm sorry, as
14 SOC information -- based information flows
15 into O*NET, is not something that the panel
16 looked at.

17 CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: Thank you.
18 And in your presentations I noted that you use
19 the word "occupation" in terms of reflecting
20 the O*NET, and I know that in terms of a
21 decision point that DOL had to make in the
22 development of the O*NET was what was the unit

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1 of analysis. And in your report you indicate
2 that to be the unit of analysis at the
3 occupation level.

4 Was there ever a consideration of
5 the unit of analysis or a user need where the
6 unit analysis was at the job level?

7 MS. HILTON: Well, as I mentioned,
8 when the Advisory Panel on the DOT met, one of
9 their concerns was that it was just not
10 practical, not affordable, to continue trying
11 to collect data on 14,000 job titles. I think
12 it is important to remember that even the DOT,
13 even with 14,000, that those job titles were
14 representing more different, unique jobs.

15 If you are going to create a
16 national database, it is not ever going to be
17 possible to define every job, because
18 organizations have their own job titles and it
19 just gets very, very large.

20 I remember Rich Froshel telling me
21 something about when the state of Texas talked
22 to their employers and said, "What job titles

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1 do you use here in Texas?" And they got
2 something like 80,000 different job titles
3 back.

4 So I believe that it -- that the
5 reason -- one reason O*NET uses the broad
6 occupations it does is that it was trying to
7 follow the recommendations of that earlier
8 advisory panel, which recommended looking at
9 fewer, broader occupations, partly because, as
10 I mentioned, their concern of identifying the
11 transferable skills and knowledges, and so
12 forth, that people might be able to use to
13 move from job to job.

14 CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: Thank you.
15 The second area in terms of SSA's needs for
16 occupation information was reflecting work
17 requirements, that it must enable SSA to
18 evaluate an individual's ability to perform
19 work rather than to obtain work. As such, it
20 says any new resource must reflect
21 occupational information that is aggregated,
22 defined, and measured, in a way that allows

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1 SSA to compare work requirements to an
2 individual's RFC and to determine the ability
3 to work despite a severe impairment.

4 So the question is: how did the
5 National Academies of Science panel consider
6 this occupational information need for SSA's
7 disability determination process in its
8 recommendations?

9 MR. PLEWES: Again, I think that if
10 you look at Chapter 8, the panel did not go
11 into the level of detail that you are -- have
12 and will go into. Let's say that right up
13 front.

14 So its comparisons that I discussed
15 with you between the RFC and the O*NET are at
16 a fairly high level of aggregation. That
17 said, when you go into the various
18 descriptors, you can see that in some cases
19 O*NET does a pretty good job, and in some
20 cases it falls way short of the mark as to
21 meeting this particular requirement in terms
22 of reflecting work requirements, as you have

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1 defined them as necessary to conduct -- to, if
2 you will to clearly understand the RFCs. So
3 it varies.

4 CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: Thank you.
5 And you mentioned in the chapter the RFC,
6 which is the physical. I didn't see a mention
7 of the MRFC, which is the mental/cognitive.
8 Was that something that the National Academies
9 of Science panel considered in its
10 recommendations for Chapter 8?

11 MR. PLEWES: Not in any depth, no.

12 MS. HILTON: No.

13 MR. PLEWES: There was a mention,
14 and that's it. No.

15 CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: Okay. And I
16 know you have read our report. That's a
17 really big area of research that needs to be
18 done. It's one of the fastest-growing areas
19 in terms of claims, and a really big issue in
20 terms of disability determination.

21 One of the questions -- and I know
22 when I met with you I talked about and you

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1 mentioned in your presentation that I'm a
2 rehab counselor, and I talked of my role as a
3 vocational rehab counselor and also a forensic
4 expert.

5 And I noted in your PowerPoint
6 presentation that you talked about voc rehab,
7 but I didn't see that you had anybody present
8 to you who came from the forensic community,
9 somebody with a legal background, somebody who
10 does expert witness testimony. And I just
11 wanted -- did you have any testimony, any
12 information in terms of the forensic
13 application?

14 MS. HILTON: No, we didn't.

15 CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: Okay. And so
16 that goes to my question in terms of the third
17 bullet, that the database, the occupational
18 information system must meet a burden of proof
19 that the individual is actually not
20 theoretically capable of doing some kind of
21 work.

22 And so has there -- did the

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1 National Academies of Science -- or how did
2 the National Academies of Science panel
3 consider this very important threshold in
4 terms of occupational information for the
5 disability determination process?

6 MS. HILTON: Right. Well, again,
7 we didn't consider that. I think one reason
8 that what -- our recommendation here would be
9 to create an interagency panel to look at this
10 in greater detail, is that we recognize that
11 we did not -- I mean, it is not only with
12 disability determination, but many other
13 areas, we began the process of looking into
14 the database in greater depth.

15 We identified areas that we thought
16 were problematic with our quick look, and we
17 think further study is needed.

18 CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: Okay. So
19 insofar as further study has occurred since
20 these recommendations, I know that you noted
21 that one of the recommendations was basically
22 for something such as our panel, then that

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1 would be additive to the recommendations that
2 the National Academies of Science panel has in
3 Chapter 8, is that what you mean by that?

4 MS. HILTON: Well, I think as Tom
5 mentioned it would -- you know, one of the
6 things we recommended that this interagency
7 group do would be to look at SSA's needs, and
8 obviously, you know, you have done that.

9 CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: Okay.

10 MS. HILTON: So --

11 CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: So in the
12 fourth bullet -- and I just want to bring this
13 one up, I'm not going to go through each of
14 these individually, because it's my
15 understanding that you didn't look at the
16 specific needs, is that correct, in terms of
17 any of the occupational information needs as
18 outlined in our report, that that was not
19 considered by the National Academies of
20 Science panel?

21 MS. HILTON: Well, this report came
22 out -- our report came out before your report,

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1 so, you know, we couldn't address --

2 CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: Our report
3 came out in September.

4 MS. HILTON: Oh, that's true, but
5 our committee had done its work. Our report
6 was in review at that point, so we were not
7 going to be making changes except in response
8 to review. So there was -- you know, it
9 wouldn't have been possible for us to look at
10 all of these things.

11 I mean, I would say in terms of
12 these three bullet points here, the reflect
13 work requirements, as Tom just mentioned, that
14 the analysis in Chapter 8, we did try to look
15 at what we thought -- what some RFC needs
16 were, specifically physical, and compare those
17 with some O*NET descriptors.

18 CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: Okay. And I
19 know that Chapter 8 does mention our report,
20 and it also mentions our recommendations,
21 outlined --

22 MS. HILTON: Yes.

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1 CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: -- in the
2 report, so there was some cursory review of
3 our report, but not a consideration of our
4 report within the recommendations?

5 MS. HILTON: Right. Right. It was
6 -- you know, in editing some -- some of the
7 final editing of the report after it had been
8 through review, just to update it, was to
9 mention that your report had come out and try
10 to briefly capture some of the things that
11 were said. But the panel, no, did not
12 deliberate on your report's findings. the
13 panel finished its deliberations in late
14 April, with a final teleconference.

15 CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: So if the
16 recommendations had been made before our
17 report was out, might that have impacted some
18 of the recommendations?

19 MS. HILTON: Certainly. I would
20 think we would have taken that into account.

21 CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: Okay. Okay.
22 I'm going to open it up to the panel to see

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1 if there are other questions for members of
2 the panel. Sylvia?

3 MEMBER KARMAN: Hello. Thank you
4 very much, Tom and Margaret, for coming out
5 today. I do have one question -- well,
6 actually, I've got a couple, but one that just
7 occurred to me. You mentioned that it, you
8 know, wouldn't be practical to gather data at
9 a more disaggregated level, and the level that
10 we've been really looking at.

11 I notice on page 7-10 of your
12 report that the second bullet under O*NET
13 content refers to occupational information is
14 not customized for jobs in a particular
15 organization. This inability to describe a
16 specific job in detail can limit O*NET's
17 utility for legal defensibility, and this is
18 for personnel selection. We face the same
19 issue --

20 MS. HILTON: Right.

21 MEMBER KARMAN: -- with regard to
22 any occupational information system that we

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1 would need in order to meet our burden at step
2 5.

3 MS. HILTON: Yes.

4 MEMBER KARMAN: And so, therefore,
5 that is why that is so, you know, incredibly
6 important to us.

7 MS. HILTON: Yes.

8 MEMBER KARMAN: Among the questions
9 that I have is also page 2-2 of your report
10 provides five different questions that you all
11 felt were important in assessing an
12 occupational information system.

13 And they each -- one starts out
14 with, how general or specific will the
15 descriptors of occupational requirements be?
16 Second one is, given a particular level of
17 generality/ specificity, should the set of
18 descriptors of a particular occupational
19 requirement be a representative sample of all
20 possible descriptors of that requirement? Or
21 should it represent the entire universe of
22 descriptors?

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1 Third one is, should each
2 descriptor of occupational requirements be
3 applicable to every occupation or unit of
4 analysis? Fourth is, is the taxonomy to
5 include genuine taxons, such as those that
6 exist in biology? This gets at the issue of
7 skills that you mention there. Certainly,
8 skills cannot necessarily meet the definition
9 of a taxon.

10 Five, can the taxonomy be designed
11 to serve a wide range of purposes among
12 diverse users? I'm wondering how the panel
13 answered those questions for O*NET, or did you
14 feel that the Department of Labor answered
15 those questions for O*NET? And then, also,
16 how did you all assess those questions in
17 terms of our -- the needs that were outlined
18 in Chapter 8?

19 MS. HILTON: I think that these
20 questions are raised as a way to introduce
21 this whole chapter, which is about the history
22 of the development of O*NET. You know,

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1 basically, near the end it said that the
2 developers of O*NET have addressed all of
3 these questions.

4 So basically they are kind of
5 rhetorical questions, if you know what I mean,
6 saying how general or specific should this be?

7 And then, if you read the rest of the
8 chapter, you know, you will see that they
9 ended up with something they called OUs,
10 occupational units, and I think there were
11 about a thousand of them.

12 So I don't think these questions
13 are introduced, you know, with the idea that
14 then our panel is going to answer these
15 questions. As I say, it's a vehicle to get
16 you to read on and find out, you know, what --
17 how the developers address these questions.

18 And as for our panel's view on the
19 -- for the first question, how general or
20 specific, as I mentioned, our panel did not
21 agree on how general or specific it should be
22 and recommended that it was important to study

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1 the pros and cons of being more and less
2 specific.

3 MEMBER KARMAN: Okay. I just want
4 to mention that when we -- our panel went
5 through the assessment of what basically SSA
6 gave the panel, its occupational information
7 needs, and a lot of what we did as a panel was
8 really address these kinds of issues.

9 And so what we're noticing is that
10 almost at every stage or at every question we
11 would have selected a direction that is
12 decidedly differently --

13 MS. HILTON: Different from what
14 O*NET took, yes.

15 MEMBER KARMAN: -- from what the
16 Department of Labor did, because their mission
17 is decidedly different.

18 MS. HILTON: Right, right.

19 MEMBER KARMAN: Thank you.

20 CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: Dave?

21 MEMBER SCHRETLEN: Good morning,
22 and thank you very much. I have a question

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1 that concerns sort of the first recommendation
2 in Chapter 8, and that is the recommendation
3 that SSA and the Department of Labor create an
4 interagency task force to study the viability
5 of potential modifications of O*NET to
6 accommodate SSA needs.

7 And my question concerns a point
8 that you make in Chapter 8 about the
9 behavioral anchors for the rating scales. I
10 think it's on pages 8 -- 6 and 7 of Chapter 8.

11 And you give an example of behavioral anchors
12 for arm -- I think arm stability, and the
13 example includes lighting a candle at a point
14 of two on the ability scale. This is hand
15 steadiness. And threading a needle at point
16 four.

17 And you make the point -- you
18 acknowledge in this report that there are
19 problems with these behaviors.

20 MS. HILTON: With those bars, yes.

21 MEMBER SCHRETLEN: And there are a
22 couple of them, and you cite a couple that are

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1 very clear, and I think that you did an
2 excellent job of articulating some of the
3 problems.

4 I do think that there are others as
5 well that are not articulated there, but I
6 think that the bars' anchors are intuitively
7 appealing, but had a lot of scaling problems.

8 And you mentioned the lack of specificity.
9 In fact, that's sort of a theme that runs
10 through, you know, Tom, your presentation as
11 well, that the 52 abilities may lack some
12 sufficient specificity for SSA's needs.

13 But with regard to this behavioral
14 anchors, and the problems, those behavioral
15 anchors and the 52 abilities that they have
16 been used to assess, have been applied to the
17 1,102 occupational units in O*NET. And my
18 question is this: if those behavioral anchors
19 lack enough specificity for SSA's use, and
20 have other scaling problems, how could it be
21 modified, how could the existing database be
22 modified for SSA's use?

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1 It seems to me that the only
2 modification would be to essentially start
3 from scratch, because you can't simply go back
4 and reapply new behavioral anchors to the
5 existing database. The existing database was
6 developed using these behavioral anchors, and
7 so the -- my question is: can you envision a
8 way of modifying O*NET that does not include
9 replacing O*NET?

10 MS. HILTON: I think that it
11 deserves further study. That is what we
12 recommended, that it needs to be studied. But
13 one thing I would mention is, you know, in
14 terms of the analysis in Chapter 8, that the
15 whole focus -- it does not focus only on the
16 abilities domain. You know, it also talks
17 about the work context domain, and some of the
18 other domains.

19 I mean, that is the thing about
20 O*NET. As Tom mentioned, it is a general
21 purpose. It is very big. It has 239
22 descriptors. It is like please all, please

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1 none, you know. It was designed for many
2 purposes, and it doesn't serve any one user
3 exactly the way that user would like it to be.

4 MEMBER SCHRETLEN: In fact, one of
5 the things you said is that the panel could
6 not agree on the appropriate level of
7 aggregation.

8 MS. HILTON: Yes.

9 MEMBER SCHRETLEN: And that some
10 people might think of that as a problem of the
11 panel, but it strikes me that it's really not
12 a problem of the panel at all, but the fact
13 that O*NET -- that Department of Labor has
14 attempted to make a sort of all-purpose
15 occupational information system.

16 And there are -- different purposes
17 have different requirements, of course. So
18 for some reason, as you pointed out very
19 appropriately, some users might want a more
20 aggregated, more disaggregated system.

21 But my question about this bars issue is
22 really not one that I think further study

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1 could address, because it's illogical. My
2 question is: is there a logical way -- is
3 there a way that it could be modified without
4 replacing it? And I don't think that that's a
5 question that really -- that further study
6 will answer. I think it's a question that --
7 is it that a logical analysis of the existing
8 system leads to an answer?

9 MR. PLEWES: I agree with you. I
10 don't believe that you can fundamentally
11 change the anchors and retain the system as it
12 is. But the panel didn't look at that.
13 That's just my sitting here thinking about it.

14 Now, how about tweaking?

15 MEMBER SCHRETLEN: That's what I'm
16 asking.

17 MR. PLEWES: I think it would be
18 possible, with proper research, to tweak. If
19 indeed the result of the tweaking brought it
20 closer to the Social Security Administration's
21 RFCs than the current system, without
22 fundamentally changing the result.

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1 MEMBER SCHRETLEN: Okay. So that
2 is -- so that is wonderful. Then, how -- can
3 you imagine even one way that it could be
4 tweaked? That's what I'm trying to get at.
5 I'm trying to understand how this could be
6 done without fundamentally recreating the
7 database, because, you know, either the bars
8 --

9 MR. PLEWES: I don't give you an
10 answer. In a research approach, I would think
11 -- I would compare results of current with the
12 tweaked, and then to see what the differences
13 are. But I don't know.

14 MEMBER SCHRETLEN: So you are
15 suggesting like starting with new behavioral
16 anchors.

17 MR. PLEWES: Yes.

18 MEMBER SCHRETLEN: On some of the
19 existing occupational units.

20 MR. PLEWES: On those of most
21 interest, where the deviation between the
22 descriptors, the anchors -- current anchors

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1 for the descriptors and the RFCs are -- have
2 the greatest differences that are very, very
3 important to the Social Security
4 Administration processes. But that's me. I
5 -- the panel didn't look at that, I have to
6 tell you.

7 MEMBER SCHRETLEN: Right. I guess
8 the question is, if you were to find a
9 correspondence between revised behavioral
10 anchors and existing behavioral anchors, that
11 still wouldn't answer the question of what to
12 do about levels of ability that fall between
13 those points on the scale.

14 MR. PLEWES: No.

15 MS. HILTON: I mean, we definitely
16 thought there needed to be research on the
17 behavioral anchors, but all of our research
18 recommendations don't necessarily mean that we
19 think that O*NET has to be rebuilt from the
20 bottom up.

21 There are always costs and benefits
22 to making any change to a big system like

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1 this, and this is why we thought they needed
2 an outside ongoing expert technical advisory
3 committee, one of the reasons being to
4 prioritize what research is most important,
5 and, secondly, what are the potential costs
6 and benefits.

7 You know, some people are very,
8 very critical of the behavioral anchors in
9 O*NET. Our dissent, if you read the dissent
10 to our report, the two dissenters say, "Just
11 get rid of -- get rid of the behavioral
12 anchors on the level scale," because they are
13 so problematic. The rest of the committee did
14 not agree with that.

15 Nevertheless, even the dissenters
16 do not say we should scrap O*NET, that we need
17 to start over. So as Tom mentioned, there are
18 a lot of tweaks. You can make modifications.

19 And then, there are costs and benefits to
20 doing that.

21 CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: When you say
22 "tweaks," what do you mean?

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1 MS. HILTON: For example, the two
2 people that dissent to say that we should get
3 rid of the level scales in the abilities and
4 skills domains, and only use the importance
5 scale, and that they also suggest maybe we
6 should be looking at other scales, such as
7 frequency or duration.

8 I think that relates a little bit
9 to the Chapter 8, the comparison of how much
10 time do you spend sitting, kneeling,
11 crouching, and it is like half the time, all
12 the time, whereas for RFC purposes you need
13 actually number of hours. So things like
14 that.

15 CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: And you
16 mentioned the work context, you are referring
17 to 38 in your slide that talks about how much
18 time in your current job do you spend
19 kneeling, crouching, stooping, and crawling.

20 MS. HILTON: Right.

21 CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: And for
22 disability determination, we might have

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1 somebody who has a shoulder injury who can do
2 kneeling, crouching, and stooping, but they
3 can't do crawling, because that involves the
4 upper extremity. So are you talking about not
5 just changing the anchors but also changing
6 the descriptors?

7 MS. HILTON: Definitely. I mean,
8 we called for research into the descriptors.
9 We said that the content -- what was the exact
10 language? The content validity of the domains
11 and the descriptors is uneven. We think that
12 in some domains, like abilities, the
13 descriptors are stronger, they have a stronger
14 research base. In some of the other domains,
15 like knowledges and skills, there is not such
16 a strong research base.

17 So here again, I mean, I think some
18 people would say that our report is radical,
19 because how could you go back and look at the
20 content model. The content model is perfect,
21 it's -- you know, it was studied. It was
22 studied a long time ago. We think it is time

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1 for a fresh look at this.

2 CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: Sylvia, and
3 then Shanan.

4 MEMBER KARMAN: Okay. I guess it
5 seems like the panel must have had some
6 things, though, in mind, you know, just sort
7 of piggybacking on what David has asked, and
8 Mary has brought up, because, you know, on
9 page 8-3 the panel -- the National Academies
10 of Science report, its panel stated that the
11 panel is not advocating the adoption of O*NET
12 by SSA, or the development of a hybrid O*NET
13 disability system in the disability
14 determination process.

15 However, we conclude that a
16 considerably modified or expanded O*NET would
17 be capable of informing the disability
18 determination process.

19 So for one -- one question I have
20 is that this seems contradictory, but, you
21 know, then the other question I have is, given
22 the discussion that we've just had for the

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1 last few moments, it seems as if you all may
2 have had something in mind, what would that
3 modification look like that would not, as
4 David pointed out, or as Mary brought up,
5 really require extensive change to the point
6 where it would be impractical and not a cost
7 savings in terms of, you know, not requiring
8 two different systems.

9 MS. HILTON: And I have to say I
10 really can't answer this question, because, I
11 mean, this is really what the panel thought,
12 what we have here in the report. The panel is
13 not meeting anymore. As Tom mentioned, you
14 know, we didn't look in-depth at this whole
15 disability question. We took a quick look,
16 and we thought it needed further study. And
17 since it was important to both agencies,
18 that's why we suggested that the two agencies
19 study it together.

20 CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: Shanan?

21 MEMBER GIBSON: My question will
22 likely be a simple followup to that, then, or

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1 actually I have a couple of questions. The
2 first was, I noted that the chapters did not
3 identify the primary authors for each chapter.

4 Is it possible to find out who the primary
5 chapter author was for Chapter 8, so that, for
6 example, in this case we could ask them, what
7 were their thoughts perhaps related to those
8 comments, so that we understand better, so we
9 have the information going forth.

10 MS. HILTON: No, I don't think so.

11 You know, it is a committee consensus report.

12 If one panel member did take a lead on a
13 chapter, that chapter did not go forward for
14 inclusion unless the rest of the committee
15 agreed to it. So we really try to talk about
16 these as committee reports, not -- they are
17 not like edited chapters by individual
18 authors. It's a consensus.

19 MEMBER GIBSON: It just seems that
20 there is very great distinctions among how the
21 different chapters are written, so, for
22 example, Chapter 7 does a very good job of

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1 identifying specific issues related to
2 psychometrics, which might impact the use of
3 the O*NET. And then, we see nothing similar
4 to it in other chapters, like ours, so I'm
5 thinking one person probably wrote this
6 chapter, and so their styles are very
7 distinctly different, which is what leads me
8 to that conclusion.

9 My other -- my second question --
10 so I guess I have three now -- is in the very
11 beginning of your discussion you talked about
12 how you received a review of the report and
13 created a response to the reviews. Are those
14 part of open documentation, so that we could
15 look at them as well?

16 MS. HILTON: No, they're not.

17 MEMBER GIBSON: Okay. And then, my
18 final question is simply to try to make
19 certain I understand kind of your overall
20 theme here. Is it a -- am I understanding
21 correctly when I say that it appears the
22 overarching decision of the panel was that the

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1 O*NET is a general purpose instrument, which
2 means it will meet the needs of some but not
3 the needs of others, it will meet the needs of
4 individuals and groups to differing degrees,
5 and, therefore, other systems might be
6 necessary or appropriate to meet the needs of
7 different organizations.

8 MS. HILTON: I don't know that we
9 commented on whether other systems were
10 necessary, but certainly what you said about
11 how it's an all-purpose and it meets some
12 needs but not other needs, that's correct.

13 MEMBER GIBSON: So the logical
14 conclusion of it doesn't meet the need,
15 something else must --

16 MS. HILTON: It could be. I mean,
17 we have to -- we are representing what's here
18 in our report, so we can't --

19 MEMBER GIBSON: And that's --

20 MS. HILTON: -- go beyond what our
21 panel said.

22 MEMBER GIBSON: Okay. Thank you.

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1 CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: Tom?

2 MEMBER HARDY: Good morning. It is
3 a real pleasure having you here, and I -- I
4 would imagine all of us would like to spend
5 two hours talking with you, because we all
6 have volumes of questions. And so I'm not
7 going to take a lot of time, I just have two
8 because in my role here -- I'm a vocational
9 counselor, but I'm also an attorney.

10 So I've got two different
11 interests, and they are each -- and my
12 question is that -- I actually rather more
13 have a discussion than a question, if you want
14 to know the truth. One is more for you, Ms.
15 Hilton. Because of my vocational background,
16 I am very interested in skills, and in
17 transferability of skills.

18 And we are working right now on
19 coming up with a definition, and I noted in
20 the report you spoke several times about the
21 fact that O*NET doesn't truly define "skills,"
22 and that it is kind of difficult in some ways

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1 to track skills using their raters for skills.

2 In doing that -- in reading that, I
3 also read went out and read a little further,
4 and I found your report on future skill
5 demands.

6 MS. HILTON: Okay.

7 MEMBER HARDY: Which I read, and I
8 thought it was fascinating. I really loved
9 reading this.

10 MS. HILTON: I'm glad you liked it.

11 MEMBER HARDY: You did a great job.

12 MS. HILTON: Thanks.

13 MEMBER HARDY: And it really made
14 me think about a lot of things. But what
15 really stuck with me -- and I go back to what
16 you said about we are very concerned about SSA
17 and what those needs are, but there is broader
18 context, and I get -- and that report really
19 broadened my context of how skills can be
20 used, and for workforce development, workforce
21 planning, education, and huge numbers of
22 things.

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1 But what struck me was all the way
2 through here everybody kept commenting on how
3 O*NET was not going to be useful, for the most
4 part, in answering the workforce development
5 questions. Is that a good reading on this, or
6 am I kind of skewing it because of something
7 else?

8 MS. HILTON: Well, actually, I am
9 not sure that -- you are talking about the
10 workshop report on future skill demand.

11 MEMBER HARDY: Future skills, yes.

12 MS. HILTON: The people were
13 critical of O*NET in terms of its ability to
14 identify changes over time in the national
15 different skill demands of work.

16 MEMBER HARDY: Yes.

17 MS. HILTON: I think that someone
18 at the workshop did make that point. I do
19 think there are some questions, you know, if
20 you are looking at it strictly from a research
21 point of view, whether the data in O*NET could
22 be used, if you could track it for 20 years,

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1 which it hasn't even existed for 20 years --

2 MEMBER HARDY: Yes.

3 MS. HILTON: -- and compare
4 versions of the database every five years, and
5 look at what levels of the skills were
6 reported in 1995, 2000, 2005. I mean, I do
7 think it's theoretically possible that you
8 could use O*NET for that purpose.

9 But with regard to that question
10 that you are talking about, I think that the
11 discussion in Chapter 7 of our current report
12 does a pretty good job of talking about how
13 very useful O*NET is for this kind of labor
14 market research as things change and as
15 economists try to understand what is growing
16 -- not only what is growing and shrinking,
17 but, you know, within jobs, within a given job
18 title, what the demands are.

19 MEMBER HARDY: And I get that, and
20 I guess what -- this is more of a discussion,
21 truly. I am wondering if we go ahead with
22 what we're doing, and get skills defined down

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1 to a job level, and are able to really anchor
2 that and not use some of these O*NET
3 descriptors, which Dr. Spenner from Duke was
4 talking about the O*NET descriptors of skills
5 as being --

6 MS. HILTON: Ken Spenner from Duke,
7 yes.

8 MEMBER HARDY: Yes, being we'll
9 just say unwieldy. If we were able to get to
10 a better definition of "skill," take it to a
11 job level, and then actually track that,
12 wouldn't that be more useful than using O*NET
13 for those purposes, that this -- the other
14 paper was talking about?

15 MS. HILTON: I don't know. Like I
16 say, I mean, it is -- your question is very,
17 very theoretical. I mean, we are talking
18 about creating a whole new database, and the
19 first -- what you're talking about is the
20 first step. Then, is that database going to
21 be representative, you know, broadly
22 representative of the jobs in the national

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1 economy? That's the second question.

2 The third question, you know, if it
3 had a better -- if it had better descriptors
4 of skill, yes, I think that could be useful.

5 MEMBER HARDY: Okay. My other
6 question is more of a legal question, because,
7 again, I'm an attorney, and I have to worry
8 about these things. And this is more for you,
9 Mr. Plewes. You were talking about doing some
10 tweaking or nuancing, and trying to find ways
11 where the marginal differences could be
12 brought down.

13 In constructing your report, did
14 you guys talk to any attorneys about legal
15 defensibility issue?

16 MR. PLEWES: We recognized that
17 there were those, but we -- no, we did not
18 talk to -- if I had known that we were going
19 to be here today, we probably would have gone
20 --

21 (Laughter.)

22 -- to an attorney as one of our

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1 presenters, I can tell you that, and a
2 vocational rehabilitation person, thank you
3 very much. But no, we did not.

4 MEMBER HARDY: Okay. My concern is
5 that, you know, everybody on the panel looks
6 at me and goes, "Oh, you're the lawyer. Make
7 sure we've got it right." And one of the
8 things I always say back is, "If and when we
9 develop -- or when we develop this system,
10 every piece of it must be legally defensible,
11 because if one piece fails the test, the
12 entire system fails the test."

13 And in a broad sense, I kind of
14 come back to you and say if we're looking at
15 O*NET and I see in your report you speak
16 multiple times about areas that are flawed,
17 how can we -- how can we work around that if
18 there is a legal defensibility issue, in your
19 opinion?

20 MS. HILTON: Well, I'm not sure if
21 it's exactly the same thing, but I know that
22 some of the panel members that work in the

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1 field of selection and development of
2 selection tests, which are very often subject
3 to legal challenges, mentioned that they find
4 O*NET information very, very useful, but they
5 use it as a starting point.

6 Like if they are trying to create a
7 selection test, they start with an O*NET
8 occupational description, and that gives them
9 the basic foundation of information. But
10 then, they add a lot more specific
11 information, specific to that organization,
12 that more narrowly defined job title, and so
13 forth.

14 MEMBER HARDY: Okay. I guess just
15 so you understand, when we go to court,
16 whether it's in Social Security or -- many of
17 those cases then end up in federal court,
18 which is subject to federal rules of evidence
19 as well.

20 If you build something on any
21 platform, that platform still must be
22 defensible under the same rules of evidence.

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1 And that is an issue that I have.

2 MR. PLEWES: And I think the
3 question for your panel is to -- is to think
4 about O*NET in that case as a framework. And
5 I think it's fairly clear that O*NET is a
6 framework. It would probably be preferable to
7 the DOT as a framework in terms of some of the
8 things that it offers in terms of its tying to
9 the SOC and its updating, and so forth.

10 But that, as Margaret suggests from
11 other areas, that there probably needs to be
12 within that framework a lot of adjustment to
13 meet the requirements that you have.

14 MEMBER HARDY: So you would still
15 advocate O*NET over DOT as a basis.

16 MR. PLEWES: I think that was done
17 some time ago.

18 MEMBER HARDY: Okay.

19 MR. PLEWES: That decision was made
20 in terms of a framework for looking at the
21 issues.

22 CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: I have --

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1 MEMBER HARDY: I could talk to you
2 for hours.

3 CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: Okay. I have
4 a quick question about that. In the days of
5 PDF, it's very easy to search a report in
6 terms of key word, so I did search the report
7 in terms of "legal" and saw that there were
8 only two references to it. One that Margaret
9 just mentioned, page 7-3, in terms of a
10 starting point, and the other one that Sylvia
11 had mentioned.

12 And in both of those instances it
13 -- it indicates that the O*NET is not
14 defensible, and so those were the only
15 mentions that I was able to find in the report
16 in terms of the defensibility. And so I think
17 Tom's question is, if when you look at pages
18 11 and 12 of our report in terms of the must
19 needs of an occupational information system,
20 and the third one being legal defensibility,
21 it becomes a really big issue, if, you know,
22 there are aspects of the O*NET that are not

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1 legally defensible.

2 Mark, you had a question?

3 MEMBER WILSON: Yes. Welcome.
4 It's good to see you again. It's a real honor
5 to be here today speaking with you about very
6 important issues. And, as you see, I have to,
7 as the IO psychologist along with Shanan, deal
8 with very diverse sets of issues in terms of
9 making recommendations about occupational
10 information for this purpose.

11 And as you know, we exchanged some
12 correspondence, and so I -- and I know you
13 might not -- because Mary and others were
14 asking you some specifics about changes, but I
15 just wanted to check to see in a couple cases
16 if some of the things that we discussed might
17 have gotten changed.

18 The first one was early on in the
19 report it -- and we discussed this as a
20 potential typo -- refers to O*NET as a system
21 providing information about jobs when, in
22 fact, it is really an information system about

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1 occupations. Do you remember if that got
2 changed to occupations instead of jobs?

3 MS. HILTON: I know we went through
4 the report before and after review, because we
5 got comments about that also in review. And I
6 think that in many places we changed the word
7 "job" to "occupation." But I don't believe we
8 changed it in every single place, and that was
9 partly for purposes of readability by someone
10 who doesn't know anything about occupations,
11 occupational analysis, or anything.

12 The term "occupation" had not yet
13 been introduced, so that you might still see
14 in some of the early pages of the report
15 references to "job."

16 MEMBER WILSON: Yes. And I think,
17 you know, the reason we discussed that was
18 because it is sort of -- O*NET clearly doesn't
19 provide, you know -- and it gets some of these
20 others, but, you know, I certainly understand
21 that.

22 The second question I had that we

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1 discussed -- and this was kind of more of a
2 wish, I don't know -- and you talked about and
3 had a slide about the advisory panel, and in
4 your report you refer to it as external, and
5 we discussed the idea that we need to define
6 the term "external." This is not contractors.

7 Were you able to make any changes
8 there in your report to specify what you meant
9 by "external," so that when the agency got
10 this they would understand what that meant in
11 terms of your intent, or --

12 MS. HILTON: I am not sure what we
13 did there.

14 MEMBER WILSON: Sure. I completely
15 understand. The other two things in terms of
16 wishes -- and these I suspect you weren't able
17 to do a whole lot about, but I thought I would
18 ask. As other people have indicated, you
19 know, we don't get someone -- the National
20 Academies of Science prestige in work analysis
21 very often to look at these issues and make
22 these kinds of reports.

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1 And so I was -- was as sort of my
2 wish list saying that I wish you would have
3 addressed evaluation issues and work analysis
4 in terms of specifying what some of the
5 criteria were that the external panel might
6 look at. Did you make any changes there to
7 say, you know, we want you to look at X, Y,
8 and Z? Or, you know, these are the --

9 MS. HILTON: Well --

10 MEMBER WILSON: -- fundamental
11 evaluation criteria that should be considered?

12 MS. HILTON: Right. As I
13 mentioned, our policy is not to make changes
14 to any major conclusions or recommendations.
15 So, I mean, that would involve making a change
16 to a recommendation with more detail, so --

17 MEMBER WILSON: Sure. No, I
18 understand. And the other thing we discussed
19 -- and some places you talked a little bit
20 about panel formation, things of that sort.
21 But it wasn't always clear what the
22 methodology was in terms of how the panel went

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1 about -- you know, Tom mentioned that there
2 were experts that were aware of the literature
3 and did lit reviews and things of that sort.

4 But was there anything added more?

5 And I think this gets some to Shanan's
6 question. We really want to understand what
7 the mind of the panel was with regard to
8 several of these specific issues, because we
9 are struggling with them. If there is some
10 methodological issue that we need to address,
11 we want to know that.

12 Were there any expansion of, you
13 know, here's how we went about coming to this
14 particular conclusion in any cases? Do you --

15 MS. HILTON: Well, we did try to
16 base our conclusions on all of the input we
17 received in our two workshops.

18 MEMBER WILSON: Right.

19 MS. HILTON: And also, the panel
20 members' own expertise and knowledge. We
21 talked in closed sessions about what exactly
22 we thought our major conclusions would be. We

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1 basically went through several rounds of
2 deliberation about our conclusions and
3 recommendations, where we were talking about
4 them in person, we talked about them in
5 teleconference, and then we would send them
6 out to the whole committee --

7 MEMBER WILSON: Yes.

8 MS. HILTON: -- trying to reach
9 consensus. And, you know, we did not reach
10 consensus on some issues, as you know.

11 MEMBER WILSON: Right. Absolutely.

12 And especially with regard to the disability
13 issue, you know, you mentioned that it was a
14 much more general panel, and this wasn't --

15 MS. HILTON: Right.

16 MEMBER WILSON: -- necessarily an
17 area where you acquired experts. Were any
18 disability experts, as part of the methodology
19 you describe, which is sort of trying to gain
20 consensus -- did you -- did they bring anybody
21 with expertise in for any of those
22 deliberations other than the panel meetings

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1 and --

2 MS. HILTON: No.

3 MEMBER WILSON: The next issue,
4 which you had in your slides and I wanted to
5 ask your thoughts on, is that the effective
6 measurement error is unclear. And as you
7 know, in the second panel meeting, Dr. Harvey
8 made a presentation where, among other things,
9 he looked at calculation of reliability
10 coefficients in O*NET data.

11 MS. HILTON: Yes.

12 MEMBER WILSON: And he made the
13 point that -- which is unique to generic work
14 analysis, that there are lots of "does not
15 apply" responses in any sort of occupational
16 level profile that would be generated. So in
17 any individual case, a large part of the O*NET
18 descriptors in whatever domain are not going
19 to be relevant to describing that particular
20 occupation.

21 And so when you calculate
22 reliabilities on the entire profile, you get

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1 numbers that look pretty respectable, but he
2 presented data that seem to -- when you
3 calculate the reliability on just those things
4 that are relevant, there are dramatic,
5 breathtaking, shocking declines in terms of
6 the stability of these data.

7 So I guess my question is: was
8 there something unpersuasive about that data?

9 Or why is it that the panel seemed to come to
10 the conclusion that there were unclear
11 measurement effects?

12 MS. HILTON: Do you mean, how did
13 we come to the conclusion that the effects on
14 measurement error are unclear, because every
15 new method adds to the uncertainty?

16 MEMBER WILSON: Well, I just meant
17 that that data was pretty persuasive to me,
18 and its impact in terms of the following panel
19 discussions, you know, I mean, it just seemed
20 like that presentation sucked a lot of air out
21 of the room in terms of, you know, I mean,
22 there were people that seemed shocked when

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1 they saw the reliability coefficients that
2 were calculated on some of these data that
3 people are using that appear to be almost
4 noise.

5 I guess that's what I'm saying is
6 is that why -- my question is: was there
7 something about that presentation that was
8 unpersuasive with regard to measurement error?

9 Or why was there the conclusion that
10 measurement error effects were unclear? Is it
11 just because of the multi-method, is that what
12 you're saying?

13 MS. HILTON: Right. That
14 conclusion is really focusing on the whole
15 multi-method issue.

16 MEMBER WILSON: Yes.

17 MS. HILTON: It relates to the
18 whole issue of using job incumbents, but also
19 occupational analysts.

20 MEMBER WILSON: Right.

21 MS. HILTON: The fact that job
22 incumbents have strengths and weaknesses as a

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1 data source.

2 MEMBER WILSON: Right.

3 MS. HILTON: They have the
4 strength, they -- obviously, they work in the
5 job, so they know something about it. But as
6 you very well know, there is a tendency for
7 job incumbents to inflate --

8 MEMBER WILSON: Absolutely.

9 MS. HILTON: -- you know, the
10 abilities and skills of a job. Similarly,
11 within occupational analysts, again, you have
12 strengths and weaknesses, strengths that you
13 are dealing with someone who is very well
14 trained to do this kind of ranking --

15 MEMBER WILSON: Absolutely.

16 MS. HILTON: -- a weakness that
17 they are not as familiar with the job, with
18 the occupation, and depending on the quality
19 of information you provide to them, or whether
20 they would get a chance to actually go to the
21 field, which in O*NET case they do not
22 actually go. So that's what that conclusion

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1 is really based on.

2 MEMBER WILSON: Those are all
3 excellent points, especially that issue of
4 inability to observe. In fact, what I would
5 suggest is that that may be the reason why
6 some of these data were presented -- are what
7 they are, that these people aren't necessarily
8 providing data based on direct observations of
9 what actually occurred.

10 MS. HILTON: Yes.

11 MEMBER WILSON: And then, my --
12 it's not so much a question. It is taking me
13 a while, but I'm trying to learn from Tom and
14 Nancy. It seems like the sort of crux of the
15 discussion here, which your panel dealt with
16 and ours dealt with, and that I described to
17 you as sort of a fundamental distinction or a
18 different way of thinking, I suspect I know
19 who on the panel was more concerned about
20 disaggregation, because IO psychologists have
21 to deal with things at the organizational
22 level, at the job level. And I described it

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1 there as a distinction between the econometric
2 and the ergometric approaches to doing work
3 analysis.

4 And I'm just wondering about your
5 thoughts. I understand the efficiency
6 argument, and I very much understand the
7 currency argument. Shanan and I made some
8 presentations where there is good
9 interreliability here between what you are
10 recommending and what we said with -- you
11 know, you can have the greatest data system in
12 the world, and if it's not current, that is a
13 problem.

14 And you're right, as the number of
15 descriptors and the number of disaggregation
16 increases, there is definitely more data cost.

17 But I'm just wondering, is it possible that
18 the sort of top-down econometric, more
19 rational, big picture is very different than
20 the sort of bottom-up, here is work as it
21 actually exists in the economy. I mean, do
22 you have any thoughts on that?

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1 Is that potentially an area where
2 we can sort of find that there really maybe
3 are two fundamental different approaches that
4 can't be very easily reconciled, and that
5 trying to reconcile them is always going to be
6 a sort of lever between either making the
7 econometric approach unhappy, because there is
8 too much detail, or, you know, perhaps moving
9 in the other direction now where there is
10 simply not enough detail from a defensibility
11 -- any thoughts at all on that or --

12 MS. HILTON: Do you have any
13 thoughts about that?

14 MR. PLEWES: Just hearing you, when
15 we had our meeting, and again now, we
16 certainly wish we had invited you to give a
17 presentation before the panel, because I think
18 some of these thoughts probably would have
19 been very valuable to them, and they would
20 have been willing to address them.

21 In their saying that they -- that
22 they like the idea, I'm putting words in

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1 there, but the recommendation is that if we
2 don't change at least the linkage between the
3 SOC and the O*NET, that kind of they say that
4 the top-down approach -- that is, that the
5 importance of the linkage to the national
6 databases is very, very important.

7 Now, what they didn't do is take a
8 look at what you are suggesting, and that is
9 that there may be another way of looking at
10 this. I didn't see evidence that they had
11 given that full thought.

12 MEMBER WILSON: Well, I certainly
13 agree, and I think that the sort of -- there
14 are a couple of questions here. One is the --
15 how do you describe the work? And, you know,
16 am I going to be able to defend whatever the
17 analysis is when Tom halls me into court? You
18 know, all those kinds of issues.

19 But I think you make an excellent
20 point that linkage back to what Social
21 Security is not going to be able to do is have
22 their own Bureau of Labor statistics and make

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1 projections about where -- you know, so I
2 think that linkage -- and, in fact, we made
3 significant recommendations in that area to
4 link back to those systems. I think we are
5 very aware of the value of the econometric
6 approach and that -- from a sampling
7 standpoint.

8 In conclusion, I just -- welcome to
9 my world. I know that this is sort of a
10 departure from how you normally conduct
11 business and things of that sort. I very much
12 appreciate you being here. I mean it when I
13 say it -- you know, it has been an hour to
14 interact with you on these issues, and I
15 appreciate the expertise that you bring to
16 this topic.

17 So thank you.

18 MS. HILTON: Thank you. Thank you
19 for giving us an opportunity to share the
20 panel's work with you all.

21 CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: Thank you.

22 Bob, do you have a question?

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1 MEMBER FRASER: No, it's really
2 more of a comment. I'm a vocational
3 rehabilitation counselor and rehab
4 psychologist also, and I and the folks -- the
5 counselors in my unit, we do use O*NET for
6 purposes of vocational exploration and career
7 guidance.

8 But in responding to a company
9 relative to the legal defensibility whether a
10 person can do a job, we simply can't use it,
11 because it's functionally and skill-related,
12 etcetera, it's simply not discrete enough.
13 It's relative. So relative doesn't work, you
14 know, for us, and that's part of our charge
15 here in SSA.

16 And kind of going back to Dave's
17 comment, you know, or the issue is, can we
18 tweak these scales? Well, you know, we have
19 that problem with aggregation, you know, so
20 say we have 18 truck drivers in that
21 occupation. So we have anybody from an access
22 van driver to an interstate trucker, you know,

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1 a wide variance in terms of the demands of
2 that kind of -- for those different types of
3 jobs.

4 So I just don't see how, in an
5 interagency effort, how we could work on this
6 tweaking with this core problem of aggregation
7 being an occupation versus the range of jobs
8 being represented.

9 MEMBER SCHRETLEN: In fact, as I
10 was thinking further about it, I thought maybe
11 I was not very clear in my question. But just
12 sort of following up on that, I think the idea
13 of what a modified O*NET system might look
14 like, I'm trying to envision that.

15 And it seems as though, based on
16 the things that you have said in your report,
17 the limitations of O*NET that you have
18 acknowledged or recognized, that at minimum a
19 modified system would need to not merely add
20 more specific jobs, but actually replace a lot
21 of the occupations, because they are so
22 broadly aggregated, or occupational units,

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1 because Social Security simply cannot compare
2 an applicant to an occupational unit. They
3 have to compare them to jobs, specific jobs,
4 or, you know, clusters of jobs.

5 So it would at least require a very
6 broad supplementation, if not a complete
7 replacement, of those occupations, that the
8 abilities that are rated, the job
9 characteristics that are rated would have to
10 be more specific. And if they're more
11 specific, you can't -- you would have to go
12 back either to previously evaluated ones and
13 add those, or start from scratch with new
14 ones, and evaluate those new dimensions of job
15 characteristics.

16 And in any case, you would have to
17 go back, because the bars are problematic.
18 And in a sense, you would have to revalidate
19 all of the ratings across the entire system,
20 and that's why I'm saying I just don't -- it's
21 hard for me to imagine how -- I mean, we can
22 use the word "modification," but it's a -- it

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1 would be a radically different system. That's
2 the only thing that I can imagine. I mean,
3 can you imagine -- can you help me imagine
4 some way that it's not that?

5 MS. HILTON: I have a very weak
6 imagination.

7 (Laughter.)

8 But I guess what I wanted to
9 mention is that this whole issue of, you know,
10 once you've created something, and O*NET is
11 very big, do you want to change it? Can you
12 change it? If you change it, will it disrupt,
13 you know, what we have in place?

14 And I guess I would just say that
15 our panel felt that it was worth causing some
16 disruption if it would result to longer-term
17 improvements in the quality of the data. So I
18 think that's true of any database. If you go
19 ahead and create your own, I mean, that's
20 something that you will always have to be
21 thinking about, because it's not like you just
22 create an occupational database at one point

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1 in time and just leave it. So --

2 CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: Nancy?

3 MEMBER SHOR: Thank you. I want to
4 thank you very much for coming. This has
5 really been fascinating. I am interested in
6 what sort of response you have received
7 formally, informally, that you expect to
8 receive from the Department of Labor, that we
9 -- we are kind of asking you questions about
10 how O*NET could be modified, how O*NET could
11 be changed, and I think in many ways those
12 questions really are best directed to them.

13 But, you know, your process is
14 extremely familiar to you, but not to me. Is
15 there a role, has there been a role, do you
16 anticipate a reaction from them?

17 MS. HILTON: Well, we had a
18 briefing with them in late November, and they
19 seemed really interested in a whole report.
20 They are very surprised by some thing, like
21 when we mentioned that green jobs might not --
22 might be a distraction from the core database

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1 they all like were shocked, because they are
2 very focused on green jobs these days.

3 Since that initial briefing, we
4 haven't really heard from them. As Tom was
5 mentioning at breakfast, we think that when
6 the printed report comes out that they will
7 pay more attention once again. I can say with
8 specific regard to that recommendation for a
9 joint interagency task force that they were
10 very interested. They thought -- they seemed
11 to think that that would be a great idea, that
12 they would love to coordinate more closely
13 with SSA.

14 CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: And when I
15 started the meeting, I talked about what the
16 Commissioner has asked us to do in terms of
17 the four points. And one of them was the
18 recruitment, training, and certification of
19 field job analysts. So I was looking for a
20 lot of that information in your report to see
21 how the panel came at that.

22 And the sense I get is that it

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1 wasn't really even a question addressed. And
2 my question, because I'm a little intrigued by
3 that, my question is, especially in light of a
4 whole chapter on technology, when the APDOT
5 was looking at data collection methods, and
6 ruled out the use of field job analysts, the
7 technology was very different then. There has
8 been a lot that technology has done in the
9 last 20 years.

10 So was there -- I'm just wondering
11 why there has -- there wasn't even a question
12 of the use of field job analysts and data
13 collection with O*NET, in light of the fact
14 that it had been almost 20 years since the
15 APDOT started their work that led to a lot of
16 the decision-making and design.

17 MS. HILTON: I guess I would just
18 say that the -- that issue appears slightly in
19 Chapter 2 in the whole discussion of the data
20 collection and the fact that the occupational
21 analysts in O*NET don't go to the field and
22 don't -- you know, they only receive paper

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1 descriptions.

2 But it wasn't something that our
3 panel really looked at, because we were trying
4 to look at O*NET as it is now. Actually, I
5 don't know whether it's still relevant, but if
6 you are interested in this whole question
7 about field job analysts you might want to go
8 back and look at the 1980 report, because they
9 found a lot of problems where those field job
10 analysts were not following the protocols that
11 had been developed nationally, and also they
12 weren't even finding enough -- there were
13 supposed to be at least three analysts I
14 believe rating every job title, and in a lot
15 of cases there was only one or two.

16 So it is a very complicated issue,
17 and there might still be something in that
18 older report that would be relevant, as you
19 think about that now.

20 CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: Thank you.
21 Dave?

22 MEMBER SCHRETLEN: Yes, one other

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1 question about the recommendation to focus
2 resources on core database activities, leaving
3 development of most new applications and tools
4 to others.

5 If Department of Labor asked you,
6 would you regard expanding the use of the
7 O*NET to make it suitable for disability
8 determination a core part of the database
9 activities, or is that one that you would
10 advise them to farm out to others?

11 MS. HILTON: Well, that's one
12 reason we suggested a user advisory panel to
13 try to deal with some of those issues. But,
14 you know, we definitely recognize that
15 different users have different needs, and this
16 whole area of application -- yes, it's -- you
17 raise a very good question. That's all I can
18 say. I don't have the answer to it, but it's
19 an important point.

20 CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: Tom asked
21 some questions about skills. And I noticed
22 there was not a discussion about the

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1 application or the importance of skills and
2 skills transfer within Chapter 8, but there
3 was in other areas of the report a lot of
4 discussion about skills.

5 As a matter of fact, Chapter 10,
6 the number one priority in terms of all of
7 your recommendations is conducting research on
8 the content model, beginning with skills and
9 knowledge demands.

10 MS. HILTON: Right.

11 CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: And I know
12 your report talks about that there were even
13 problems of how to define skill, and I think
14 there were like four or five different
15 definitions, and then the one that was arrived
16 at was -- which was sociotechnical skills, it
17 indicates that there was a view that this was
18 the most prominent. There was no underlying
19 researcher data to bolster that decision. So
20 what is currently being used as a theoretical
21 framework for skills does not have a body of
22 research.

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1 Are you aware of how skills domain
2 within the content model for the O*NET is
3 applied, or can be applied in disability, or
4 any transferable skills assessment?

5 MS. HILTON: Not specifically with
6 regard to disability, but in Chapter -- I
7 think it's Chapter 6 in the workforce
8 development chapter, we talk about a number of
9 electronically created databases that link the
10 various domains in O*NET -- skills, abilities,
11 knowledges -- and compare that with what an
12 individual has, what they think their level of
13 it is, and then it can be linked to other
14 jobs. So there is some progress being made in
15 that area.

16 CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: And I think
17 one that I saw on the O*NET Academy was one
18 called TORQ.

19 MS. HILTON: Yes.

20 CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: And that
21 talks about an RV team assembler in northern
22 Indiana, where, through that system, the

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1 transferable skill that is derived is a dental
2 hygienist.

3 MS. HILTON: Oh, right.

4 CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: But in
5 disability determination, retraining cannot be
6 considered when looking at transferable
7 skills. We're looking at residual, not rehab
8 potential.

9 MS. HILTON: I see.

10 CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: So in that
11 instance, I haven't found a way to be able to
12 use any of the O*NET data for transferable
13 skills assessment, where we are looking at
14 residual issues instead of rehab potential.
15 Have you seen that application whatsoever?

16 MS. HILTON: I guess I -- I am not
17 that familiar, but what is just popping to
18 mind -- and I don't know that this is really
19 ever done. I am more familiar with the
20 applications that I mentioned to you, like
21 TORQ.

22 It seems that, in theory at least,

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1 that a person could use O*NET, or a counselor
2 working with a person could use O*NET, and
3 whatever jobs, occupations they had had in the
4 past, jobs could be linked to O*NET
5 occupations, and then the level of the
6 different skills, knowledges, and so forth,
7 required in those previous occupations could
8 be identified.

9 Then, it would be possible to
10 identify other occupations that use those same
11 levels of skills and identify a new
12 occupation, without requiring any training in
13 between, if you see what I mean.

14 CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: Yes. And I
15 think -- I think when we look at the
16 occupational unit that is representative of
17 the team assembler and the dental hygienist,
18 and we look at the DOTs -- the aggregated
19 initially under those OUs, they were pretty
20 heterogeneous as opposed to homogeneous, and a
21 lot of other --

22 MS. HILTON: Yes.

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1 CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: And so it was
2 still -- it would be very difficult for me as
3 a vocational expert to have Nancy or Tom
4 cross-examine me and say, "How did I go from a
5 team assembler to a dental hygienist?" in
6 terms of transferability.

7 MS. HILTON: I see.

8 CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: Particularly
9 if I can't consider retraining.

10 MS. HILTON: And proving that they
11 really were capable of becoming the dental
12 hygienist without any retraining, is that what
13 you're saying?

14 CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: Correct.

15 MS. HILTON: Yes.

16 CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: Or
17 licensing --

18 MS. HILTON: Yes, right.

19 CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: -- in many of
20 the states.

21 MS. HILTON: Right, right.

22 CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: Okay. Any

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1 other questions? Deb?

2 MEMBER LECHNER: I get the
3 underlying current from your report that one
4 concern about maintaining two separate
5 databases is the cost effectiveness issue of
6 Social Security Administration maintaining a
7 separate database from Department of Labor.

8 But I didn't see anything in the
9 report that spoke to the cost effectiveness of
10 the data collection methodology used by
11 Department of Labor at the present time. And,
12 you know, when you look at 100 occupations a
13 year, and \$6 million a year to maintain an
14 updated database, that sort of rounds out to
15 \$60,000 per occupation, so -- which I find is
16 really an astounding number.

17 So I just wondered if there was any
18 consideration to the current cost
19 effectiveness of the process.

20 MS. HILTON: I guess the -- we
21 didn't really reach a conclusion here, but we
22 did talk at least -- I think in two places in

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1 the report we talk about the whole tradeoff
2 question. There was certainly an idea that if
3 some research was conducted on some of these
4 domains and descriptors that perhaps not all
5 of those descriptors were necessary, because
6 there are 239, which is a very lot. Maybe
7 that's why it costs \$60,000.

8 So if research would find that
9 there would not need to be quite so many
10 knowledges or skills or problem-solving, which
11 appears in four different places, so that what
12 -- it's called pruning, the idea of pruning it
13 down a little bit, that would definitely
14 improve the cost effectiveness of it.

15 But we didn't go specifically into
16 the costs of, you know, doing surveying job
17 incumbents versus using occupational analysts,
18 and so forth. We didn't have the data to do
19 that for one thing.

20 CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: Any other
21 questions?

22 (No response.)

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1 Okay. I have one last question.
2 And you just heard from Deb Lechner. Deb is
3 the person that I mentioned when I met with
4 you, that she and Joe had done the study that
5 is mentioned in Chapter 8 in reference to the
6 IOTF. And that reference in Chapter 8 makes
7 it seem like the concept of the O*NET D was
8 being tested by that study, and in reality
9 that was a study of field job analysts.

10 And I -- is that an area of the
11 report that has been corrected in terms of a
12 clarification of what -- how that study is
13 represented?

14 MS. HILTON: Yes, we did make that
15 change.

16 CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: Thank you.
17 Thank you.

18 Any other questions from the panel?

19 (No response.)

20 Thank you. It has been a great
21 pleasure to have you here. I think our
22 discussions are really important. There are a

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1 lot of things that I learned in terms of your
2 process, in terms of where the report was
3 issued along that process. There were some
4 conclusions that I was coming to in terms of
5 what your report meant within that context
6 that I think were clarified today.

7 And I do want to point out to
8 everybody that there was a section of your
9 report on page 1-11 that I thought was really
10 important in terms of the distinction between
11 what we're doing here and the fact that we are
12 a panel that keeps on going, and that your
13 panel was really time-limited. And so I think
14 that's important to understand reports and
15 context.

16 And in page 1-11, it says in some
17 cases the evidence that could be assembled and
18 considered with the available resources and
19 within the timeframe of study was
20 insufficient, leaving the panel with
21 unanswered questions. And so I think that's
22 really important for us to acknowledge, that

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1 what you said at the very beginning of your
2 presentation, that there were some areas that
3 you just didn't have an opportunity to
4 address.

5 And so I know some of our questions
6 are way more detailed than you had the
7 opportunity to cover. And so I thank you for
8 the time that you have spent with us today,
9 for answering our questions, and for the
10 opportunity to speak with you.

11 It looked like Mark wanted to say
12 something. Did you want to say something?
13 Okay.

14 MEMBER WILSON: Just more of a
15 comment in terms of this, because I think it's
16 a very relevant issue, this sort of cost-
17 benefit analysis, and the resources required
18 to keep things current and up to date.

19 And if you look at it from a sort
20 of classical occupational analysis standpoint,
21 and you're the Department of Labor, where this
22 is a relatively small, you know, potentially

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1 in some bureaucrats' minds, insignificant part
2 of what the Department of Labor is all about,
3 the resources that one might devote to that,
4 and the justification for those resources is
5 very different than, you know, I perhaps I
6 should have, but it wasn't until fairly far
7 into the process that I understood the scale
8 of the operation on which Social Security
9 operates, the underlying industries, in terms
10 of private insurance.

11 So the costs in terms of
12 litigation, the costs in terms of getting this
13 right, are enormous. And so if you look at it
14 as a percentage of DOL's budget, in terms of
15 what might be devoted to this issue, you might
16 come to a very different cost-benefit analysis
17 than if you look at it in terms of the \$140
18 billion, plus perhaps another \$140 billion in
19 private benefits in terms of justifying the
20 effort to do a more bottom-up, job-oriented,
21 more detailed set of descriptors. Just a
22 thought.

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1 CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: Thanks, Mark.

2 And that was something we talked about when
3 we met with you in January, the \$140 billion a
4 year that is used -- spent by Social Security
5 on disability for beneficiaries and their
6 dependents, \$128 billion of that for
7 beneficiaries.

8 And if we would take that
9 equivalent amount of money and apply it to the
10 federal budget, in terms of the discretionary
11 spending, that it would equate to about 14
12 budgets of federal agencies including NASA,
13 including the federal courts, including the
14 executive office, including Congress. When we
15 started adding all of those up, it was pretty
16 huge to see the impact of disability. And
17 that was just the federal impact; it didn't
18 include private insurance.

19 And so you could see that we are
20 very passionate as a panel in terms of what we
21 are doing, because this has huge implications
22 to people we see on a daily basis.

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1 So I want to thank you again. We
2 recognize that disability determination, and
3 its application in terms of the O*NET, was but
4 one of the many parts of the O*NET that your
5 panel evaluated. And there were time and
6 resource issues that you could not control
7 that caused limitations and delimitations to
8 the scope of your work.

9 We want to thank you for your time
10 to come here to St. Louis and be with us here
11 to present in terms of the panel's findings.
12 We recognize your hard work over there. We
13 recognize it. And you worked for over a year
14 on it, and I know that you continue to work.

15 One of the things we talked about
16 over breakfast was how long after a panel
17 finishes its work do you present, and you said
18 it could be years that you might be presenting
19 on this. So we know that it continues for
20 you, although the panel has been disbanded.

21 So we want to thank you for your
22 insights. They have been tremendously

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1 helpful, and that you have provided to us as
2 we report back to Commissioner Astrue in terms
3 of our findings.

4 Thank you.

5 MS. HILTON: Thank you for inviting
6 us.

7 CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: Okay. We
8 will take a 15-minute break and resume our
9 meeting.

10 (Whereupon, the proceedings in the foregoing
11 matter went off the record at 10:46
12 a.m. and went back on the record at
13 11:12 a.m.)

14 CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: Okay. Let's
15 come back on the record, please.

16 I think that the meeting this
17 morning was incredibly valuable. I learned a
18 lot from the process. One of the things that
19 most stood out for me was that although our
20 report is referenced in Chapter 8, when I
21 talked to Margaret about that and its
22 reference in the very first page, the National

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1 Academies of Science panel did not deliberate
2 on our report.

3 As a matter of fact, they got it
4 after the panel was disbanded. And so their
5 recommendations at the end of the chapter have
6 nothing to do with the content of our report.

7 In fact, there is no contradiction between
8 their conclusions and our report. There is no
9 contradiction in terms of what they say in
10 recommendation number one in terms of looking
11 and analyzing the user needs for SSA, and the
12 fact that that had already been done in our
13 report.

14 So it was a timing issue, but the
15 way it's reflected in Chapter 8 is it almost
16 seems like our report having been referenced
17 or cited in the first page, that it became a
18 filter for the rest of the chapter when it was
19 not the case. It was something they added
20 later on to try to make it as complete as
21 possible.

22 And so when I talked to Margaret

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1 about the potential of making a clarification
2 in Chapter 8 about that, as she was willing to
3 make a clarification about Deb's research back
4 when she was with IOTF and the fact that it
5 wasn't testing the O*NET D concept, it never
6 got that far way back then, they are so far
7 along in their process with the National
8 Academies of Science in terms of the
9 publication of the final report that they
10 cannot make that clarification.

11 And so I indicated to her that that
12 would probably be a clarification that would
13 be included in our report back to the
14 Commissioner, because I think it's a very
15 important one. Particularly, we are very
16 sensitive in this panel to how people read
17 flat documents in context of time with what we
18 experienced in January, some people going to
19 subcommittee reports that don't reflect the
20 final recommendations that appeared in our
21 final report to the Commissioner.

22 So I wanted to -- I think we got a

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1 lot of information that we potentially have
2 the need -- more than just the few minutes we
3 have allocated for this meeting before we end
4 or adjourn for the day to really discuss. And
5 so I wanted to see if maybe we could talk
6 about the implications of what we learned for
7 a couple of things that we've talked about
8 over the last day and a half and the agenda.

9 National Academy of Science
10 roundtable, the OIS-1 study, but I think it
11 merits a lot more discussion than we have time
12 for. And so I would propose that we consider
13 doing a teleconference at some point in the
14 next few weeks to address the broader issue in
15 terms of the takeaways and how this might
16 affect our advice and recommendations back to
17 SSA.

18 So let me open it up in terms of
19 the implications to the couple of things that
20 we have been talking about the last couple of
21 days. First, the National Academy of Science
22 roundtable, meaning not just dealing with the

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1 O*NET issues, but we had discussed yesterday
2 about the DOT issues, you know, the
3 implications of this report overall, not just
4 Chapter 8, and the implications of the Miller
5 study from 1980 in terms of the overall design
6 and recommendation issues.

7 Any thoughts about any changes, of
8 whether we need to have that, how we need to
9 have it?

10 MEMBER WILSON: Just a point of --
11 are we still in a public meeting? I notice
12 our name tags are gone.

13 (Laughter.)

14 CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: I think the
15 staff is just being a lot more efficient, but
16 I think I know who you are. So, yes, we are
17 in the public meeting.

18 Okay. Let me -- Sylvia, go ahead.

19 MEMBER KARMAN: Well, one thing is
20 is that it -- as we are anticipating the
21 National Academies of Science's final report
22 at the end of April, depending on when that

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1 report -- final report comes out, we may want
2 to adjust the timing that we were thinking
3 about for the National Academies of Science
4 subject matter, at least roundtable.

5 So that may -- that just might be
6 something that we may want to tackle, because
7 we did talk about that yesterday in terms of
8 possibly having that in June. All things
9 being equal, that might be a good idea, but
10 then again, on the other hand, if we don't
11 receive the report until, you know, the end of
12 April, possibly even May, we certainly want to
13 have enough time for all of the people we
14 would invite to that panel, as well as
15 ourselves, to have time to read it and really
16 reflect on it.

17 So, I don't know, I am just putting
18 that out there. That's one thing.

19 MEMBER WILSON: I agree. I think
20 there is no rush. I am not opposed to having
21 some sort of teleconference on -- to sort of
22 process some of the things that we heard here

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1 today, but I think it's important to have the
2 report in hand, the final report, have read it
3 and digested it. You know, I saw a lot of
4 people taking lots of notes and stuff, so, you
5 know, I doubt that we will forget any of that.

6 So --

7 CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: Okay. Thank
8 you. And Allan?

9 MEMBER HUNT: I was just going to
10 point out that the final report is not going
11 to be materially different from what we've
12 seen, because obviously their process
13 prohibits that. So --

14 CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: Okay. So
15 what I'm hearing and seeing around the table
16 is that the roundtable concept is on the
17 table, very much so, moving forward. And
18 there might be some variation in terms of what
19 we had put the timeline to be within the road
20 map that we discussed yesterday.

21 Shanana?

22 MEMBER GIBSON: I was going to say

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1 one thing we might consider, though, is based
2 on the responses here, and our understanding
3 of how the panel operates, I think we should
4 probably, as part of this teleconference,
5 discuss our expectations for what we will
6 achieve through this roundtable.

7 CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: The Four
8 Square Document, excellent. Thank you.

9 MEMBER SCHRETLEN: Yes, that's -- I
10 was just going to say that it calls into
11 question in my mind, what is the purpose of
12 the roundtable? Do we need to visit that and
13 ask ourselves as a panel what -- what we --
14 what our goals -- what we want to accomplish.

15 CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: Okay.

16 MEMBER KARMAN: I guess we should
17 definitely consider that over the next few
18 weeks. And then, when we meet again, we
19 should, you know, talk -- discuss it and just,
20 like you said, revisit the purpose, given the
21 responses we had.

22 I do know that we have many more

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1 questions, but you're right, I mean, it may
2 not -- it may not --

3 MEMBER SCHRETLEN: It raises in my
4 mind the question of might our time be better
5 served doing other things than a roundtable,
6 like spending time talking about how to
7 respond to this, or how this panel might
8 advise SSA to respond.

9 MEMBER GIBSON: I would concur with
10 that, and I would just say, though, I do want
11 to -- that we mentioned the fact that the NAS
12 roundtable will also be taking a secondary
13 look at the original report, not just this
14 report. So there does still leave that one
15 particular issue on the table.

16 CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: And I think
17 there were a lot of questions that were more
18 technically oriented, where there were members
19 of the National Academies of Science, O*NET,
20 and DOT roundtables that addressed more
21 technical aspects beyond obviously Chapter 8,
22 that might be beneficial in terms of the

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1 research process.

2 You know, when we look at some of
3 the things that have been -- we have been
4 asked to provide advice and recommendations
5 on, in terms of data collection and field job
6 analysts, what they found with DOT and, you
7 know, 30 years ago why it was addressed or not
8 addressed, some of those scientists might have
9 some thoughts about that in this report, you
10 know, other methods for data collection, same
11 thing with sampling, some of the linkage
12 issues -- that might be helpful.

13 MEMBER SCHRETLEN: If they would
14 attend.

15 CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: If they would
16 attend, absolutely.

17 Mark?

18 MEMBER WILSON: Yes. I think
19 that's the issue, and it's an excellent point.

20 In terms of what the roundtable would be, my
21 plans were always to recommend that it be very
22 similar in format to the one I attended that

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1 Dave had organized, where we as a panel,
2 certainly those interested would formulate a
3 set of questions that the technical experts
4 would be asked to address. And that wouldn't
5 be the only thing, but that would be the start
6 of the discussion.

7 And I think the area that remains
8 unexplored, in terms of looking at various
9 recommendations in the NAS report, were some
10 of the issues that Shanan and I were -- you
11 know, can you tell us about the reviews? Can
12 you tell us who wrote this? There aren't that
13 many experts, and so, assuming that they would
14 come, the IO psychology panel members of NAS
15 and some people who were involved in the
16 original DOT report, are the obvious invites
17 to this.

18 But if they were not -- if
19 significant or all numbers -- or all of them
20 were not able to attend, then I think it would
21 potentially be something that we would have to
22 reexamine as to whether or not it was

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1 valuable.

2 CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: And maybe,
3 you know, beyond the panel members, I remember
4 reading Handel and his comment in terms of job
5 complexity. There might be other aspects of
6 other people who presented that might not
7 necessarily have been on the panel who might
8 be helpful to have as part of that process.

9 But so what I'm hearing is that we
10 want to keep the NAS roundtable concept on the
11 table, be a lot more specific in terms of what
12 the Four Square Document would include, what's
13 the purpose, and what we would learn from it
14 in terms of cost-benefit, time analysis, and
15 also timing.

16 Okay. Mark.

17 MEMBER WILSON: Well, and maybe one
18 way to get at the issue that David raised, and
19 also your initial comments about, you know, do
20 we need a teleconference to discuss the
21 process, you know, I would be very interested
22 and would invite, as we did in terms of the

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1 Research Committee and reading the NAS report,
2 what questions the various panel members have
3 and, you know, that is kind of a moot point
4 now, but I would certainly be interested in,
5 well, were we able to assemble an august body
6 of work analysis experts who are expert, what
7 questions would you want to ask them? What
8 issues should they address that were similar
9 to the kinds of questions that, you know,
10 David was asking his people?

11 MEMBER KARMAN: I appreciate that,
12 because I am thinking that as we formulate the
13 questions or purpose around what we might want
14 to do in terms of a roundtable, and then ask
15 ourselves, gee, you know, is there perhaps a
16 better way for us to attain these answers to
17 these questions than doing that? You know,
18 perhaps there is some other method or
19 approach.

20 Because, you know, to the extent
21 that we would be asking additional questions
22 and maybe -- specifically, with regard to that

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1 particular report, in its final form or pre-
2 publication, is for us as a panel to be able
3 to reconcile for Social Security the
4 recommendation that, well, there is this
5 modification notion on the table with regard
6 to O*NET, and its use -- possible use for
7 Social Security, which Social Security has
8 looked at.

9 And also, the recommendations in
10 the report itself that really get at the data
11 quality issues, and how can we deal with that
12 as a panel moving forward and making
13 recommendations to Social Security about the
14 development of its occupational information
15 systems.

16 And it may be, as David pointed
17 out, and, Mark, you also seconded it, that
18 maybe there are better ways of getting at
19 that.

20 MEMBER SCHRETLEN: And I just think
21 it might be very useful for all of us to think
22 about what we might do, in a sense kind of

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1 preemptively, or prospectively, and do we want
2 to wait until the Department of Labor reaches
3 out and makes some overture, or do we want to
4 anticipate that with something and say, in
5 case you are thinking about reaching out and
6 making some overture --

7 (Laughter.)

8 -- here are some preliminary
9 thoughts, before you decide whether or not you
10 might want to form some kind of interagency.
11 Just to make it clear what their -- how steep
12 the mountain is.

13 MEMBER KARMAN: In fact, I am kind
14 of glad you mentioned that, because one of the
15 things that has come to mind is that in the
16 discussion that we had earlier, David, when
17 you had raised the issue of the bars, for
18 example, the behaviorally-anchored ratings,
19 and Tom Plewes had suggested that, well, you
20 know, these are things that could be studied,
21 you know, perhaps a comparison of the current
22 anchors with things that may or -- may be more

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1 useful to Social Security, or measures that
2 may be more useful.

3 I am thinking that that may be
4 something that could be readily integrated,
5 that kind of a study may be a point that may
6 be readily integrated into the OIS design
7 study, may give us some traction on that issue
8 early on, at least to take a look at that, and
9 be in a position to say to the Department of
10 Labor, or whomever, "Well, you know, we
11 actually did take a look at that and here is
12 what we found."

13 MEMBER SCHRETLEN: So we could
14 conceivably respond to that, both rationally
15 and empirically.

16 MEMBER KARMAN: Yes, sir.

17 CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: With
18 something that is happening right now. So, I
19 mean, what kind of became evident from the
20 discussion this morning is that we are
21 delivering on -- what has happened
22 chronologically is beyond -- is happening

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1 beyond what the recommendations imply. I
2 mean, they implied something that is static in
3 time for them in August of last year.

4 And we are -- we are, what, about
5 seven months beyond that, and so, you know,
6 they even mentioned in their -- I think it was
7 Tom who said, "We anticipated you." And "you"
8 meaning the recommendations that we had and
9 the information that we had in our report. So
10 I think it's kind of a timing issue.

11 Okay. So we've talked about the
12 roundtable. We have talked about the
13 implications for study. We have talked about
14 a teleconference. I am going to ask Debra
15 Tidwell-Peters to scan for dates for a
16 teleconference for us to maybe process this
17 particular topic further.

18 Anything else in terms of specific
19 to this topic that we need to discuss at this
20 point?

21 (No response.)

22 Okay. Then, I am going to take us

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1 through the rest of the agenda, so we can
2 finish on a timely basis today.

3 Okay. We have a couple of things
4 to include on the agenda, approval of minutes.

5 Elena e-mailed us all, and we got copies of
6 the minutes earlier this week. I would
7 entertain a motion to approve the minutes.

8 MEMBER GIBSON: So moved.

9 CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: Shanan moved.

10 Do I have a second?

11 MEMBER WILSON: Second.

12 CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: Mark seconded
13 the approval of the minutes. Is there any
14 discussion?

15 MEMBER HARDY: Yesterday I gave
16 some corrections to Debra Tidwell-Peters.
17 They were purely spelling and editing things,
18 and I believe that these minutes would be with
19 those corrections. I just wanted to put that
20 on the record.

21 CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: Okay. So
22 there were some typographical kinds of

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1 corrections. And I'm assuming what will go up
2 on the website will be the corrected minutes.

3 Any other discussion?

4 (No response.)

5 All those in favor?

6 (Chorus of ayes.)

7 Okay. Opposed?

8 (No response.)

9 That was unanimous. The minutes
10 have been approved.

11 Let's open up very quickly the
12 discussion for the agenda for June. If we
13 looked at our road map, there is probably a
14 lot that is going to be going on. I know that
15 there is going to be a lot going on between
16 now and June in terms of the public feedback
17 period from many different ways, probably the
18 electronic collection of the information, the
19 review of that information.

20 A lot of us are going to be on the
21 road quite a bit over the next few months, and
22 so we -- that is probably going to be a big

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1 area that we are going to be reviewing in
2 terms of the public feedback. We are going to
3 be having probably a lot of organizations
4 providing us feedback in terms of the report,
5 so I anticipate that is going to be a big
6 area.

7 I think there are going to be a
8 couple of technical reports that may be
9 offered at that time, so we will probably have
10 presentations around those. I'm assuming
11 research in terms of maybe some of what we're
12 going to be talking about with the NAS at the
13 teleconference we may need to include in
14 there.

15 Any other thoughts? Allan?

16 MEMBER HUNT: Labor market.

17 CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: Labor market,
18 yes, absolutely, the roundtable. That is
19 going to be a big one that we will need to
20 talk about in terms of consideration for the
21 agenda.

22 Deborah?

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1 MEMBER LECHNER: I think we
2 probably would have a report -- some sort of
3 report on the recommendations for the job
4 training and certification of job analysts --

5 CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: Yes.

6 MEMBER LECHNER: -- at that point.

7 CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: There is
8 probably going to be quite a bit happening in
9 the next few months on that as well, yes.

10 Tom?

11 MEMBER HARDY: You are looking at
12 possibly having a draft content model by May
13 from the workgroup? Are we going to be
14 looking at that, do you think, or will that
15 still not be quite ready?

16 MEMBER KARMAN: Well, it certainly
17 is on track for us to be working with the
18 workgroup to finish our considerations around
19 the person-side elements for the content
20 model. So I am not sure whether or not we
21 will have something to share with the entire
22 panel in June, but that's where we're headed,

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1 anyway, as far as drafts are concerned.

2 CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: I think from
3 an administrative standpoint I got a lot out
4 of the training, the professional development,
5 and I want to thank you again for doing that,
6 Mark and Shanana. And so we will be looking at
7 and might also kind of scan for other areas
8 that people would really want to see
9 additional training about.

10 I know we talked about the legal
11 issues, in terms of defensibility, and, you
12 know, is June a good timing, is there a lot
13 going on in June, might we do it another time.

14 So we will probably scan for that as well in
15 terms of professional development.

16 Okay. Any other considerations for
17 the agenda for June?

18 (No response.)

19 Hearing none, I would entertain a
20 motion to adjourn our second annual quarterly
21 meeting for the OIDAP.

22 MEMBER HARDY: I make a motion to

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1 adjourn.

2 CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: So moved by
3 Tom. Seconded by Allan?

4 MEMBER HUNT: Yes, I second the
5 motion.

6 CHAIR BARROS-BAILEY: All those in
7 favor?

8 (Chorus of ayes.)

9 I'll note that was unanimous, and
10 we are adjourned.

11 Thank you.

12 (Whereupon, at 11:34 a.m., the proceedings in
13 the foregoing matter were
14 adjourned.)

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TAB C

Appendix C: Timeline of NAS O*NET Panel and OIDAP Activities

(February 2009 through May 2010)

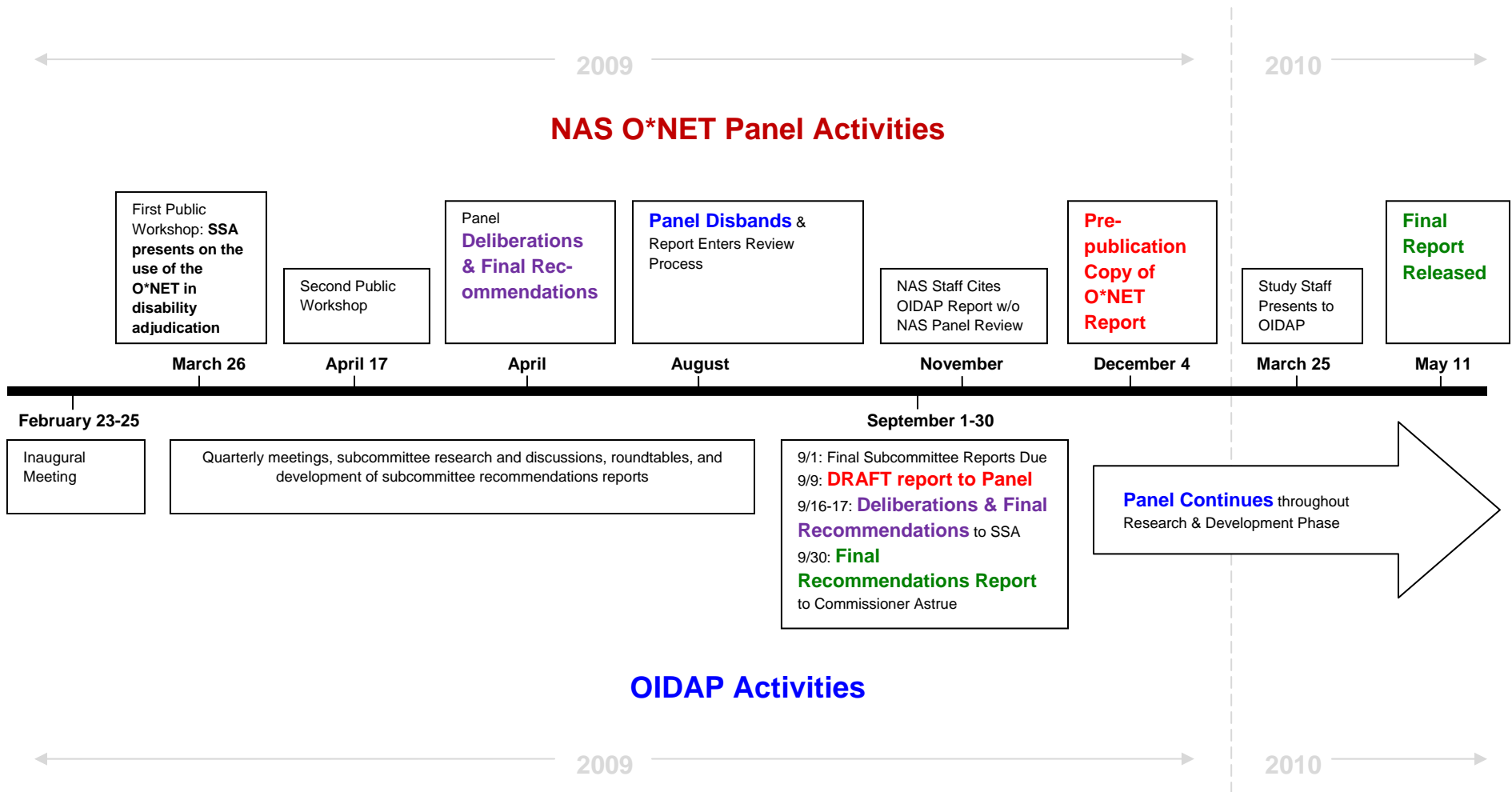


FIGURE NOTES

NAS timeline from panel's **final recommendations** to release of pre-publication and then **final report**: 13 months (April 2009 → May 2010)

OIDAP timeline between subcommittee recommendations, report draft, deliberations, **final recommendations**, and **final report**: 1 month (September 1 -30, 2009)

- ✓ Different processes, different timelines
- ✓ NAS recommendations made in absence of OIDAP research and recommendations
- ✓ OIDAP recommendations complement and refine NAS recommendations on SSA occupational information needs and the usefulness of O*NET in disability adjudication

TAB D

ECONOMETRIC V. ERGOMETRIC WORK ANALYSIS DESIGNS

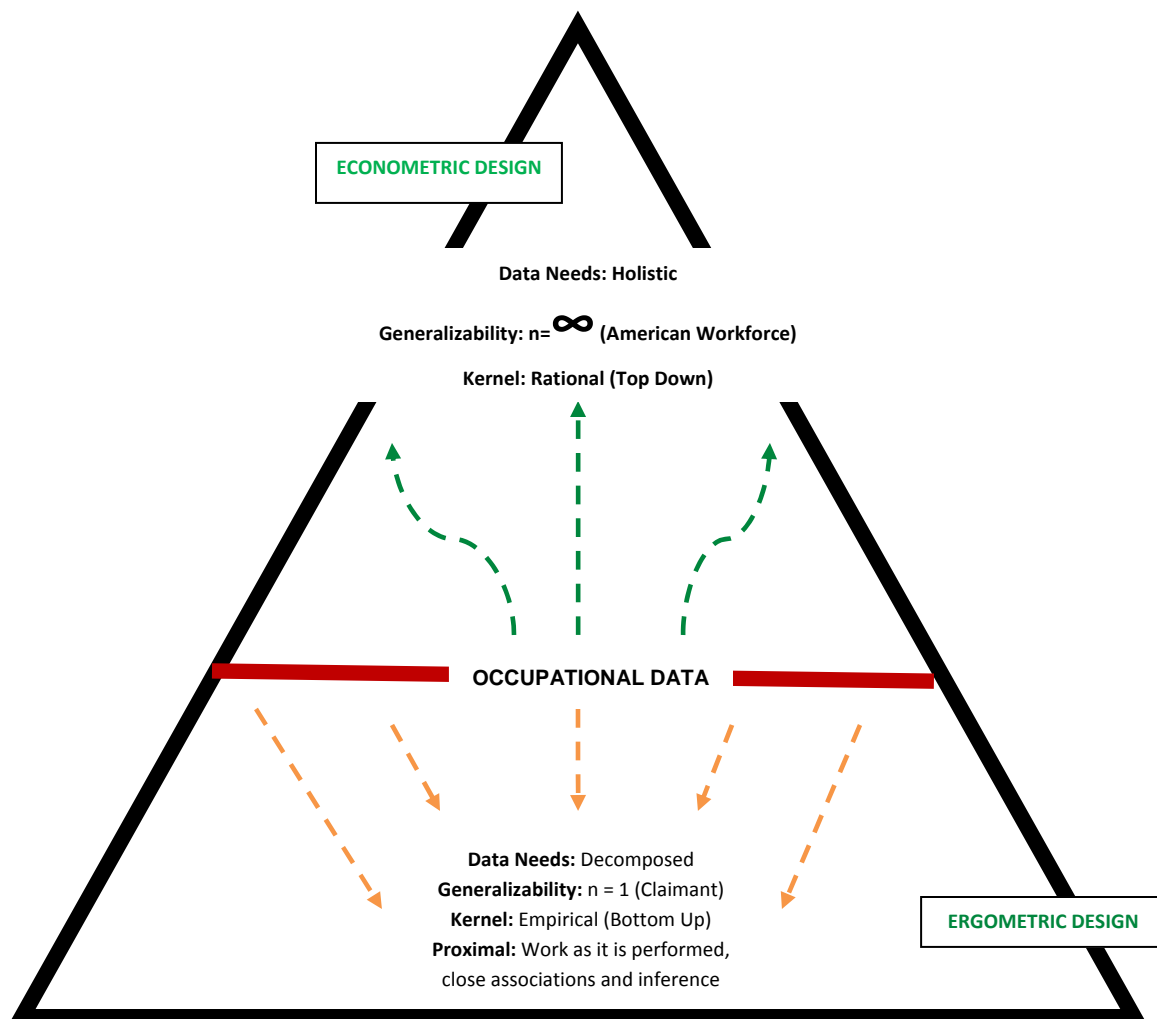


Table 1

Comparison of Ergometric and Econometric Approaches to Work Analysis

Element	Ergometric	Econometric
Definition	Measurement of work as performed by the worker	Measurement of work as a labor market category
Primary Scales of Measurement	Ordinal, Interval & Ratio	Nominal
Measurement Approach	Decomposed	Holistic
Measurement Precision	Moderate to High	Low
Unit of Analysis	Position & Job	Large Aggregations of Jobs
Primary Purpose/Application	Human Resources	Policy Development
Organizational Level	The Enterprise	The Economy
Primary Threats to Validity	Internal & SCV	External & Construct
Level of Legal Scrutiny	Moderate to High	Low
Sample Systems	Task Inventory & PAQ	O*NET & SOC
Primary Discipline	Psychology	Economics

Note. SCV = statistical conclusion validity; PAQ = position analysis questionnaire; O*NET = Occupational Network; SOC = Standard Occupational Classification

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