



**AMERICAN
ECONOMIC
ASSOCIATION**

< Evolving Measurement for an Evolving Economy: Thoughts on 21st Century US Economic Statistics



Journal of Economic Perspectives

ISSN 0895-3309 (Print) | ISSN 1944-7965 (Online)

≡ Menu

Evolving Measurement for an Evolving Economy: Thoughts on 21st Century US Economic Statistics

Ron S. Jarmin

JOURNAL OF ECONOMIC PERSPECTIVES

VOL. 33, NO. 1, WINTER 2019

(pp. 165–84)

Download Full Text PDF
(Complimentary)

Article Information

Abstract

The system of federal economic statistics developed in the 20th century has served the country well, but the current methods for collecting and disseminating these data products are unsustainable. These statistics are heavily reliant on sample surveys. Recently, however, response rates for both household and business surveys have

declined, increasing costs and threatening quality. Existing statistical measures, many of which were developed decades ago, may also miss important aspects of our rapidly evolving economy. New data sources, such as online data and more powerful computation make privacy and confidentiality protections more challenging. There is broad agreement on the need to transform government statistical agencies from the 20th century survey-centric model to a 21st

This website uses cookies.

By clicking the "Accept" button or continuing to browse our site, you agree to first-party and session-only cookies being stored on your device to enhance site navigation and analyze site performance and traffic. For more information on our use of cookies, please see our [Privacy Policy](#).

Accept

century model that blends structured survey data with administrative and unstructured alternative digital data sources. In this essay, I describe some work underway that hints at what 21st century official economic measurement will look like and offer some preliminary comments on what is needed to get there.

Citation

Jarmin, Ron S. 2019. "Evolving Measurement for an Evolving Economy: Thoughts on 21st Century US Economic Statistics." *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 33 (1): 165–84.

DOI: 10.1257/jep.33.1.165

Choose Format:



Additional Materials

[Author Disclosure Statement\(s\)](#)

JEL Classification

C80 Data Collection and Data Estimation Methodology; Computer Programs: General

E01 Measurement and Data on National Income and Product Accounts and Wealth; Environmental Accounts

C83 Survey Methods; Sampling Methods

[Terms of Use](#)

[Privacy Policy](#)

Copyright 2026 American Economic Association. All rights reserved.

This website uses cookies.

By clicking the "Accept" button or continuing to browse our site, you agree to first-party and session-only cookies being stored on your device to enhance site navigation and analyze site performance and traffic. For more information on our use of cookies, please see our [Privacy Policy](#).

Accept