

README.PDF for the NELS:88/2000 CD-ROM and Electronic Codebook (ECB)

1. What files are on the NELS:88/2000 CD-ROM?

The CD-ROM containing the NELS:88/2000 electronic codebook (ECB) has four folders that include data and documentation for the study, as well as useful guidance and supporting information for data analysts. Each of these folders is described below.

The folder entitled:

- **ECBW** includes data files, documentation, and an installation program (setup.exe) for the NELS:88/2000 ECB.
- **Report** includes an electronic copy of the combined base-year to fourth follow-up data file user's manual.
- **AMstat** includes a file (ReadmeAM.txt) with instructions for downloading the free AM statistical software from the *am.air.org* website, and directs users to examples using AM software with NELS:88. The AM software can be used to create standard errors for NELS:88/2000 estimates.
- **Derived** contains SAS program code developed during the fourth follow-up study to create derived or composite variables from the NELS:88 data. The derived variables (e.g., highest postsecondary degree earned by 2000) are included in the ECB; this program provides documentation of the programming logic and steps used to develop these fourth follow-up study variables.

2. Installation instructions for NELS:88/2000 (N0P) electronic codebook (ECB)

The ECB program is designed to run on a PC with Windows 95, or higher versions. The ECB requires approximately 5 MB space on the hard drive.

- Close all applications on your computer.
- Insert the NELS:88/2000 CD into your computer's CD-ROM drive.
- Click the Windows **START** menu button, and select **RUN...**
- Type: **D:\ECBW\Setup.exe** (If your CD-ROM drive is not **D**, enter the appropriate drive letter).
- Click on **OK** to run the setup program, and follow the directions on your screen.

3. What is an electronic codebook (ECB)?

The ECB system is primarily an electronic version of a fully documented survey codebook. For example, the NELS:88/2000 ECB allows the data user to browse through all instrument items and derived variables in the NELS:88 data files, to search variable and value labels for key words related to particular research questions (e.g., high school), to review the rough wording of these items along with notes and other pertinent information related to them, to examine the definitions and programs used to develop derived variables, and importantly, to create syntax files that import data from the selected variables. The ECB also provides an electronic display of the distribution of counts and percentages for each variable in the data set, both for the NELS:88 fourth follow-up interview in 2000 and the earlier data collection points for the study.

Analysts can use the ECB to select or "tag" variables of interest, print hardcopy codebooks that display the description and distributions of the tagged variables, and generate SAS and SPSS program code (including variable and value labels). Note that the ECB does not analyze data, but only generates the program code to import the data into statistical analysis software packages (e.g. SAS and SPSS).

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The public-use N0P, and restricted-use N0R ECBs contain data for all rounds of the study for the 12,144 NELS:88 sample members who were retained in and were respondents in the 2000 wave. Four other NELS:88 ECBs—described in item 5 below—include data and documentation for other respondent groups.

NOTE: ECBs are defined by three-character names, with the first digit representing the study name, the second indicating the year or wave of the study, and the last character describing the type of information contained in the ECB (e.g., “P” for public-use or “R” for restricted-use data). The NELS:88/2000 public-use ECB is named N0P, where the “N” indicates the National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988, the “0” depicts the 2000 data collection, and the “P” signifies that the data is public and thus available for use without a license.

4. Getting started with ECBs

Data users new to electronic codebooks are encouraged to read and understand the documentation for these products to ensure that these powerful analysis tools are effectively used. Two very helpful documents are available on this CD. HELP.PDF, included in the root folder, includes useful guidance on the ECB, its system requirements, and operation. Users will also find additional guidance about using ECBs in Appendix A of the NELS:88 Base-Year to Fourth Follow-up Data File User's Manual (in the Reports Folder on this CD).

5. Description of Data Files on ECB N0P

The NELS:88/2000 ECB (N0P) includes four megafiles: BYF4STU, PSEF3F4, INSTF3F4, and PSE1994. *Table 1* provides information on the content of these megafiles.

6. Description of NELS:88 ECBs

Six ECBs are currently available for use with the NELS:88 data.

N2P and N2R include the NELS:88 respondents who participated in the base-year, first follow-up, or second follow-up studies through 1992, regardless of their subsequent participation in later rounds of data collection. The respondent group includes approximately 27,000 sample members. These ECBs are appropriate for cross-sectional analyses of eighth-, tenth-, and twelfth-grade students and dropouts.

N4P and N4R include only those cases who were subsampled and responded to NELS:88/94, the third follow-up study (N = 14,915) in 1994. Data for the base year, first follow-up, and second follow-up are also included.

N0P and N0R include only those cases (12,144) who responded to NELS:88/2000, the fourth follow-up wave. Data for the base year, first follow-up, second follow-up, and third follow-up are also included.

7. Getting started with NELS:88

Appendix A of the base-year to fourth follow-up data file user's manual (Quick Guide to the NELS:88/2000 Data) includes useful guidance about analyzing NELS:88 information, including frequently asked questions. In addition, appendix B to the NELS:88/2000 descriptive report (Research Potential of NELS:88/2000—Some Areas of Inquiry) will help both novice and experienced data analysts focus their research on these important respondent groups. The user's manual is included in the Reports folder on this CD. NCES' NELS:88 website (<http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/nels88/>) is also an excellent resource for new users. This site includes downloadable versions of many of the study's important technical and methodological reports.

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Table 1.—Structure of the NELS:88 data files contained on the fourth follow-up study ECB (N0P): 1988–2000*

Data file name	Contents	NELS:88* wave(s)	Number of records	Unique identifiers	Record structure
BYF4STU	<u>Student-level information</u> , including student, dropout, school, teacher, and parent data; high school transcript information; and test scores	BY to F4	12,144	STU_ID	One record per F4 respondent
PSEF3F4	<u>Student Postsecondary Institution data</u> about postsecondary enrollment during F3 and F4 by NELS:88/2000 respondents	F3 and F4	16,459	STU_ID INCODE	One record per attended institution per F4 respondent
INSTF3F4	<u>Postsecondary institution-level data</u> about institutions identified by sample member during F3 and F4	F3 and F4	3,217	INCODE	One record per unique postsecondary institution
PSE1994	<u>Student Postsecondary Institution</u> about postsecondary enrollment spells during F3, with some institutions reported multiple times for the same student. Note: This file is an exact duplicate of the file provided in the NELS:88/94 ECB. Thus, it will include records for F3 respondents who did not respond to F4, as well as not including records for F4 respondents who did not respond in F3.	F3	11,560	STU_ID INCODE INSTNUM	One record per enrollment spell identified in the third follow-up per F3 respondent

* The different data collection waves of NELS:88 are represented with (BY) Base-year study in 1988; (F1) First follow-up study (NELS:88/90); (F2) Second follow-up study (NELS:88/92); (F3) Third follow-up study (NELS:88/94); and (F4) Fourth follow-up study (NELS:88/2000).

Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988 (NELS:88), 1988–2000.

8. Changes from prior NELLS:88 ECBs

- A. Prior NELLS:88 ECBs (N4P/N4R and N2P/N2R) allowed the use of blanks to represent missing data for sample members who were not in the wave or were nonrespondents for a particular data collection. Since current data reporting standards do not allow blanks in data, these cases were assigned new consistency codes (e.g., 9999, -3, -9, etc. in NOP and NOR). For some variables, no unused consistency codes were available, and these values were combined with legitimate skips in the fourth follow-up study ECBs.
- B. A new ECB data definition standard requires that variable names be unique to seven characters. This new convention is required because ECBs output SAS value formats based on these seven characters, thus there is potential for the wrong format to be associated with variables that share the first 7 characters of variable names. (Note: This caution applies only to ECB-output SAS programs; SPSS programs are not affected.) Our examination of the NELLS:88 data released prior to the fourth follow-up study identified approximately 1,800 variables that were not unique to the first seven characters, representing 393 variable formats.

Most of the formats for these variables will not be problematic to users. Thus, we elected not to change variable names familiar to data users in earlier rounds unless essential to avoid formatting errors. However, **Table 2** includes 22 variable sets we identified that should be used with caution. NOTE: Always check and edit the code produced by ECBs for format inconsistencies.

Table 2.—List of NELLS:88 base-year through third follow-up study variables with potential ECB-output SAS value format problems: 1988–2000

Variable names	Problem SAS format
1. F1T2H20, F1T2H20A – F1T2H20N	F1T2H20.
2. F1T2H21, F1T2H21A – F1T2H21G	F1T2H21.
3. F1T2M20, F1T2M20A – F1T2M20J	F1T2M20.
4. F1T2M22, F1T2M22A – F1T2M22J	F1T2M22.
5. F1T2M24, F1T2M24A – F1T2M24O	F1T2M24.
6. F1T2S21, F1T2S21A – F1T2S21L	F1T2S21.
7. F1T2S23, F1T2S23A – F1T2S23L	F1T2S23.
8. F1T6H20, F1T6H20A – F1T6H20N	F1T6H20.
9. F1T6M20, F1T6M20A – F1T6M20J	F1T6M20.
10. F1T6M22, F1T6M22A – F1T6M22J	F1T6M22.
11. F1T6M24, F1T6M24A – F1T6M24O	F1T6M24.
12. F1T6S21, F1T6S21A – F1T6S21L	F1T6S21.
13. F2T2_20, F2T2_20A – F2T2_20I	F2T2_20.
14. F2T2_21, F2T2_21A – F2T2_21J	F2T2_21.
15. F2T2_22, F2T2_22A – F2T2_22H	F2T2_22.
16. F2T421A1 – F2T421A5	F2T421A.
17. F2T421B1 – F2T421B5	F2T421B.
18. F2T421C1 – F2T421C5	F2T421C.
19. F2T421D1 – F2T421D5	F2T421D.
20. F2T421E1 – F2T421E5	F2T421E.
21. F2T421F1 – F2T421F5	F2T421F.
22. F2T421G1 – F2T421G5	F2T421G.

For example, the value formats for F1T2H20 are different from those assigned to F1T2H20A–F1T2H20N. However, the SAS program output by the ECB when these variables are tagged includes non-unique format names for each—so the last format specified would be applied to all of

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the variables (though appropriate only to the last). SAS users can repair this issue by renaming the non-unique formats assigned to variables.

- C. Postsecondary institutions reported by sample members during the third follow-up interview were preloaded into the fourth follow-up interview—but only those institutions with valid Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) identification numbers. Military training and attendance at foreign institutions, for instance, were not included in the preloading. Sample members were then asked to report any postsecondary institutions not preloaded from the third follow-up interview. Sample members may or may not have specified the previously uncodeable "special" schools during the fourth follow-up interview.
- D. Several variable names and labels in N2R and N4R were inadvertently switched on the ECBs, and are corrected in N0R. (These variables are F2RSATM, F2RSATV, F2RPSATM, and F2RPSATV – and the variable descriptions in N0R indicate the change from the previous ECBs.)

9. NCES contacts

The National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education, strives to make all of its products available in a variety of formats and in language that is appropriate to a variety of audiences. If you have any comments, suggestions, or questions about this data product or any other NCES product, please direct your comments to:

National Center for Education Statistics
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
U.S. Department of Education
1990 K Street NW
Washington, DC 20006

For additional information and questions about NELS:88 and NCES' education longitudinal studies program, please link to the NELS:88 web page:

<http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/nels88/>

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