

## REJOINDER

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Let me start my rejoinder by saying that I find Dr. Tepping's comments both interesting and helpful. The main criticism of my paper given by Dr. Tepping is my choice of the Fellegi-Sunter model as a basis for blocking research. As such, this exchange is simply another in a long debate over the handling of clerical costs and errors.

I have been aware of, and admired, Dr. Tepping's work on record linkage for quite some time. From a theoretical point of view, the utility theory approach is a fascinating one; however, clerical operations are hard to control and empirical investigations of clerical error rates and costs are data dependent. This makes estimates of the parameters in Dr. Tepping's model hard/expensive to obtain and highly variable.

Due to these facts, it is my opinion that the Fellegi-Sunter model provides the best general foundation for record linkage research and development. Methods which account for clerical costs should be used only after there have been several linkage projects run on data from the same source, using the same record linkage system.

Dr. Tepping also commented on the assumption of independence between comparison vector components, the difficulty of estimating, the difficulty of estimating model parameters, and the potential sensitivity of linkage error rates to errors in those parameter estimates. These comments are well placed, and I am continuing work on the blocking problem in an attempt to strengthen the results of this paper.