Biography

**Jim E. Smith**

(Westat)

[SMITHJJ1@WESTAT.com](mailto:SMITHJJ1@WESTAT.com)

Jim Smith is President and CEO of Westat, an employee-owned research company in the Maryland suburbs of Washington, DC, USA.

For more than 50 years, Westat has conducted statistical surveys and other research projects on a wide range of subjects for Federal, state, and local government agencies and other organizations. In 1989, Jim became responsible for Westat’s computer systems and applications staff, including future plans for computer-assisted interviewing systems. He came across an announcement for the 1993 International Blaise Users Conference in London, England, and sent a senior systems staff member to find out what this Blaise system was all about. The report was positive, and Westat began evaluating and then using Blaise as a preferred commercial off-the-shelf (COTS) solution. Things moved rapidly from there as Blaise became recognized as a preferred system for a wide range of computer-assisted interviewing projects, including some of the most complex Federal statistical surveys. Westat has been a major Blaise user for more than two decades and, since 1996, under an agreement with Statistics Netherlands, has provided Blaise licenses and technical support to users in the USA and Canada.

Jim received his Ph.D., with a specialization in demography, from the University of Southern California. He was a university professor and researcher for several years before joining Westat.