

**UNITED NATIONS STATISTICAL COMMISSION and
ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE**

CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN STATISTICIANS

UNECE WORK SESSION ON THE COMMUNICATION OF STATISTICS

(29 June – 1 July 2011, Geneva, Switzerland)

- (ii) Gathering user feedback from web sites

OECD's approach to building a user-centric website

Submitted by OECD¹

I. Introduction

1. As the OECD's principal interface with the outside world, www.oecd.org is visited daily by about 44,000 people in search of OECD news, reports and data. The website is built of hundreds of thousands of pages, has a wealth of information and options, and results in users at times not finding what they are looking for. In the past, the OECD website success was measured by page views and visitors. However, the number of visits to a website is not a good indicator of its success. What should be measured is the users' success in finding what they are looking for and accomplishing their tasks.

2. In 2009, the OECD started working with a well-known website usability consultant, Mr. Gerry McGovern (Customer Carewords <http://www.gerrymcgovern.com/>), with the aim of building a more user-focused website. This paper describes the approach that OECD is taking to build such a site, as it actively employs usability testing to do so.

II. OECD website background

3. At present, management of the OECD website is decentralised and content is loaded by approximately 400 staff members from about 20 different departments or programmes. A team of 4-5 people in the Media Division in the Public Affairs and Communications Directorate (PAC) is responsible for navigation, layout, graphics, editorial rules, administering rights, and providing staff with technical and editorial

¹ Prepared by Terri Mitton, terr.mitton@oecd.org.

support. The delivery of information to the public is essentially defined by the complex accumulation of internal structures, policies and technical infrastructure.

4. OECD content pages are being added and modified continuously throughout the year. In May 2010, OECD had 180,849 live content items, 7,090 draft and 9,137 archived items. The live content included, 84,453 document uploads which consisted of files in 22 various formats (PDF, XLS, bmp, ppt, zip, doc, etc.). On the content side, the number of new files added on www.oecd.org each year has tripled since 2001. The volume of online content and number of website visitors is on an increasing trend.

5. The last major technical upgrade of the OECD website platform dates back to 2001. To keep pace with technology and changing communications practices, the website needs to be upgraded and redesigned. Major changes are needed in the navigation and layout of the site, in quality control mechanisms to ensure satisfactory services are provided to users. The OECD website redevelopment project is currently underway to address these issues.

III. What do users want to do on our website?

6. When a user comes to the OECD website, we know (s)he comes for a reason. The user usually has a task to do or needs to find information of some kind. Users' expectations are such that they want to find information in the least number of clicks. What users want on a website can be the subject of a lot of organisational debate yet the best way to find out is to ask the users. In September 2009, OECD engaged a web usability consultant, Mr. Gerry McGovern, to carry out a study and conduct an online survey. The purpose of the online survey was to identify the 'top tasks' that users wanted to accomplish when they visited the OECD website. Here is a sample of the type of tasks that were developed:

- Access to raw data
- Find a working paper
- Attending meetings and events
- Buy a publication
- Compare country statistical data
- Country surveys/ reviews / reports
- Find an OECD subject expert

7. We asked OECD website customers to vote for their top 5 tasks. Over 2,000 voted. The top 10 tasks got over 50% of the votes. The top 4 tasks received 25% of the vote.

OECD website customer voting trends

	Tasks	Votes
1	Country survey/review/reports	7%
2	Compare country statistical data	6%
3	Statistics on one particular topic	6%
4	Browse an online publication for free	5%
5	Working papers	5%
6	Publication by topic	5%
7	Basic facts, summaries, overviews	4%
8	Statistics on one particular country	4%
9	Statistics forecasts / projections	4%
10	Access to raw data	3%
11	International guidelines and standards (corporate governance, tax havens)	3%

Top 25%

Top 50%

12	Statistical sources and methods	3%
13	What's new (hot topics, recent publications, events)	3%
14	OECD policy advice by topic, country	3%
15	OECD Annual Report	2%
16	Publication by country	2%
17	Best practice in policy implementation	2%
18	Publication by title	2%
19	Simple easy-to-understand tables and graphs	2%
20	News releases	2%

The bottom 20 tasks received only 3% of the vote. Here are some of the tasks at the bottom of the list:

- How OECD interacts with non-member countries
- How OECD is funded (budget)
- Find OECD officials
- Press conferences (Calendar, accreditation)
- Tours of OECD
- Secretary-General speeches and activities

The challenge with the bottom tasks is that they are often very important communication items for management. The survey provides compelling information on what should be given more prominence on our website.

IV. How successful are users at accomplishing their tasks on our website?

A. Conducting the usability test

8. From the survey, we knew what people want to do on our website. The next step was to find out what people have a difficult time doing on our website. In December 2009, Gerry McGovern carried out a set of usability tests on the OECD website. The usability tests focused on the top tasks. Rather than ask a user to find a country survey, we had to create simple, real examples for the activities. We created questions that were neutral and did not lead the user to find the answers.

9. Here is an example of some of the questions:

1. What are the OECD's latest recommendations regarding Japan's healthcare system? (Country surveys / reviews / reports)
2. What is the latest average starting salary, in US Dollars, of a primary school teacher across OECD countries? (Statistics on one particular topic)
3. Did more males per capita die of heart attacks in Canada than in France in 2004? (Compare country statistical data)

10. A baseline task performance usability test was conducted with 18 people who were representative of OECD website users. This included students, statisticians, researchers, journalists, economists and policy advisors. The test was conducted remotely using sharing software. The screens were recorded so that the test observers could review them afterwards.

11. In 2010, Gerry McGovern taught usability testing basics to a selection of OECD staff. Since then, OECD carried out four sets of in-person usability tests with 17 people, including students, journalists, researchers, and statisticians, based on Steve Krug's method (www.sensible.com/rocketsurgery/index.html). Users are given four-to-five task-related questions based on the top tasks which require that the user find and/or use specific information on the website within five minutes per task. We remind the tester that the

purpose is to test the usability of the OECD website and not the user's online skills. The user takes the test in the presence of an OECD agent who runs the test, and is observed at a distance by a small team of observers via screen and audio sharing. The tester leaves with a small compensation such as an OECD book or USB key.

12. The 2011 tests have focused on testing statistics-related tasks, but future tests for www.oecd.org will focus on testing the ease with which users can find, access and download publications, country-related information and topic-related information. The tests are recorded and to date have been observed live by our Paris, Berlin and Washington offices.

B. Measuring the results of the usability test

13. The results of the task performance indicator usability tests are measured based on three items

- Success rate: How many users successfully completed the task?
- Disaster rate: How many users thought that they completed the task but had the wrong answer?
- Completion time: Of these who completed the task, how long did it take them? How does this compare an estimate of the optimal time?

14. For the OECD website, the success rate from the baseline task performance was success 50%, failure 42% and disaster 8%.

Gerry McGovern recommended we aim for the following task performance indicator targets:

- To have successful completion rates for top tasks greater than 90%
- To have disaster rates lower than 5%
- To have as short of a completion time as possible

15. To achieve this objective, we continue to conduct usability tests using the Krug-based method and make incremental improvements. Following a set of usability tests, the observing team discusses the top three usability problems identified by each member of the team and identifies solutions and action plans. By testing with several people, we start to see common issues and understand why tasks are not completed or why they take longer than necessary to complete.

For example, we start with a question which was based on the top tasks:

Find a table that gives key statistical information, such as government deficit and CO2 emission levels; in Japan for 2007 (browse statistics on a particular country)

We can see that most users navigate by 'country' first and they usually find the 'Country Statistical Profile of Japan'. Once the user finds the Country Statistical Profile of Japan, they often have problems finding the right number for the year because the table header is not visible when the tester scrolls down the page. When we ask as a follow-up question for testers to compare this data to the same data for another country, none of them click on the breadcrumbs at the top of the page and most navigate back the same way to find data on another country.

statistical profile: Japan - Country statistical ...

You are here: Home / Statistics / Country statistical profiles: Key tables from OECD / Country statistical profile: Japan

Country statistical profiles: Key tables from OECD

DOI: 10.1787/20752288

Also available in: French

Interactive Databases |

Subscribe to the feed

More on: Economics

Table

Same table in other editions

2010

2009

Latest Edition

Country statistical profile: Japan

Keywords: Japan

Latest Update: 27 May 2010

Update Frequency:

DOI: 10.1787/20752288-table-jpn

Also available in: French

Preview WEB PDF - 0.05Mb XLS - 0.17Mb

Country statistical profiles: Key tables from OECD - ISSN 2075-2288 - © OECD 2010

Country statistical profile: Japan 2010

	Unit	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Production and income									
Gross domestic product (GDP)	Bln USD curr. PPPs	3 330.1	3 417.2	3 509.9	3 708.5	3 872.8	4 080.4	4 297.5	4 358.3
GDP per capita	USD current PPPs	26 156	26 805	27 487	29 021	30 312	31 935	33 635	34 132
Gross national income (GNI) per capita	USD current PPPs	26 593	27 252	27 965	29 581	31 027	32 843	34 759	35 258

16. Some of the top usability issues which have been identified are listed below:

- Cross search hides the navigation bar
- Long text on publication pages made it difficult to find the content
- Content not clicked on home/topic/country pages due to design and navigation
- Testers couldn't find a Publication Portal
- Testers became lost on Stats portal due to the Navigation
- Testers prefer to navigate first by country or topic rather than 'statistics'
- Quick rotation of News box meant area was completely missed
- Confusion of what the *News* tab is, testers thought it was the latest information
- Testers expect forward-navigation
- Massive XLS files are overwhelming, need breaking down, better presentation
- Need to freeze headers in tables
- Some terms difficult for non-experts
- Stats AZ: Should start with table, end with most complicated (Complete database)
- The popular requests block users' ability to navigate (users thought they were themes)

V. Results to date

17. In December 2010, OECD published a new relooked website to improve the first level navigation. Since then, some incremental improvements have been made. Work to build an improved website, based on the usability testing research is underway.

OECD website home page for initial usability tests (circa 2010)



For a stronger, cleaner, fairer world economy

Browse

- > Home
- > Newsroom
- > About OECD
- > By Topic
- > By Country
- > By Department
- > From A to Z

Find

- > Statistics
- > Working Papers
- > Publications & Documents

Online Services

- > OECD iLibrary
- > Online Bookshop
- > OLIS - Committee Information
- > E-mail Alerts
- > RSS Feeds

What's new

[Middle class in Latin America economically vulnerable, says OECD](#)

03-Dec-2010

Even though the growing middle class in Latin America is becoming an engine of economic progress, this group remains economically vulnerable when compared with high income OECD countries, according to the OECD Development Centre's Latin American Economic Outlook 2011. Therefore, Latin American governments must ensure that they do not fall down the economic ladder.

[Environment: Cities central to climate change response](#)

01-Dec-2010

Cities and metropolitan regional governments should play a more prominent role in defining the wider response to climate change, according to a new report from the OECD.

[Statistics: Annual inflation rate up to 1.9% in October 2010](#)

30-Nov-2010

Consumer prices in the OECD area rose by 1.9% in the year to October 2010, up from 1.7% in September. The uptick was partly driven by strong rises in Japan, where annual inflation was positive for the first time in twenty months, and Canada, where consumer prices rose at their fastest rate since October 2008.

Don't miss

- > Secretary-General
- > Key upcoming events and publications
- > Frequently requested statistics
- > Contact Us
- > Site Map

Climate change



A crucial step in the international effort to address climate change

OECD's contribution to the COP16 meeting in Cancun

Reloaked OECD website home page (since December 2010)

OECD 50 BETTER POLICIES FOR BETTER LIVES

Follow us: E-mail Alerts, Blogs, RSS, Twitter, YouTube, Facebook, LinkedIn

Navigation: OECD Home, About, Countries, Topics, Statistics, Newsroom

What's new

- » NUCLEAR SAFETY: Learning the lessons from Fukushima
- » TAX: Countries continue to move towards better tax transparency
- » OECD WEEK: Chair's Summary of Ministerial Council Meeting 2011
- » ECONOMY: Global recovery underway, but risks remain
- » ENVIRONMENT: Green and growth go together

OECD at 50

Create Your Own

Your Better Life Index

The Better Life Index allows citizens to compare well-being across 34 countries based on 11 dimensions in the areas of material living conditions and quality of life: housing; income; jobs; community; education; environment; governance; health; life satisfaction; safety; work-life balance.

18. Prior to the release of the relooked home page, we conducted usability tests and we discovered that users were getting lost in the navigation on the statistics tab. As a result, the test observers decided to build a new page for the statistics tab. We also decided to make the subsequent usability tests focus on statistics-related tasks. In the first four months of 2011, the success rate for users completing statistics tasks improved from 25% to 53%.

Previous statistics tab:

Where to find our statistics?

Data warehouse and databases

- OECD.Stat Extracts: a selection of datasets (no subscription)
- OECD.Stat: our complete statistics service by subscription.
- A few databases are not available via the links above: => Student Assessment (PISA) => Key Environmental Indicators 2008

Key tables

- Country Statistical Profiles
- OECD Factbook

Visualize our data

- Dynamic maps and charts

Need help? Consult our:

- List of topics
- Frequently requested statistics
- List of statistics publications
- Brochure about our work on statistics

News

News releases

- Merchandise Trade continues to grow strongly in first quarter of 2011 (6 June)
- OECD growth steady at 0.5 per cent in the first quarter of 2011 but diverging trends across major economies (1 June)
- OECD annual inflation continues rising to 2.9% in April 2011 (31 May)

OECD Total

Category	Value
All items	2.9
Food	3.1
Energy	13.8
All items non food non energy	1.6

Don't miss

- Contact Us
- Site Map
- WikiProgress: The global platform for sharing information in order to evaluate societal progress.
- National Accounts at a Glance 2010
- Cross-country comparisons not only of GDP, but also of income, household saving & ..

Factblog | Methodology and Tools

- Are today's students prepared for
- Glossary of Statistical Terms

New statistics tab:

OECD 50 BETTER POLICIES FOR BETTER LIVES

Follow us: E-mail Alerts, Blogs, RSS, Twitter, YouTube, Facebook, LinkedIn

OECD Home | About | Countries | Topics | **Statistics** | Newsroom

OECD Home > Statistics from A to Z - Beta version

Statistics from A to Z - Beta version

Send Print

Keyword	Indicator	Table	Real-time dataset
Africa	African economies: basic indicators	Download Excel	
Agriculture	Consumer support estimates (subsidies)	Download Excel	Get real-time data
	Environment: agriculture	Download Excel	
	OECD Producer single commodity transfers	Download Excel	
	OECD Total support estimates	Download Excel	
	Producer support estimates (subsidies)	Download Excel	Get real-time data
	Wheat production	Download Excel	Get real-time data
	World cereal projections	Download Excel	Get real-time data
World prices		Download Excel	

19. By conducting the usability tests, we are building evidence and experience of what works. The approach helps to build consensus among a diverse set of observers. The test observers cringe, laugh and cry together as they watch users stumble into the same patterns. They work together as a team to identify the top issues and define action plans for improvement. The website is being continuously adapted and tested with users. At times, changes may improve some tasks yet introduce new problems so we must retest and adjust as necessary.

20. OECD will conduct another task performance indicator usability test after the new website is launched on a new platform in early 2012. This will gauge progress since Gerry McGovern's baseline task performance indicator test and serve as a key website performance reporting tool.

VI. Conclusion

21. The Organisation's website is one of the primary means of communicating with the public. The success of the website should be based on the users' success in quickly finding what they are looking for and accomplishing their tasks. To achieve success, we must manage the top tasks of our customers. A good way to encourage the support within the organisation is to show evidence that the website is working for users.