



2001 Canadian Census: Shifting Gears

**Joint ECE-EUROSTAT Work
Session on Population and
Housing Censuses**

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Outline

- ◆ Key findings of 2001 Census
- ◆ Content Determination: consultation key for 2001 Census
- ◆ Collection and Processing: drivers of change towards 2006 Census
- ◆ Dissemination and Communications: new approaches for 2001 Census

Key Findings of 2001 Census

- ◆ 30 million people in Canada, slowest growth ever.
- ◆ Immigration is an increasingly important driver of population growth and growth is becoming more uneven across regions.
- ◆ Growing cultural diversity in large cities.
- ◆ Canadian population is aging but stays independent longer.
- ◆ Divergence of “traditional” family composition, which has implications for children.
- ◆ Skill shortages looming in some key occupations.
- ◆ Earnings and family income stable, with highest deciles experiencing significant gains

Content Determination: Consultation key for 2001 Census

◆ 2001 Census

- 2001 Census Content Consultation Guide
- Major Stakeholders (governments, academics, private, media, general public via www.statcan.ca)
- Testing (Qualitative and Quantitative)
- Brought back - birthplace of parents (1971), religion(1991)
- New - language at work, same-sex common-law couples

◆ 2006 Census: little change

◆ 2011 Census:

- Major consultation planned soon for rethinking questions related to family, ethnicity, education and labour.

Collection and Processing: Drivers of change towards 2006

- ◆ Privacy and confidentiality concerns
 - local enumerators
 - security of personal information
- ◆ Highly decentralized and manual operation
 - 34,000 enumerators.
 - Recruitment and retention for six-week period increasingly difficult.
 - 5 billion keystrokes for data entry.
 - Verification and resolutions cumbersome.

Collection and Processing: Drivers of change (cont'd)

◆ Changing technology

- Census has relied on federal revenue agency for key data entry. This federal agency is now moving towards electronic reporting.
- Canadian *Government Online* initiative - By 2004 all federal government services must be accessible via the Internet.
- Scanning and intelligent character recognition technology well developed.

Working towards new methodology in place by 2006 Census

- ◆ Mail out - mail back approach for collection
 - Requires quality address register - current assumptions are it will cover 75-80% of households
 - Follow-up using computer-assisted telephone interviewing
 - Traditional method for other households, largely rural.
- ◆ Options for returning information on census form
 - Mail back.
 - Secure Internet application.
 - Telephone operator.

Working towards new methodology in place by 2006 Census (cont'd)

◆ Processing

- Scanning census forms mailed in.
- Integrating data from mail, Internet and Telephone.
- Verification and editing on-screen.

◆ Timeliness

- First set of population counts by December 2006.

Progressively introducing change

- ◆ 1996 Census
 - pilot centralized mail out, mail back (tested in one region)
- ◆ 1998 National Census Test
 - pilot centralized mail out, mail back of long form (tested in two regions)
- ◆ 2001 Census
 - pilot electronic reporting via the Internet (tested in two regions)
 - parallel key data entry and scanning of questionnaires
 - scanned images used to verify and edit data from screens

Progressively introducing change (cont'd)

◆ 2004 Dress Rehearsal

- Full mail out, mail back of short and long forms
- Integration of multiple options for providing census information available to all respondents in Canada
 - » regular mail (scanning)
 - » Internet
 - » telephone operators (screen application)

◆ 2006 Census

- Completion of transformation to fully integrated and automated data collection and processing operations.

Challenges and Risks with New Methodology

- ◆ Significant costs
 - Technology is expensive, particularly in the short term. Cost of maintaining systems often underestimated.
 - Communication with field staff for non-response
 - Development and integration of collection and processing operations
- ◆ Time
 - Much lead time necessary to develop and test systems.
 - Challenging with quinquennial census in Canada.

Challenges and Risks with New Methodology (cont'd)

- ◆ Response rates
 - High quality address register crucial.
 - No personal contact may lead to fewer responses.
 - More aggressive communications campaign needed.
- ◆ Data quality
 - Centralized edit and follow-up could potentially impact data quality.
- ◆ Privacy and confidentiality
 - Traditional methodology still being used in rural areas.

Dissemination:

New approaches for 2001 Census

- ◆ As of 2001 the Internet is the main dissemination vehicle
- ◆ Three tiered structure for on-line access to census data
 - free data: univariate data for geographies down to municipality level ... in 2001 more than ever before
 - restricted access: special tabulations for key stakeholders including certain government departments and education sectors
 - for a fee: detailed cross-tabulations

Dissemination:

New approaches for 2001 Census

- ◆ On the Internet, for each Census topic
 - Analysis, Animated graphics
 - Data
 - Maps, reference and thematic
 - Reference guides, dictionnaires...

Communications:

New approaches for 2001 Census

- ◆ More relevant analysis
 - *2001 Census Analysis Series*
 - Basic analysis written for general public
 - Storylines prepared months in advance data from previous censuses and other surveys.

Communication:

New approaches for 2001 Census

- ◆ Convey information to Canadians about their own community
 - *Highlight Tables* provide information for a given topic down to municipality level, with sorting and ranking functionality.
 - *Highlight Tables* focus on indices (distribution, median, % change over time), not just data
 - *Community Profiles* provide many statistics for a given community
 - Media relations
 - » Advance sessions with analysts
 - » Customized tables and databases

Thank you
