



people's panel



People's Panel Survey – Census Test

August 2016



Report prepared by Statistics New Zealand and Auckland Council's Market Research and Engagement Team

Background

Statistics New Zealand is getting ready for the 2018 Census. To prepare, they are running a series of tests to check that their new systems, processes, and forms are easy to use and will help capture quality and robust independent information.

Part of the testing programme involved Statistics NZ and Auckland Council working together to ask the People's Panel to test the latest version of the new online forms.

By working with an online reference group, Statistics NZ was able to gather information from thousands of New Zealand residents in a short timeframe. The information will be used to help plan for the 2018 Census.

What is the census?

Census data is used in New Zealand to help government, iwi, businesses and community groups make decisions about the services they provide – services that matter to all of us.

Every five years, Statistics NZ collects information from everyone who is in New Zealand on census night. This information is used to provide an official count of how many people there are in New Zealand. The census also captures a range of information that is used by local and central government, iwi, community groups and businesses to help them make decisions about funding and services in communities across the country.

What happened during the test?

In late June 2016, People's Panel members were sent a link and a unique access code, and asked to complete the test census form online.

Participants were asked to answer a series of online questions about themselves, their family, and household to help Statistics NZ decide if the new and changed questions could be included in the next census.

Participants completed three sections online:

1. a household summary page with details about individuals in their household
2. information about their dwelling, and
3. information about themselves.

The information provided by participants is protected by law and will be kept confidential by Statistics NZ. Responses were sent directly to Statistics NZ and were not shared with Auckland Council. The data collected during this test is held securely and will be destroyed by Statistics NZ once the 2018 forms are finalised.

How will the information be used?

Statistics NZ will use the information from the test to plan for the 2018 Census, where everyone is encouraged to complete their census information online.

The information collected will be broken down into the following groups:

Content

To reflect changes in the social landscape of New Zealand and to collect data that is relevant for key data users, Statistics NZ is in the process of reviewing the topics and questions that will be asked in the next census. The census questions have not been comprehensively reviewed since 2006.

Statistics NZ is testing new and changed questions on a variety of new topics including housing quality – whether people have damp or mould in their homes; sexual orientation; and the introduction of a third sex category, ‘indeterminate’ – for people to select who are biologically neither male nor female.

Statistics NZ will determine the right balance between making changes to better reflect information needs in New Zealand today and being able compare data over time.

The information gathered during this test will also help Statistics NZ see if the questions are easy for people to understand and complete, and if they enable Statistics NZ to gather high-quality information.

This information will be used to help the organisation make a final decision in 2017 about whether new questions will be included in the final version of the 2018 forms.

Technical

Statistics NZ has also been able to collect information about how people completed the online forms.

By gathering information about how long it took people to complete the forms, some of the issues people experienced with using different devices and browsers, and the structure of the forms, Statistics NZ will be able to make improvements to the next version of the form that will be tested in 2017.

About the People’s Panel

The People’s Panel aims to provide an opportunity for Aucklanders to get involved with a range of council issues and projects, giving feedback by regularly completing online surveys and getting involved with focus groups and other activities as needed.

The panel ideally supplements other research, consultation and engagement activities used to provide public perceptions to help inform decision-making processes. Panellists are recruited to be ‘typical’ members of the public – that is they include members of the public who come from a range of backgrounds and a range of levels of involvement with the council.

At the time of surveying there were almost 25,000 people registered with the panel, with representation from residents of each local board area and by age group and ethnicity. The People's Panel is not yet representative of the wider Auckland population and on-going recruitment is conducted to improve participation from particular areas, age groups and ethnicities.

For more information about the People's Panel visit:

www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/peoplespanel



Did you know?

Of all panel respondents, 10 percent commonly use a bus to travel to work.

Survey outcomes

Methodology

The survey was open from Monday 27 June to Friday 29 July 2016. The test day was Tuesday 5 July 2016.

All People's Panel members were sent a link and a unique access code by email. The link took members to a census test site, where they entered their code to access the forms.

One reminder was sent on Thursday 7 July 2016 to members who had not responded after the test day had passed.

The People's Panel is the largest online group of people that Statistics NZ will test their forms with in the lead up to the 2018 Census.

One purpose of the test was to see if people were able to complete the new questions without support. To this end, Statistics NZ did not provide a contact centre and the online form did not include the full functionality that will be developed for the 2018 Census form.

Enquiries

During the test, Statistics NZ responded to more than 150 enquiries from panel members who reported a variety of technical issues and provided feedback on how they found the experience.

Early in the survey period, panel members alerted Statistics NZ to a technical testing issue that was resolved within a few hours.

Responses

Statistics NZ received approximately 5,700 individual forms and 3,300 household forms. Overall, 14.6 percent of panel members completed the test census forms.

Figure 1 outlines the response rate over the four weeks the survey was open.

Figure 1

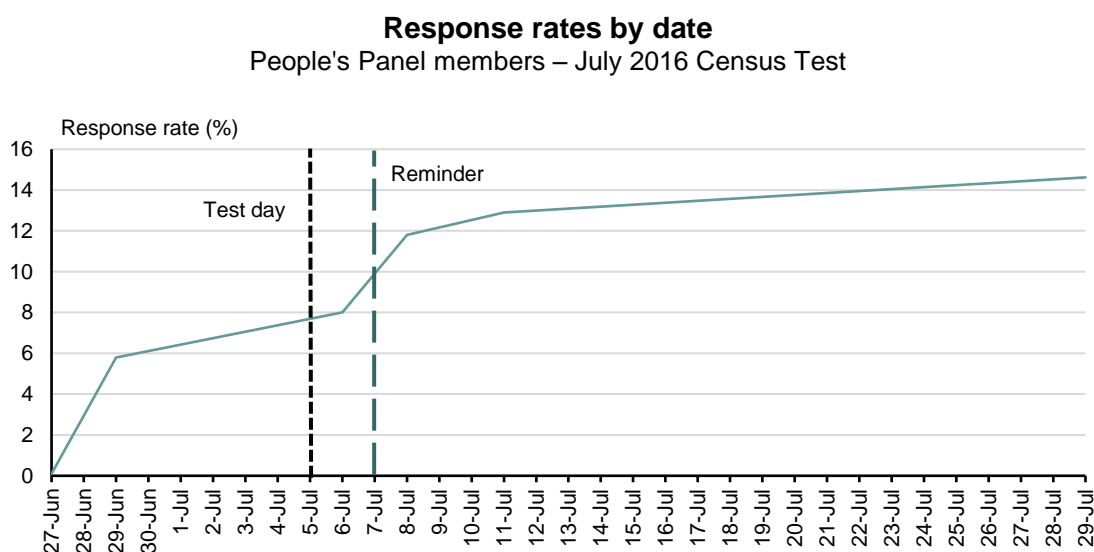
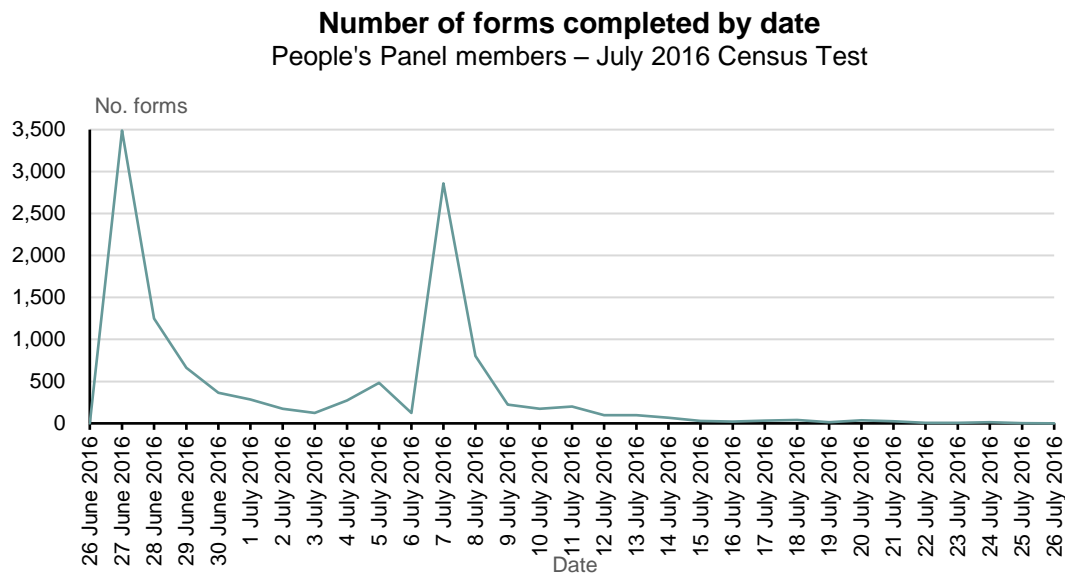


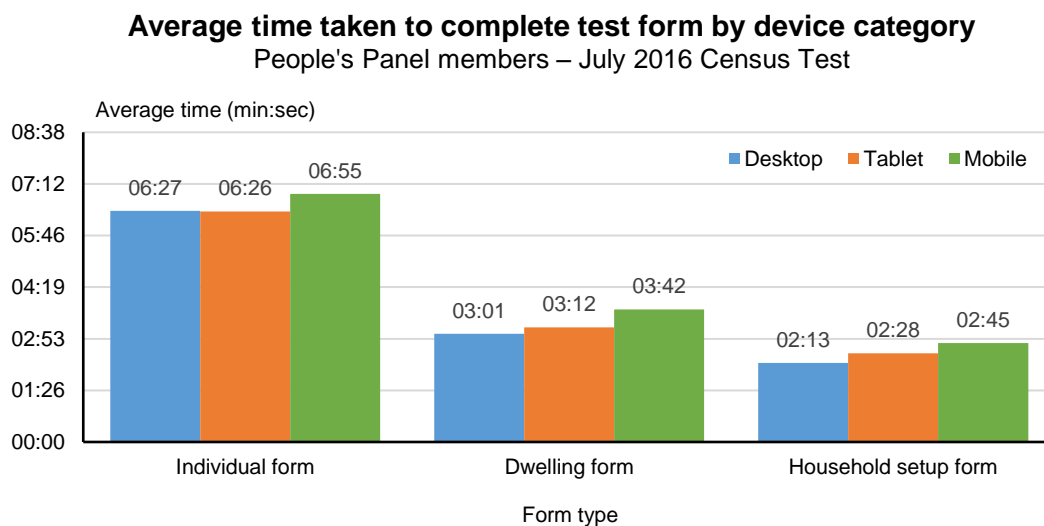
Figure 2 shows the number of forms received each day. The two peaks show the day of the first email invite (27 June) and the day of the reminder email (7 July).

Figure 2



Completing the survey (includes time taken to login) took an average of 12-and-a-half minutes, across all devices.

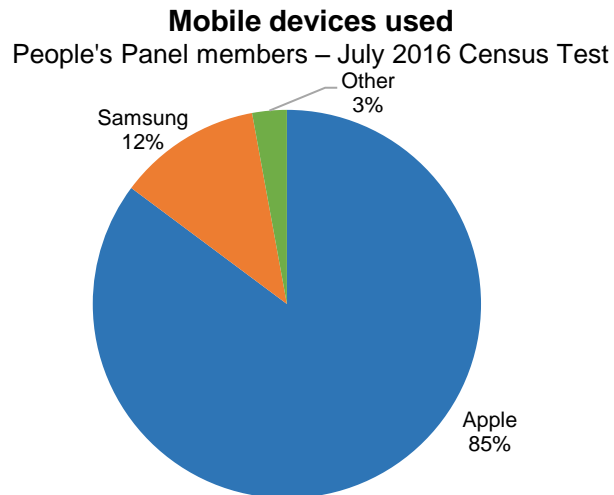
Figure 3



Mobile device

Apple iPad and iPhones were the predominant mobile devices used by people during the test.

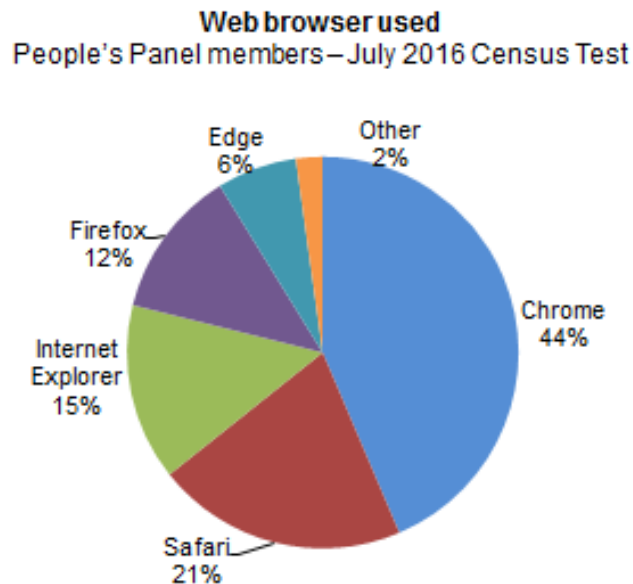
Figure 4



Browser

The browser that most people used on all platforms to take part in the test was Chrome.

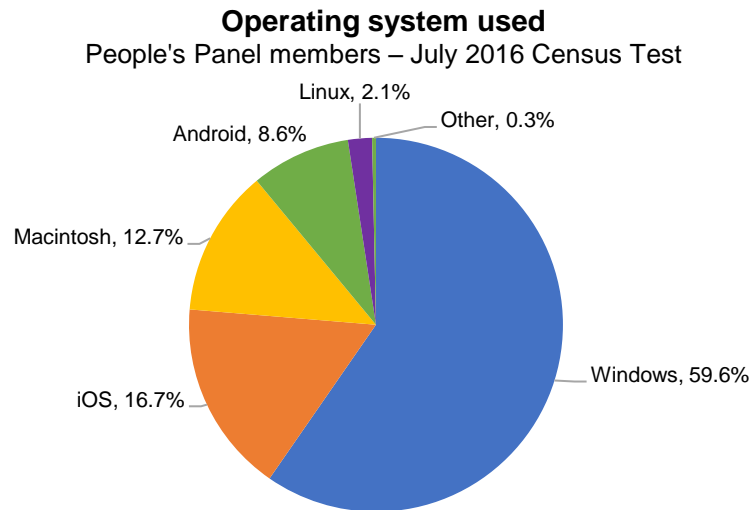
Figure 5



Operating system

The operating system used by most people to participate in the test was Windows.

Figure 6



Thank you

Statistics NZ would like to thank everyone who participated in this test. Your support will help improve systems and processes in the lead up to the 2018 Census.

Statistics NZ will make a final decision about the content that will be included in the next census in mid-2017.

The next census will be held on Tuesday, 6 March 2018.

ⁱ The data referenced in this report was sourced directly from the Census Test (July 2016).

Did you know?

Nearly 30 percent of respondents indicated they normally walk or jog to their place of education.