

Challenges of Migrating ABS Surveys to Blaise Web

On a Large Scale and Short Timeframe

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Outline

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- The journey
- ECollection migration challenges
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The Australian Bureau of Statistics

- ABS is Australia's official national statistical agency
- Provide statistics on a wide range of economic, social, population and environmental matters
- Our mission:
 - To assist and encourage informed decision-making, research and discussion within governments and the community by leading a high quality, objective and responsive national statistical service
- My role:
 - Responsible for ABS future enterprise eCollection capability for household and business surveys and the online Population Census

Key drivers for change

- The ABS faces a number of challenges
 - Increasing demands for more timely and diverse statistical data
 - Operating in a fast changing information landscape
 - Increasing collection costs and complexity
 - Budget pressures
 - Increasing provider resistance.

Responding to the need for change

- To remain effective and to ensure we have a sustainable future ABS needs to
 - transform the way we collect, collate, manage, use, reuse and disseminate statistical information
 - transform our operations in order to be more productive, timely and flexible with the information we collect, process and deliver
 - ensure we meet the expectations of users and providers

The Journey

- In 2012, ABS began a program of transforming data collection activities to include eCollection as an option
- Blaise IS for eCollection in household and business surveys
- Started in May for December release - adopted a minimalist approach to this initial round of eCollection
- By the end of 2013, eForms will be implemented for:
 - most quarterly and annual business collections
 - the Monthly Population Survey
 - the Multipurpose Household Survey

Collection	Cycle	Sample Size	First Use
Monthly Population Survey	Monthly	36,000*	Dec 12
Internet Activity	Half Yearly	100 to 600	Dec 12
Business Indicators	Quarterly	16,000	Mar 13
New Capital Expenditure	Quarterly	8,000	Mar 13
Tourist Accommodation	Quarterly	4,500	Mar 13
Retail Trade Margins	Quarterly	150	Mar 13
Engineering Construction	Quarterly	2,000	Mar 13
Average Weekly Earnings	Half Yearly	5,500	May 13
International Trade Coverage	Quarterly	800	May 13
Employment and Earnings	Annual	2,000	Jun 13
Rural Env. & Ag. Commodity	Annual	35,000	Jun 13

ECollection Migration Challenges

- Integration issues
 - eForm had to work with ABS legacy systems
 - Incremental fixes and enhancements were needed to ensure a stable eCollection experience
- Testing
 - Insufficient time for end to end testing
 - Increased overall testing required
 - Limited availability of testing environments
 - Deployment of surveys required technical assistance
- Ambitious release schedule
 - Original migration release plan had to be scaled back

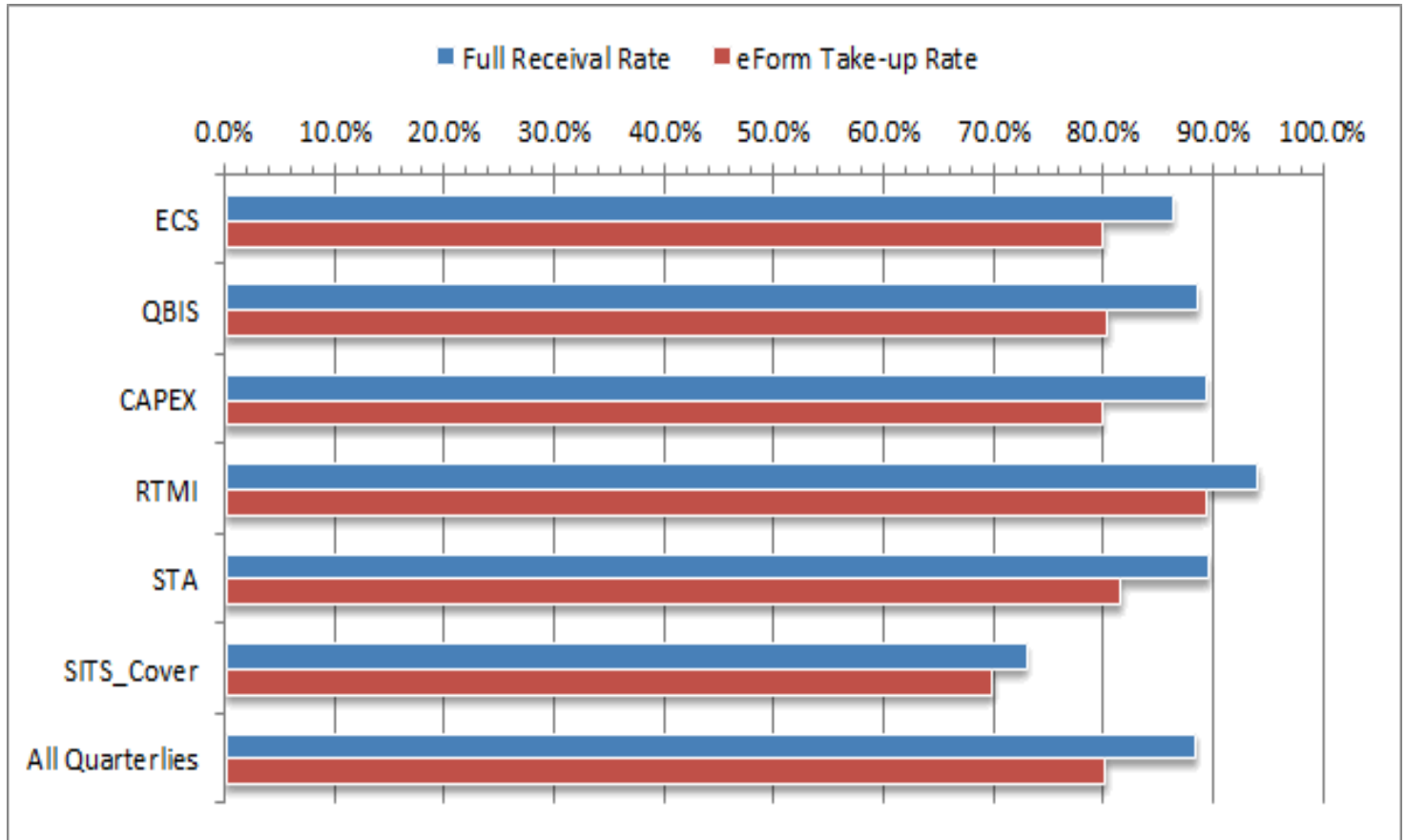
ECollection Migration Challenges

- Resourcing
 - Constant competition between business as usual and eCollection development
 - Insufficient skilled staff
 - Not a complete migration to eCollection yet – so we have dual development paths
- Expectation management
 - The initial migration has kept forms very simple and is really a translation from paper
 - Everyone uses the web and has their own expectations of how a web form should look and feel

Lessons Learnt

- Focus on the whole collection process, not just eForm delivery – despatch, authentication, end user experience
- Allow time for skills development, expansion and learning – business and IT
- Allow for increased/different testing processes
 - Functionality, performance, load, security, accessibility, useability, integration

Results so far



Where to Next

- Migrating outstanding collections to eForm (where possible)
- Investigating Blaise 5
- Examine pre-approach and follow-up strategies to increase uptake of eCollection
- Providing an eForm for the Census Major test in August 2014, 2015 and the main event in 2016

Where to Next – Blaise 5

- Load and performance testing is currently being undertaken by an external partner
- Assessment of ABS requirements against Blaise 5
- Security and integration testing
- Determine if Blaise 5 is suitable for use for the 2016 Population Census

Conclusion

- The ABS has successfully migrated a considerable number of surveys to eCollection in a short timeframe
- Overall quality of instruments has been reasonably good (stable and works), but provider experience needs to be improved
- Our ambitious program has not been without its challenges, but we are moving in the right direction

Questions

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