Technical Improvements and future directions for eCollection and multimodal data capture in the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS)

Monica Kempster, Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS)

The ABS is positioning itself strongly for increased demand for electronic collection of data, which will support the Australian Government Digital Services Strategy. The ABS is further improving eCollection capability, utilisation and usability for respondents. This includes adopting a self-help user model, user self-management of accounts and credentials, improvements in multi-modal data capture and management.

Significantly more surveys have been added to the electronic capture program with many requiring new layouts to improve statistical collection, reduce modal bias, improve accessibility compliance and provide value add functions such as address validation through the utilisation of corporate geospatial services. As the ABS moves into a transformation phase for its acquisition of data, from the current translation phase, the usage of Blaise to provide further opportunities for data collection, editing and analysis is core to the success of this phase of the project. Through the work done over the last 12 months an increased focus on multi modal data capture and processing has become a core part of development and improvement.

The ABS is also adopting a new corporate authentication and authorisation solution. Changes have been made to the existing Blaise solution to improve connectivity with other components, such as authentication, security, and processing services. There are also improvements in system security, load and performance. This work will make the Blaise Instrument development and linkage more robust for the future through the exclusion of all non-form processing services to servers outside of the Blaise server park environment and making the instrument more resilliant to external ICT changes.

Future improvements include improving ability to move partially completed records between data collection modes, making multi modal capture more timely and adaptable to changing respondent behaviours , as well as enable scale out of infrastructure to multiple Blaise parks for load balancing, risk management and contingency planning.