

Developing the UK International Passenger Survey in Blaise 5 on tablet computer

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The survey

The International Passenger Survey (IPS) is a continuous survey that has been running since 1961 by the Office for National Statistics (ONS). This is the main source of information in the UK on international travel and tourism, as well as the associated expenditure. Between 700,000 and 800,000 face-to-face interviews are conducted every year at the major air, sea and tunnel routes to and from the UK by a national team of 240 interviewers.



The challenge

At the moment, the IPS data are collected on paper forms which are then manually typed into Blaise 4.8 and transferred electronically to ONS

headquarter where data cleansing and validation take place.

Budgetary constraints, as well as ONS policy to produce high quality and timely outputs have placed tremendous emphasis on exploring more efficient ways to collect data.



Why Blaise 5 on tablet?

The IPS has been interested in hand-held technologies for some time. However, until recently, ONS felt that the hardware was not sufficiently advanced. With Blaise 5 available on Windows tablets, and the prospect of using the software on iOS and Android in a near future, ONS has started investigating this solution again.

Our vision is three-fold. Firstly, speed up the data collection and processing time while improving data quality thanks to Blaise functionalities e.g. routing, lookup and in-built validations. Secondly, offer a cost-effective solution which allows ONS to make savings. And last but not least, develop a data collection tool that is user-friendly and fit-for-purpose.

In July 2014, a Blaise developer was asked to shadow IPS interviewers at Bristol airport in order to understand field constraints. A questionnaire prototype was then developed on Windows 8 tablet computer, using Blaise 5, and presented to a group of interviewers for feedback. A pilot is planned for beginning 2015 at Bristol, Liverpool and Manchester airports.

