User experience of the Blaise 5.12 version upgrade at Statistics Finland

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Background

Ruuti system (CMA) characteristics &
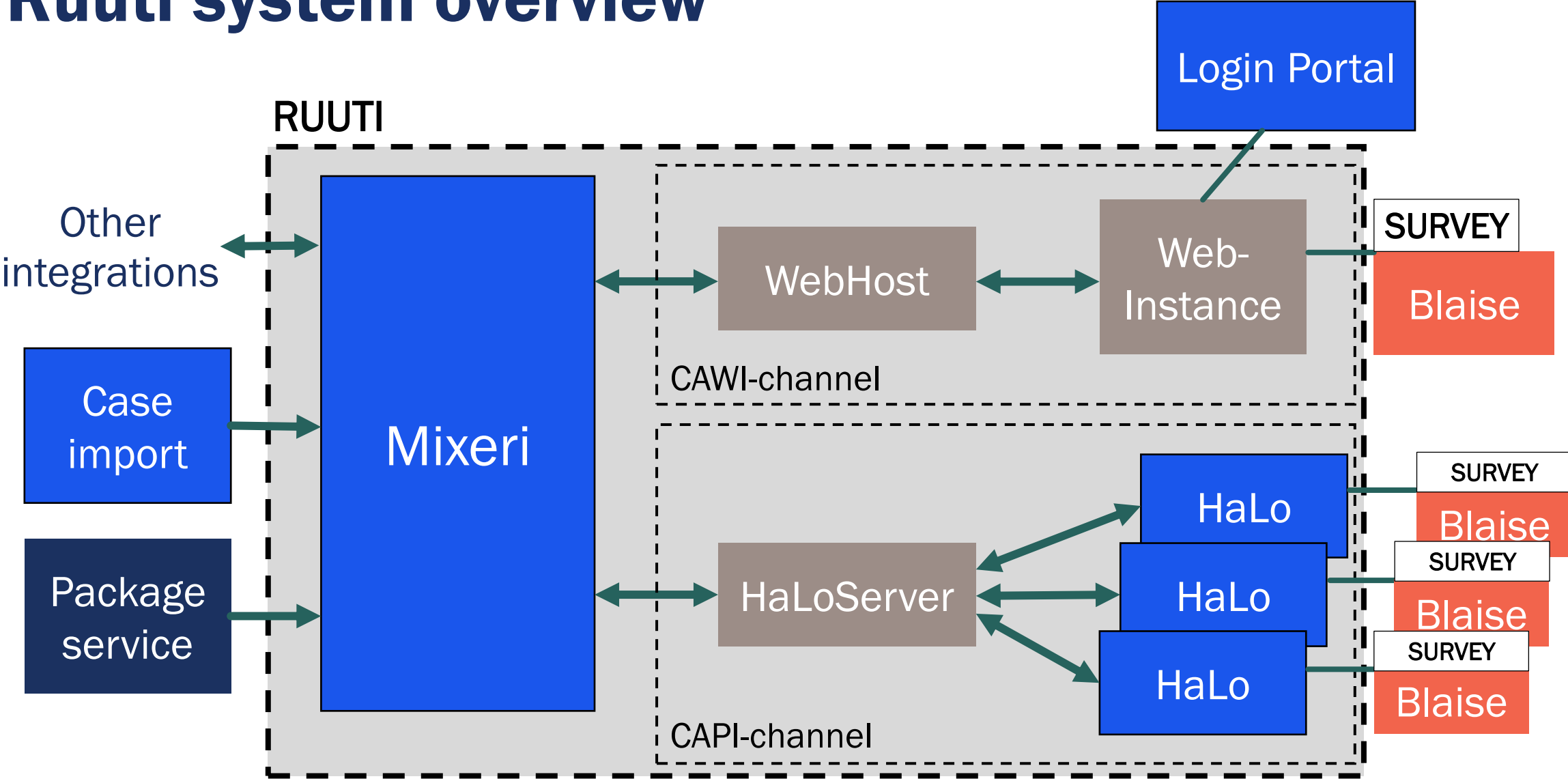Blaise version upgrade challenges

What is Ruuti?

- Ruuti is a tool for the daily operation of mixed mode data collections.

- Ruuti understands:
    - data collection, collection rounds and cycles
    - two possible collection modes (online answering and interview) used together or separately
    - interviewers and their administration in relation to the interview mode
    - case/target, persons and the persons' contact information, addresses, telephone numbers and e-mails.

- Ruuti is not responsible for the content and functionality of the forms, it is not a long-term storage place for collected data or a tool for planning data collection nor is tool for developing data collection.

- The Ruuti concept was originally designed to meet the organization's data collections and mixed mode survey management needs more than ten years ago.

Ruuti system overview

RUUTI

Other integrations

Case import

Package service

Mixeri

Login Portal

CAWI-channel

WebHost ⟷ Web-Instance

SURVEY
Blaise

CAPI-channel

HaLoServer

HaLo — SURVEY / Blaise

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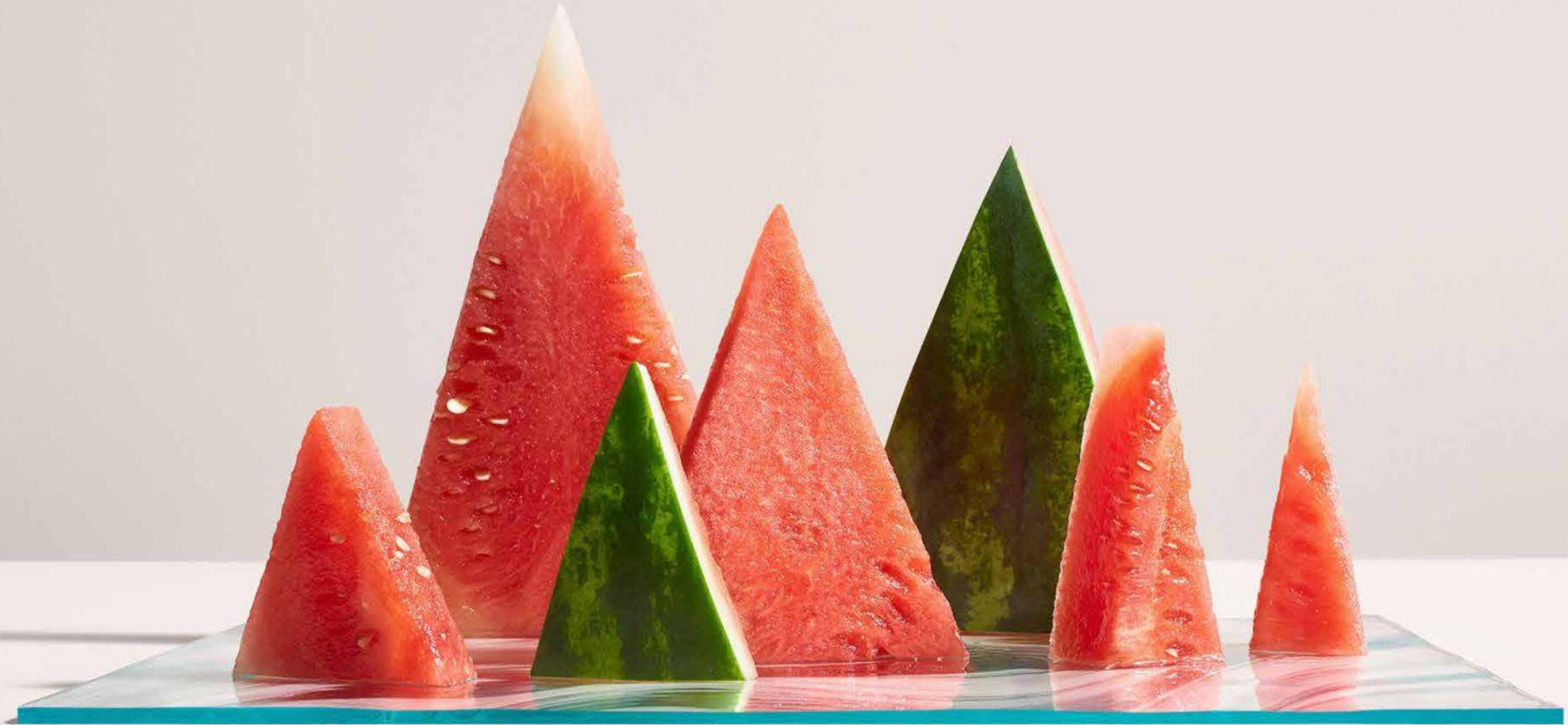
■ = user interface   ⟷ = data flow

Blaise version upgrade challenges

- Interviewers have HaLo (Interviewer Case Management Application) and Blaise 5 installation in their personal workstation

- Upgrading Blaise for the interviewers has required not only the HaLo application update but also a new Blaise installation

- As the production is running all the time, it is either necessary to schedule the updates to the turning points of the key data collection rounds around the turn of the year, or to carry out the updates during an unwanted production break

- New Blaise versions cannot be put into production flexibly and with short notice

- Introduction of the new Blaise version involves long-term testing and waiting until the biggest bugs from the latest released versions have already been ironed out and the operation is relatively reliable

Blaise 5.12 upgrade

Current situation

- In Statistics Finland, the current production version in use is Blaise 5.8

- Blaise is used also outside of Ruuti system in production use
    - business surveys
    - and in some special case surveys

- All of our production surveys along the Ruuti system are prepared for the Blaise 5.12 upgrade in November

- In December we are fully using Blaise 5.12

Testing process briefly

- A new Blaise version is initially tested with in house made test survey:
    - survey contains all the most common answer types and layout definitions used
    - we will test that the survey works in both currently used modes (CAWI & CAPI)
    - we also check that all the controls used in user interface are working correctly
    - it is important to make sure that general usability is good and accessibility functions are working as they should
    - also a few common mobile devices are used in tests

- After a successful test in the first phase, a few of our most complex surveys are upgraded with new the new Blaise version. Typically, these surveys have some unique or complex solutions:
    - household structure or some other complex datamodel structure
    - custom features such as special navigation buttons or custom pages with special controls

- In third phase we will create a Ruuti system compatible survey installation package and test the survey in Ruuti test environment
    - Before this test is possible, we usually must upgrade Ruuti API libraries with the new ones that comes with the new Blaise version package

Upgrading resource database

- Before the testing process, it was assumed that a lot of work needs to be done with the resource database

- Biggest fear were that the new rendering options such as CSS (Cascading Style Sheets) could cause us to redo our layout in our customized resource database

- The experiences from past have affected the overall feeling that in every Blaise upgrade we must test a lot to ensure the page and control dimension are as we want them to be with different devices

- On this upgrade we have not yet had any major problems and overall, it was just a "press of a button", literally

- Only problem we encountered was when we did not use the new CSS rendering options

"Use CSS grids instead of size tree" option -case

Experiences of testing Data Entry Program

- After the successful resource database update, it was necessary to study how Data Entry Program would work with our updated resource database and layout settings

- From DEP we expect:
  - to shape the current way of work to ease the installation burden
  - to help running surveys created with different Blaise versions using ThickClient

- The test was carried out by using one of our heaviest surveys "Survey on Income and living conditions"
  - in the test scenario it was necessary to successfully set up a standalone ThickClient survey and run the survey package without generated pages
  - it was necessary to have evidence to ensure that there is no risk that the survey would not work in practice

- There were no problems with running the survey and the quick conclusion from test results were that it will be implemented into production in autumn 2023

- These changes will affect on Ruuti System and HaLo application also

CATI in Statistics Finland

Blaise5 CATI phases in Statistics Finland

2018

Intial testing of Blaise5 CATI

CATI Blaise5 consept was postponed and not introduced in Ruuti system due lack of resources

2022

Decision to upgrade

TLS 1.2 upgrade caused problems with Blaise4 CATI connections

2023

Blaise5 CATI implementation

Our two CATI Blaise4 surveys will be upgraded to Blaise5 CATI surveys

2024

Production use

In February and March 2024 Blaise5 CATI will be online

CATI implementation situation

- First CATI tests with Blaise 5.12 were carried out in July 2023 with complications

- Troubleshooting was carried out successfully with the help of CBS and as a result a fix installation package was received from CBS

- Blaise5 CATI was tested successfully in October with sample "Health Survey"

- After getting familiar with the new Blaise 5.12 CATI concept, a meeting was arranged with the key users for the new system to gather information of what kind of in-house-requirements there is for the new CATI surveys
  - Layout requirements and special functions
  - Mapping of solutions related to data analysis and responsive data collection
  - Getting to know the reporting tools and studying their usage methods

- In November first CATI survey is upgraded with our own CATI layout and customized functions so we can begin to tests

Statistics Finland in figures

Statistics Finland

624 statistical releases

840 experts, of whom

150 statistical interviewers

3.57 personnel job satisfaction index, on a scale of 1–5

Funding

EUR 53 million from the state budget

EUR 13 million income from charged services

156 years of data and statistics

112 pcs

150 statistics

4 700 tables in the database

Data needed for statistics

95% from registers
5% with inquiries

95.5% of inquiries could be answered online

Statistical inquiries

168 000 responses from organisations
181 000 responses from persons and households

for researchers

423 user licences
204 data deliveries

1 048 service deliveries subject to charge

90% of Finns know Statistics Finland

90% of Finns consider Statistics Finland impartial

8 000 contacts answered by the information service

16 500 followers on Twitter

3.8 million users on the **stat.fi** website

Read more: stat.fi

Thank you

Statistics Finland