

Challenges and opportunities of upgrading surveys to Blaise 5

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The Office for National Statistics has been migrating surveys to Blaise 5 since 2018. I presented on the initial development and deployment of our first Blaise 5 questionnaire at the 2018 IBUC in Baltimore, and this paper reports on the progress since then.

Upgrading surveys to Blaise 5 has allowed us the opportunity to revisit the structure, functionality and design of our existing Blaise 4.8 survey questionnaires. We have adopted a core structure to questionnaires to make the upgrade process of our most prominent surveys more efficient. This standardization has numerous benefits, from the robustness of rigorously tested re-usable code, to the automatic application of layout templates and other features associated with the resource database.

The move to Blaise 5 and the expansion of a web mode has introduced new challenges that have impacted on the design of our questionnaires, from security to managing mixed-mode collection. An environment has been developed for two of our key surveys in which web collection is hosted externally, and the telephone interviewing hosted internally. Although this model has worked well for several years, development is continuing, and our eventual goal continues to be a single database approach accessed by respondents completing surveys concurrently in multiple modes. This will ensure that current business process will be made more efficient, whilst using Blaise 5 at its full potential.