

A Survey on Users' Opinion about StatBank Denmark

November 2001

*Statistics Denmark
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Foreword

StatBank Denmark is Statistics Denmark's public on-line database on the Internet. It contains all public statistics and it is free of charge for everyone since 1 January 2001.

Since the service was made free of charge, the number of users increased dramatically from 1,200 to more than 35,000 registered users. As a consequence we cannot hold the same close contact to the users as before. It was therefore decided to carry out a web survey to identify the users' views and needs concerning the Internet database.

The survey was taken 7 – 21 November 2001.

The survey is to be repeated September 2002.

Questions and proposals regarding the survey are appreciated. Please, forward them to Chief Adviser Annegrete Wulff, e-mail: awu@dst.dk.

Copenhagen, 20 December 2001

A Survey on Users' opinion about StatBank Denmark November 2001

Main results

The majority of users find that StatBank Denmark is a very good product regarding contents as well as functionality. Nevertheless, a small minority declare that they seldom find what they are looking for.

Although the answers are not representative for all users – only for those who took part – they contribute to our understanding of the needs and difficulties. The answers show that especially novices meet difficulties in getting a result of their use of the StatBank – something we will need to look into.

50 % of the registered users and 15 % of the non-registered users who have been presented to the questions have filled in the questionnaire.

Simple questions ...

The questionnaire consisted of 12 questions – of which some were skipped depending on answers to earlier questions (routing). Two background questions (age and sex) were included.

... and constructive comments

In addition an open question for free comments was posed. Between 1/4 and 1/3 of the respondents gave in this way some very constructive and useful comments for our future developments. Some of these proposals are already implemented in our latest user interface launched in December 2001.

Respondents

Everybody uses the StatBank free of charge. However, it is possible to register as a user.

A *registered user* has some advantages concerning functionality. He/she will be able to:

- retrieve larger tables (more than 15,000 table cells)
- save queries
- save his/her own selection lists
- receive an e-mail with information regarding corrections etc

The user can register him/herself, choose password, fill in a form with e-mail, address and sector.

A *non-registered user* (a "guest") can

- select max 1,000 figures in one retrieval.

Staff in Statistics Denmark is not included in the survey.

Registered users selected at random in two strata:

- 3,200 who were active within the latest 4 month
- 500 who within the last six month have retrieved 30 tables or more.

Non-registered selected:

- Everybody who logged in got the chance to fill in the form. We stopped when 1000 had responded.

		<i>Registered users</i>	<i>Non-registered users</i>
Number	Possible answers	637	7008
	Answers	318	1038
Per cent	Possible answers	100	100
	Answers	50	15

The survey was running over 2 weeks only. The design means that we get an over-representation of frequent users.

Only 15 % of the non-registered users answered. Anyway it was the opinions of 1038 different users, which give important input to the development. When we in this paper express the attitude of the different users, we have to realise that it only covers the part of the users that participated in the survey.

The answers

Man, age 18-49

The typical user is a man in the age of 18-49 years. This goes for both registered and non-registered users although the latter also represents more young and old. Less than 1% is 65 years or more.

70% of the registered are men, 65% among the non-registered.

At work

The StatBank is indeed a working tool. Among the registered users, 87% use it a couple of times or more a month. Almost 50% use it at least once a week.

51% of non-registered users are logged in for the first time, but still they intend to use the results for job or study.

15% of the non-registered use the StatBank of mere personal interest!

The choice to become a registered user is not obvious to all: Almost none of the non-registered were aware of the advantages of being registered: they did not know, they thought it was a charged service, they had forgotten their password and the like.

Consequence 1: Login improved

The way users can register and login must be made clearer. It must be possible to recall lost passwords.

It is very rare that the users do not find what they are looking for. Only 2% of the registered and 11 % of the non-registered users mention that they look in vain for some information. We do not know whether they look for information we actually have, or it is outside our business.

It is satisfactory that 92% of the registered users always or usually find what they are looking for. The same goes for 65% of the non-registered.

Consequence 2: Search facility improved

The non-professionals, the beginners, seem to make more searches in vain for statistics than others. We must consider to improve the search facility as an alternative to the hierarchical subject structure.

Documentation Users on the Internet are often left to help themselves. We cannot control that the statistics they retrieve are interpreted correctly. But we can facilitate their access to relevant documentation connected to the figures.

Tables in StatBank are all linked to documentation (source, definitions etc) in a product description. Obviously, all users do not know this. Only half of the registered and 15% of the non-registered have ever looked into this documentation. The majority of users who found their way to the documentation are satisfied with the information they got.

Consequence 3: Easier access to documentation

The information connected to a table should be easier to find. An improvement will be made in the forthcoming user interface.

Satisfaction

The users are in general both satisfied with the contents and the retrieval facilities in the StatBank. This goes especially for the registered users where 71% are satisfied or very satisfied with the contents and 81% find it easy or very easy to use the database.

The satisfaction among the non-registered users is almost just as high. 67% are satisfied or very satisfied with the contents while 65% find it easy or very easy to use the databank.

When we interpret this result we must remember that the group of users – and in particular the group of registered users – contains many experienced users who to some extent already know what to expect to find and how to manoeuvre in the database.

Consequence 4: Easier to manoeuvre for beginners

The StatBank is available to everyone. Our challenge will be to make it possible for everyone to navigate through it and end up with a satisfactory result.

Comments

The users were given the opportunity to write comments in free text in the questionnaire. 36% of the registered users took the opportunity to do so, while only 20% of the non-registered did the same. In total, Wwe got comments from 1356 people.

The comments fell into four groups:

- General comments (praise, complaints, proposals etc)
- Functionality (search, editing etc)
- Contents (new statistics, longer series etc)
- Irrelevant comments

Consequence 5: User panel

Some users suggested that we should set up a user panel where future developments could be discussed. We regard this as a very good idea and it will be established in 2002.

Comments regarding the contents will be discussed with the responsible subject matter people.

Many users mentioned problems and suggestions on functionality of the database. A more advanced search function was especially asked for. Our plan is to integrate the general search on the web with a search in the StatBank.

Conclusions

The users who answered the questionnaire are in general satisfied with the StatBank as it was November 2001. However, the somewhat inexperienced users are faced with difficulties. Moreover, we know nothing about the users who did *not* answer. Logically, we have neither any information about the users who gave up before even accessing the database.

The following activities that should result in a better and easier accessible database will take place during the next 12 months:

Activity 1:

Increased contents. A plan will be set up together with the subject matter people before May 2002.

Activity 2:

A more understandable log-in procedure. The advantages to register as a user will be made clearer December 2001.

Activity 3:

Documentation connected to the tables must be more obvious. Links will be made to relevant publications. January 2001.

Activity 4:

The search facility will be further developed. June 2002.

Activity 5:

Easier editing of a table including a pivoting function will be made available. December 2001.

Activity 6:

A user panel will be set up. March - April 2002.

Activity 7:

A user survey will take place again (September 2002). Moreover, a usability study based on a focus group will be carried on in 2002. It will cover the web functions in general as well as the StatBank.

Annex 1

Web questionnaire on the use of Statbank Denmark. (on-line databank: www.StatBank.dk)

Three minutes of your time could help us making StatBank Denmark better.

An extra appropriation on Statistics Denmark's budget has made it possible to give access to StatBank Denmark free of charge from 2001.

We intend to develop the database further according to the users' needs. This is why we ask you to spend three minutes to give your opinion of the database and the way it is used.

I want to answer the questionnaire now.

I want to return to StatBank Denmark.

1) How often do you use StatBank Denmark?

Once a week or more

A couple of times monthly

Once a month or less

This is my first visit →<Routing: go to 2-4 and 9-11>

2) What is the purpose of your retrieval of data from StatBank Denmark?

Study related

Work related

Personal interest

Other purposes

Do not know yet

<Routing: ONLY IF THE USER IS NON-REGISTERED:>

As registered user you have the advantage of retrieving larger tables, saving queries and lists

3a) Were you aware of these advantages?

Yes

No

3b) What is the reason why you did not use Id and password ?

I wish to be anonymous YES NO

I did not bother YES NO

I expected that it was a charged service YES NO

I have forgotten the password YES NO

I do not need the mentioned advantages YES NO

4) Do you usually find the statistics you are looking for?

Always

Almost always

Usually

Almost never

Did not need anything specific, only browsing

5) Have you ever used the information found in "Documentation"

YES → 6a

NO → 6b

6a) Is the documentation sufficient?

Completely sufficient

More or less sufficient

Insufficient

Completely insufficient

6b) Why did you not look into the information in "Documentation"?

I did not need it

I did not know there was any information

It is too tiresome

I did not have the time

Other reasons

I do not know

7) How satisfied are you in general with the contents of StatBank Denmark

Very satisfied

Satisfied

Neither satisfied nor unsatisfied

Unsatisfied

Very unsatisfied

8) How do you in general find the functionality of StatBank Denmark?

Very easy to use

Easy to use

Tiresome

Very tiresome

9) Your Sex:

man

woman

10) Your Age:

17 years or less

18-29 years

30-49 years

50-64 years

65 years or more

11) Any other comments concerning the contents or user interface of the StatBank Denmark?

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