

## *The Statistics Canada Portal : Experience and lessons learned*

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Canada

www.statcan.ca

## Statistics Canada Dissemination Strategy

- By law, all aggregate data collected must be published
- All data is published through one single dissemination window
- Published data is available to everyone via the Internet
- CANSIM (STC databank) is the backbone of this dissemination strategy



## Integrated Dissemination

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- Unique official release window in the world
- Internet based dissemination
- Centered around Dissemination Division
- Advance release dates of data
- Highlights of all data in *The Daily*
- hyperlinks
- Easily searched



## Why Integrated dissemination ?

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- Reach more than ever
- Effectiveness of dissemination
- Balance resource requirements
- Minimize manual intervention
- Optimize maintenance
- Maximize automation



## Advantages for STC

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- Unique location
- Buy-in from by subject matters
- All partners involved in coordinated effort
- Timely release with instant access to all
- More in depth / contextual information
- Cost avoidance / efficiencies
- Harmonized data / metadata
- STC credibility based on commitment



## Internet as dissemination channel

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- Unique location
- timely release with instant access
- more in depth information
- contextual information
- cost avoidance



## www.statcan.ca since 1995

- Grown from a distribution channel for *The Daily* to now contain in excess of 60 000 HTML pages and multiple databases
- Now serves 14 000 users each day, up from 3 000 in 1997
- Principal dissemination vehicle—integrated with other publishing programmes such as dynamic multi-format publishing
- After the media, it is the main channel of communication with the Canadian public and also serves our stakeholders: the library community, education and business partners
- Established research programme intrinsic to the site's development



## Market research: Key findings

- Large proportion of visitors are students and government employees
- Most popular areas contain free data: Canadian Statistics and Census
- Majority were satisfied, found most or all the information sought and would visit the site again
- Areas of improvement: search engine, design and navigation, home page



## Market research: Recommendations

- Working on increasing the breadth and scope of free information
- New search engine
- Browse by subject feature
- Standardized look and feel of the site
- Re-designed home page

Statistics Canada - Canada's national statistical agency profiling Canada's business, economy and... Microsoft Internet Explorer

STATISTICS CANADA SEARCH

### Welcome to Statistics Canada!

Message from the Chief Statistician of Canada

- Daily news**  
Highlights of newly released data, schedules for major releases and announcements of new products and services.
- Census**  
Five tabular data from the 1996 Census, including the [Statistical Profile of Canadian Communities](#) and information on the 2001 Census.
- Education resources**  
Programs and products to integrate Canadian statistical information into teaching and learning.
- In depth**  
Selected articles from our analytic periodicals.
- Service centres**  
Information on our regional offices, branches and other distributors of Statistics Canada data.
- Employment opportunities**
- Links to other sites**
- Canada quiz**  
Register our site and learn about Canada and Canadians.
- Français**
- Canadian statistics**  
Five tabular data on aspects of Canada's economy, land, people and government.
- Products and services**  
Catalogue, CANSIM and Trade statistics (TI), downloadable publications (FI), research papers, list of recently released products, and other services. [Tour site](#)
- Concepts, definitions and methods**  
Program documentation, statistical classifications (NACIS Canada), discussion papers, questionnaires, information on our surveys.
- About Statistics Canada**  
Information about Canada's national statistical agency including [Standards of access to the public](#).
- Are you in a Statistics Canada career?**
- Year 2000**
- Seminars and conferences**  
Information on seminars and conferences sponsored by Statistics Canada, international statistical conferences and proceedings.

PERSPECTIVES CLICK HERE

Statistics Canada / Statistique Canada

Canada

French Contact Us Help Search Canada Site

The Daily Canadian Statistics Community Our products and services Home Other links

Census Profiles

Search the site: [input] GO!

Free information only A to Z index Browse the site

Today's news releases from **The Daily**

Friday, August 17, 2001  
Released at 9:30 a.m. Eastern time

- [Canadian international merchandise trade, June 2001](#)  
A sharp decline in the value of energy exports along with weakness in most major sectors resulted in an overall decline in exports. Imports rose slightly as strong growth in the automotive and consumer goods sectors was partially offset by declines in energy imports.
- [Composite index, July 2001](#)  
The leading indicator was unchanged in July after a slight increase in June, pulled down by a moderation in housing after a sharp gain the month before.
- [National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating, 2000](#)  
In 2000, Canadians were volunteering less but giving more money than they were in 1997, according to a new

Latent indicators

Education (July 2000)	30,780,087
Consumer Price Index (June 2001)	0.3%
Unemployment rate (July 2001)	7.8%
Real Gross Domestic Product (May 2001)	0.3%

More in Canadian Statistics

Analyse industry performance with Industrial Monitor on CD-ROM  
Get a free demo CD-ROM  
Click here

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Statistical methods  
About Statistics Canada  
Employment opportunities

## information "modules"

- *The Daily*
- CANSIM
- Canadian Statistics
- On-line catalogue
- Metadata
- downloadable publications



## *The Daily*

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- Official release
- highlights of data releases
- hyperlinks to
  - publications
  - CANSIM
  - metadata
  - Canadian Statistics tables
- historical repository



## *Canadian Statistics*

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- 400 + summary tables
- Selected general interest data
- Fully automated updates
  - no human intervention
  - preset layout
  - CANSIM fed
  - timely and current release



## CANSIM II the output database

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- Second generation from 60's CANSIM
- macro data holding warehouse
- multi dimensional tables
- accessible on-line for fee
- Linked to metadata



## Context

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- Support from senior management
- Subject matters buy-in
- Basis of all dissemination in STC
- Subject to incremental development
- Requires continuous attention





## Issues

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- Expert resources needed
- stringent data quality a priori
- uptime of servers
- SGML staging as interim format
- advanced design vs conservative assumptions
- search engines efficiency



## Key partners

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- Senior managers
- Subject matters
  - Development / acceptance
  - Input data
  - Harmonized concepts / standards
  - Heavy users
- Support team
- External users
- Technology



## Challenges

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- Completeness
- Operational efficiency
- User-friendly
- Metadata connectivity
- Archiving
- Quality assurance
- 24/7 service



## Critical lessons learned

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- Developers must design and implement realistic functionalities and interfaces
- Developers must produce frequent and visible results in order to foster support among users and management
- Dissemination Division must champion the project



## Dissemination Division

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- Unique authoritative unit for STC
- 125+ employees
- CANSIM \ internet \ publications
- High technical \ operational expertise
- Development \ maintenance \ operations
- Link between subject matters and users



## Common Object Registry COR

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- Centralizing objects commonly used by different dissemination systems
- ID / label / relationship
- responsibility of "owning system" to update
- objects reside in only one system



## COR advantages

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- Improve the consistency and quality of common object references across systems
- make cross-referencing richer
- lower the maintenance overhead of links
- objects stored and updated once but used across



## Conclusion

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- Reaching more users
- Offering more data
- Providing timely information
- Putting data / metadata in context
- Automation, automation and automation

