

Office of the Australian Information Commissioner

Information Publication Scheme and Public Sector Information: Survey of Australian Government Agencies

Data Pack Report for Part B: Management and publication of public sector information

7 June 2012

Introduction

Background

An Issues paper that was published by the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC) in November 2011, *Understanding the value of public sector information in Australia*, proposed that a survey of Australian Government agencies was needed to gather consistent information across government about public sector information (PSI) management practices.

In April 2012 ORIMA Research was commissioned by the OAIC to conduct a survey of Australian Government agencies on the management and publication of public sector information. This was run in conjunction with research into the compliance with the Information Publication Scheme (IPS). The questionnaire was divided into two parts – Part A ‘Compliance with IPS obligations’ and Part B ‘Management and publication of public sector information’. The questionnaire was designed in the most part by the IPS and PSI Project Teams at the OAIC, with some consultation from ORIMA Research. This is a report of the results from Part B of the survey.

Part B of the questionnaire gathered information regarding the range of public sector information that is held by agencies, as well as their policies on open access to information, engaging the community, discoverability, reuse rights and challenges that agencies may be facing by publishing public sector information. Brought together, the results should help build a picture of the types of public sector information that is held by agencies across the Australian Government, and an understanding of whether that information is published in a way that facilitates reuse by the community. The questionnaire was also designed to help identify areas in which agencies could benefit from assistance or further guidance from the OAIC.

The findings are also expected to form part of further consultation with agencies, where relevant issues highlighted by the survey findings will be further explored in a series of focus groups run in mid-2012. The research is also intended as a benchmarking tool and a comparative survey is expected to occur in early 2014.

Methodology

The 2012 IPS and PSI Survey of Australian Government Agencies was conducted online between 30 April and 11 May 2012. Largely to give agencies more time to approve their responses through the appropriate clearance channels, fieldwork was extended until 17 May.

The in-scope sample was a list of all prescribed bodies subject to the FOI Act (‘agencies’)—Ministers were excluded. A total of 245 agencies were contacted, of which 191 responded. This produced a very strong response rate of 78%.

Before fieldwork, a communication from the Australian Information Commissioner, Professor John McMillan, was sent to agency heads and the FOI contact to inform them of the upcoming survey and to ask them to update their details if needed. OAIC provided ORIMA Research with a database of contact details for the IPS representative of that agency and this was maintained and updated by ORIMA throughout the survey.

At the start of the fieldwork period, all nominated contacts were sent an invitation email containing the survey link and a unique password for their agency. Reminder emails were sent to non-responding agencies on 7 and 10 May, and reminder telephone calls were made on 16 and 17 May to encourage participation.

After a preliminary data review, follow up telephone calls were made on 22 May to ask selected agencies to verify their responses were complete and certified.

During fieldwork, some agencies notified ORIMA Research that they were responding to the survey on behalf of smaller agencies within their portfolio. This has been reflected in the data, with each of these smaller agencies treated as a separate response. In these cases, the smaller agency responses were identical to the larger agency responses as the parent agency is responsible for the management and implementation of IPS and PSI obligations. A list of these occurrences is provided at Appendix E.

Note that some data used in this analysis has been sourced through external resources. In particular, data regarding the number of FOI requests received by the agency during the 2010-11 financial year and the total FOI expenditure for the 2010-11 financial year were taken from the 2010-11 FOI Annual Report at Appendix A and Appendix J (rather than the survey questions on these issues).

Guide to reading the results tables

q56. Does your agency routinely apply metadata to the public sector information it publishes on the internet?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	93	48.69109948	49.20634921	49.20634921
	No	80	41.88481675	42.32804233	91.53439153
	Not applicable	16	8.376963351	8.465608466	100
	Total	189	98.95287958	100	
Missing	System	2	1.047120419		
Total		191	100		

↑
All categories were selected at least once in this example. See Appendix A for a full list of response options available for each question.

↑
This column reports **numbers** of respondents.

↑
This column converts the number in the "Frequency" column into a **percentage of all respondents** (n=191).

↑
This column converts the number in the "Frequency" column into a **percentage of respondents who provided a response** (in this case, n=189, because 2 respondents did not answer the question ('Missing – System'))

↑
This column successively adds percentages in the "Valid Percent" column. For some questions this provides a useful "at a glance" view – for instance, in this example it tells us that 92% of respondents thought this question was applicable to them (i.e. selected either "Yes" or "No").