



Using portable electronic devices in the 2011 Census in Uruguay

Laura Nalbarte*

Instituto Nacional de Estadística, Montevideo, Uruguay– lnalbarte@ine.gub.uy

Abstract

In 2011 Uruguay held its 8th National Population Census, 4th National Household Census and 6th National Housing Census. The Census 2011 project included a series of methodological innovations such as, among others, changing to be “de jure”, the inclusion of portable electronic devices (PED) for capturing information that changes the data collection, the quality control and the dissemination. This paper focuses on the use of the devices. On one hand, it refers to aspects related to the definition of the content of the questionnaire and programming in PED, two core activities for the successful development of the census. On the other hand, the potentialities of its uses are mentioned, analyzing what was done and what might have been done.

Devices programming implies to devote time to: what and how the questions should be made, the rules to be included to improve the information gathered, always taking into account the time of interview, and how the transmission of information is made ensuring its safety. The surveyed questionnaires were sent to the National Statistical Institute (INE) through *Plan Ceibal* laptops that were connected to the PED. These laptops were the bridge to convey information and the device where the administrative system of each region was installed. The inclusion of new technology involved an improvement in the information to the extent that criticism controls were applied at the time of the interview. Also, enabled the reduction of the times in which information and microdata might be available. The data collected could be followed in real time. However, the impression is that the new technology it was not used to its full potential. On one hand, the working time of the staff with the device, prior to the Census, was scarce. This meant delays and problems in the first days of work. On the other hand, the potential of technology to monitor the work of each team leader, to know the availability of human resources in the territory, etc., was not used.

The inclusion of devices in the 2011 Census not only was good for the Census itself but also contributed in the generation of knowledge that is used today in the programming for capturing information in several of the statistical operations of the Institution.

Keywords: portable electronic devices