

# **2009 Census Rehearsal Evaluation Field and Remote Office System**

**February 2009**

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## **2009 Rehearsal – Field and Remote Office System**

### **1. Definition and scope for rehearsal**

The purpose of the Field and Remote Office project was to equip the two Field Offices located in Edinburgh and Lewis with appropriate IT equipment in order to allow field staff to perform the duties of their grade and use the systems set-up during the Census Rehearsal. The web-based systems included The Field and Payroll Services System (F&PSS), and the Field Management Information System (FMIS). Field staff were also provided with laptops, printers and mobile telephones for use in their homes and this was referred to as their “Remote Office”.

**IT and other equipment is detailed below.**

#### **Field Office**

Desktop PC  
Printer  
Thermal Printer  
Barcode Scanner  
Broadband Router

#### **Remote Office**

Laptops  
Printer  
Mobile ‘phones  
Broadband Router

Field staff were provided with training in the use of the IT equipment at their appointment and briefing sessions.

Remote Office equipment was issued to two Census Regional Managers (CRMs) and three Census District Managers (CDMs), one Census Area Manager (AM) working in Census Coverage Survey (CCS) and three Team Managers working in CCS. These staff were also issued with basic mobile telephones. Census Team Leaders (CTLs) and Enumerators were only provided with mobile telephones as were CCS interviewers.

#### **What was tested:**

- system development and maintenance;
- system security;
- broadband connectivity;
- remote desktop connections;
- barcode scanning and
- clarity of field staff instructions.

**What could not be tested**

System capability for dealing with high volumes of field staff.

## 2. Evaluation findings

- Pre – determined evaluation points

Description	Success Criteria	Outcome	Recommendation	Timeframe
1) System development and maintenance	<p>System was developed and available for use when required.</p> <p>Any faults found during operation were rectified within an acceptable timescale</p>	<p>A significant number of field staff reported difficulty in logging on to their computer equipment and related IT systems. This was predominately due to user error in either keying their user name and password incorrectly or forgetting their passwords. A General Register Office for Scotland (GROS) internal help desk resolved these problems immediately.</p>	<p>Simplify the logging on procedure and reduce the number of passwords required, whilst adhering fully to security requirements.</p>	<p>June 2010.</p>
2) System Specification and Security	<p>Sufficient detail was provided to allow the system to be developed.</p>	<p>The specifications of the field office PCs were on the whole adequate. However, the disabling of USB ports for security reasons obstructed the business need in terms of sharing non-sensitive data and copying files and generally providing remote access support to the user.</p> <p>Issues around access to field office meant specification and user account set up work was not able to be utilised to any great extent by the field staff.</p>	<p>Security requirements for PCs and the laptops should be reassessed as at times these were overly restrictive to the operation.</p>	<p>May 2010</p>

Description	Success Criteria	Outcome	Recommendation	Timeframe
<p><b>3) Broadband Connectivity</b></p>	<p>Users had consistent and reliable connectivity to the Internet.</p>	<p>Ordering of broadband connectivity was delayed until field staff had actually been appointed, despite the names and addresses of those offered appointment being known in advance of the formal appointment process. This was to mitigate the risk of individuals changing their minds and not taking up the post. As a result broadband was not installed across the board until approximately three weeks after formal appointment.</p> <p>Other problems encountered included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Broadband supplier disconnecting of domestic broadband in error, leaving the user without a service for two days.</li> <li>• Broadband supplier disconnecting domestic broadband and removal of wiring that the user themselves had installed.</li> <li>• Several cases of broadband supplier administrative errors delaying installation.</li> <li>• Broadband supplier could not provide connectivity to a property in a remote rural location.</li> </ul>	<p><b>a)</b> The procurement for internet connection must be generic enough to allow other means for connection to be considered, e.g. 3G cards.</p> <p><b>b)</b> Field staff should be allowed to make use of their own broadband connection should they wish to do so, with GROS making a payment to them for its use.</p> <p><b>c)</b> If broadband needs installed then this should be progressed once details of those offered appointment are known. In cases where some fail to take up post, the installation process will simply be cancelled.</p> <p><b>d)</b> Broadband software should be installed on field laptops prior to distribution.</p> <p><b>e)</b> Work with broadband supplier to define stronger governance/management processes for 2011. This will include the broadband</p>	

Description	Success Criteria	Outcome	Recommendation	Timeframe
		<p>A number of field staff objected to the installation of a dedicated second telephone line within their homes, mainly because of the disruption (drilling holes, lifting carpets etc). As a result in some cases broadband was installed in areas of the property which left trailing wires, creating a health and safety issue.</p> <p>Issues with broadband supplier payment process resulted in field staff receiving warnings when logged on that accounts had not been paid, when in fact they had. The fix applied by the broadband supplier was not successful and caused further issues (such as loss of service at Census HQ and other areas of GROS).</p> <p>The governance/management processes implemented by the broadband supplier were insufficient for the service required. Several issues could have been avoided had these been agreed at the outset and implemented during live operation.</p>	<p>supplier providing a dedicated account manager to proactively manage the service provision and interface with GROS throughout the contract period.</p>	



Description	Success Criteria	Outcome	Recommendation	Timeframe
<p><b>4) Remote Desktop Connections</b></p>	<p>Problems were resolved and updates were applied through remote desktop connectivity.</p>	<p>Remote desktop connectivity/software was successful in resolving problems and providing updates. While Information Technology Operations and Change (ITOC) colleagues generally provided this support at short notice, it was necessary at times to negotiate for their time against other competing demands within GROS.</p>	<p>A Census IT helpdesk will be deployed for 2011, with dedicated additional staff. The remote desktop software will continue to be used.</p>	<p>June 2010.</p>
<p><b>5) Barcode Scanning</b></p>	<p>The provision of barcode scanners and interface to successfully capture barcodes from census boxes to create consignment files.</p>	<p>The barcode scanning system proved to be very successful in capturing both the logistics service provider and GROS barcodes to create consignment files for the collection of census boxes. The scanners were easy to use. A number of training sessions were provided for field and CCS staff together with detailed instructions.</p>	<p>Barcode scanning will form part of a dedicated training session, geared specifically to IT aspects of field staff jobs. This will be carried out in small groups to allow field to be trained in a relaxed atmosphere where they would be less inhibited and be more likely to ask pertinent questions.</p> <p>The Barcode Scanning interface should be enhanced to detect duplicate GROS labels.</p>	<p>Enhanced Barcode Scanning software should fully tested and available for use by March 2011.</p>