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2011 Census Content Consultation Report



Census year 2011



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Note of appreciation

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Consultation with data users continues to help shape the census questionnaire, its relevance and its importance to users and respondents alike. Statistics Canada wishes to thank participants for the ideas and suggestions they contributed to the 2011 Census content to date.

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Note to reader

This report presents the findings generated during the 2011 Census content consultation period (April through November 2007).

Each chapter is dedicated to one or more census topics. A summary of the most frequently received remarks by subject and a list of some other areas of interest gives the reader a sense of the wealth and breadth of the input obtained during consultation. A section explaining the importance¹ of census data according to participants and a table reporting the distribution of comments by category are also found in each chapter. The follow-up section provides background on the content identified for quantitative testing on May 13, 2008.

Statistics Canada encourages ongoing consultation. Contributions are accepted throughout the census planning cycle and will be considered for 2011 and future censuses where possible.

We have tried to accurately reflect the many thoughts and ideas communicated during the 2011 Census content consultations. The opinions contained in this report, however, are not intended to be a representative portrayal of the views of the broader census user community.

We trust you will find the *2011 Census Content Consultation Report* of value.

1. The *2011 Census Content Consultation Guide* asked which existing question(s) in the census questionnaires participants consider essential. It also asked if any existing question(s) in the census questionnaires could be eliminated. The results reported in this section are mainly in response to these questions.

Introduction

The next Census of Population will be held on May 10, 2011. From census to census, users have expressed a strong desire to maintain stability and continuity in the content, such that major trends can be measured over time. At the same time, Statistics Canada recognizes that changes to the census are necessary to keep it relevant.

User consultation is a key element of the content determination process. Engaging with users is important to the development of the census questionnaires and permits Statistics Canada to

- better understand and respond to social and economic priorities
- gauge reaction to proposed content changes
- bring about creative solutions inspired by data users and experts.

Some ideas contributed during the 2011 Census content consultation will be tested leading up to the 2011 Census. Others will be examined by experts in socioeconomic survey areas. As Statistics Canada looks ahead, the input received during consultation will also help lay the groundwork for censuses in 2016 and 2021.

Consultation strategy

Consultation for the 2011 Census began in the spring of 2007. Three primary strategies were used during the consultation process to obtain feedback from data users and stakeholders for the 2011 Census questionnaires. In-person consultations, communications campaigns (i.e., e-mail broadcasts) and the Internet yielded over 1,200 content-related comments. More than 150 organizations and private citizens conveyed ideas and suggestions for the 2011 Census.

In-person consultation • From April to November 2007, Statistics Canada met with over 360 people during more than 50 in-person consultations. The majority of the participants were data users. Meetings were held with federal, provincial and territorial governments, municipalities and regions, non-profit organizations, community groups, academia, private industry (which includes licensed distributors and the media), advisory committees and the general public. Sessions were also organized with Statistics Canada subject matter divisions, regional offices and working groups (see "[Summary table](#)"; [Appendix 1](#) for "Historical tables"). While the comments and suggestions expressed during these consultations were recorded, participants were encouraged to provide written submissions prior to the November 30, 2007 deadline.

2011 Census Content Consultation Guide² • A *2011 Census Content Consultation Guide* was released in July 2007. It communicated the 2011 Census context, key milestones and proposed content directions. To help participants prepare their written submissions, seven questions were included under a "Discussion points" heading. (These discussion points also helped frame the exchange during in-person meetings.) E-mail campaigns served to announce the availability of the consultation guide and invite written submissions from almost 900 census data users from various sectors.

Internet • The 2011 Census consultation web pages facilitated the distribution of the *2011 Census Content Consultation Guide* and informed the general public about the consultation process. More than half of the comments on the 2011 Census content were submitted through the Internet.

2. The *2011 Census Content Consultation Guide* presented several proposed changes and included questions to assist participants with their submissions. Consequently, the topics touched upon in the guide received more comments than others.

Executive summary

Each census, many important considerations are weighed when establishing the content of the census questionnaires, with Cabinet having the ultimate say. There are many questions included in the Census of Population that are required to develop, support, and monitor laws and programs for the effective governance of the country. For instance, census data play a vital role in determining the amounts of federal-provincial/territorial transfers under the *Federal-Provincial Fiscal Arrangements Act*. The number and boundaries of federal electoral districts are based on census population counts, and policy analysts and program officers draw on census results to implement and evaluate legislation and programs such as the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act* and the Old Age Security Program.

Detailed information on the socioeconomic characteristics of the Canadian population reported in the various census modules (such as language, ethnicity, education, labour, income, etc.) provide comprehensive data for small areas and are referenced by researchers and policy makers in the private sector and at all levels of government. Some major uses of census information include the following:

- local governments refer to census data to understand commute patterns, establish affordable housing programs and evaluate the economic and social well-being of their neighbourhoods
- managers examine census data at low levels of geographical detail for emergency planning and the provision of health and educational services
- the business community uses census data in market analysis nationally, regionally and locally
- historians and social scientists analyse census data to understand social change and document Canadian history.

Given the critical importance of the census to many data users, consultation is a necessary component of content determination because it informs Statistics Canada on continued and emerging data requirements.

Factors to consider before making changes to the census content

Preparing for a new census requires a careful evaluation of data needs. The decision to include new questions and modify or eliminate existing census content is not taken in isolation. The input and insight gained from consultation is an important part of the mix. Equally necessary is the consideration of a number of factors, such as support to legislation, program and policy needs, respondent burden, data quality, costs, historical comparability, privacy, operational considerations and alternative data sources.

A number of measures are taken to decrease respondent burden such as sampling, providing questionnaires and telephone assistance in a number of languages, alternating content such as religion as well as offering various modes of response (i.e., Internet, paper and telephone).

Statistics Canada is sensitive to respondent burden and as a result, the 2011 Census questionnaires must be comparable in length to those of the 2006 Census. Thus, adding new census questions could involve reducing other content.

The success of the census depends on the willingness of all Canadians to complete and return their census questionnaire.

The 2011 Census content consultation process yielded a large number of contributions from data users. More than 1,200 content-related comments were collected from in-person consultations and written submissions.

While the focus for this round of consultation was to gather input on the content of the 2011 Census, feedback was also solicited on other aspects of the census, including the dissemination strategy (104 comments), geography (162 comments), and collection and communications (64 comments) (see [Appendix 2](#)).

The counts presented in this report reflect the number of comments received during in-person consultation and from written submissions, according to the guidelines outlined in the [methodology](#) chapter.

The following section highlights consultation results, by census topic.

Place of work and mode of transportation generated 233 comments. It was the topic most frequently commented upon during 2011 Census content consultations. Many participants supported more information on mode of transportation, vehicle occupancy and travel time.

Ethnocultural and religious characteristics generated 232 comments. Most who provided input on the religion question confirmed it should continue to be asked on the census. It was felt this information contributes to a better understanding of Canadian diversity. There was agreement that the ethnic origin examples should reflect today's society. It was also noted that the population group options (Question 19) caused confusion in some instances, as it was unclear how the answer categories were chosen.

Family characteristics generated 131 comments. A large number of participants expressed support for the introduction of response options related to same-sex married couples and blended families.

Housing and shelter costs generated 114 comments. Additional data on senior residences, subsidized housing and more detail on various emerging dwelling types were requested most often.

Education generated 104 comments. Many data users agreed with the inclusion of a response category related to a journeyman's or journeyperson's certificate. Some communicated concern about a possible overlap among the new 2006 Census questions.

Aboriginal peoples³ generated 80 comments. Many participants considered the proposed change in terminology from 'North American Indian' to 'First Nations.' Most agreed that the term 'First Nations' should be used. (Note: Separate regional discussions on Aboriginal identification questions were held with more than 350 users of Aboriginal data in over 40 locations across Canada during the winter, spring and early summer of 2007. See Chapter 6 for a [summary of the results](#).)

Unpaid work generated 72 comments. The majority of the observations received on unpaid work concentrated on the need for, and use of, household activities data or they deliberated whether the census was the most appropriate vehicle for collecting this information.

Demographic characteristics (includes age, sex, marital status, common-law status, mobility, fertility and sexual orientation) generated 61 comments. Reintroducing fertility on the census questionnaire was the top request related to this topic.

Labour market activity generated 51 comments. The ideas and suggestions covered an array of subjects, touching on temporary and contingent workers and employment tenure.

Income generated 46 comments. There was support for the option which enables respondents to give Statistics Canada permission to use information from their income tax files instead of answering the census income questions. It was suggested this option be extended to include other tax forms.

3. This finding is an outcome of 2011 Census content consultations. A summary of the results from the regional discussions on Aboriginal identification questions held across the Canada in 2007 is presented in [Chapter 6](#) on Aboriginal peoples.

Language generated 34 comments. Some data users wanted the census to collect information on the language spoken most often in the public domain while other data users requested additional data on the preferred language of service. Feedback on the subject of preferred language of service indicates this information would be useful for government and financial service delivery areas.

Activity limitations generated 27 comments. Many of the submissions on this topic focused on issues of disabilities covered under activity limitations. For instance, it was indicated that breaking out the existing activity categories would be useful in order to have access to specific data on single and multiple limitations.

Citizenship and immigration generated 23 comments. A few participants proposed a question on immigrant class (refugee, skilled worker, etc.). Others were interested in the extent to which the census captures multiple citizenships.

Other generated 68 comments. This chapter groups comments not clearly associated to one of the topics above. For example, many participants recommended that the census enumerate secondary residences in order to capture data on the populations working or studying away from home or in shared custody arrangements. Improvements to the question which asks permission for the release of census information after 92 years were also put forth.

Overall findings

Many issues identified during the 2011 Census content consultation echo current priorities and social policy issues. The following are some conclusions:

There was positive reaction to the changes being considered for 2011 • A large number of participants approved of the proposed content directions for the next census. There was agreement across many sectors that the modifications to family characteristics, ethnocultural characteristics, and place of work and mode of transportation would be useful. (Note: In fact, several of the proposed content changes introduced in the *2011 Census Content Consultation Guide*, dealing with such topics as blended families, same-sex married couples and travel time, were brought up during 2001 and 2006 consultations (see [Appendix 1](#) for “Historical tables”).)

Data on aging and seniors • Given Canada’s aging population (4,335,255 or 13.7% of Canadians are 65 years or older⁴), more data on these subpopulations are considered necessary to ensure that programs related to seniors are adequate. Comments on aging or seniors can be found in the Labour market activities, Activity limitations, and Housing and shelter costs chapters.

Religion • Most participants who commented on the religion question felt it was valuable and should be asked on the 2011 Census. Information on religious affiliation contributes to a better understanding of Canada’s cultural and religious diversity, particularly given the growth in immigration.

Place of work and mode of transportation questions • The place of work and mode of transportation questions (i.e., commute time and vehicle occupancy) being explored for the 2011 Census received approval across the country, especially from municipalities and regions. These data would provide planners with information to guide the development of infrastructure.

Some users’ needs can be met through Statistics Canada surveys • The necessity for data for small geographic areas and the suitability of alternative data sources are important factors when considering census content. Additional questioning during consultation revealed some users’ data requirements on topics such as health and household activities could be met through other Statistics Canada socioeconomic surveys.

Table S.1 Top 10 comment categories, by number of comments

Category	Comments
	number
Religion content	112
Mode of transportation	64
Housing and dwelling types (e.g. subsidized housing, senior residences)	61
Commute time	60
Educational attainment	59
Unpaid work content	54
Vehicle occupancy	48
Blended families	45
Same-sex marriage	43
First Nations or North American Indian	30
Total of top 10 comment categories	576
Total of all content comments received	1,276

Source: Client Services Division, Statistics Canada.

4. Source: 2006 Census of Population

Summary table

Table S.2 Content comments, by census topic and sector

Topic	Provincial and territorial departments and agencies	Municipalities and regions	Federal departments and agencies¹	Statistics Canada	Community groups and non-profit organizations
			number		
Place of work and mode of transportation	48	111	25	15	10
Ethnocultural and religious characteristics	62	29	31	33	37
Family characteristics	45	19	14	12	15
Housing and shelter costs	27	29	17	14	13
Education	43	15	19	11	6
Aboriginal peoples ²	30	10	30	4	3
Unpaid work	20	6	21	10	4
Demographic characteristics	13	4	6	9	9
Labour market activity	18	5	10	0	10
Income	15	1	13	10	1
Language	14	1	4	5	5
Activity limitations	14	6	3	2	1
Citizenship and immigration	3	5	6	6	3
Other	20	12	11	6	8
Total all topics	372	253	210	137	125

Topic	Academic	Private industry	Advisory committees	Private citizens	Total all sectors
			number		
Place of work and mode of transportation	8	9	2	5	233
Ethnocultural and religious characteristics	16	16	8	0	232
Family characteristics	14	7	2	3	131
Housing and shelter costs	1	12	1	0	114
Education	3	3	4	0	104
Aboriginal peoples ²	1	0	2	0	80
Unpaid work	2	3	6	0	72
Demographic characteristics	14	0	6	0	61
Labour market activity	1	3	0	4	51
Income	1	4	1	0	46
Language	3	1	0	1	34
Activity limitations	0	1	0	0	27
Citizenship and immigration	0	0	0	0	23
Other	2	3	4	2	68
Total all topics	66	62	36	15	1,276

Notes: In keeping with previous rounds of census consultation, questions were formulated to elicit feedback and provide a framework for input. The *2011 Census Content Consultation Guide* (see [Appendix 3](#)) included seven questions. As well, during consultation meetings, additional questions may have been asked to reveal the importance of a given topic or obtain more background on the comment.

1. Excludes Statistics Canada's comments.

2. Separate regional discussions on Aboriginal identification questions were held with more than 350 users of Aboriginal data in over 40 locations across Canada during the winter, spring and early summer of 2007. See [Chapter 6](#) for a summary of the findings.

Source: Statistics Canada, Client Services Division.

Chapter 1 Demographic characteristics

Consultation participants submitted 61 comments on demographic characteristics. As revealed in the [Summary table](#), the academic sector contributed the most input on this topic.

Fertility • The topic of fertility generated 23 comments. Due to the delicate nature of this question as well as other considerations, it has not been asked on the census since 1991.

Most participants who commented on this subject wanted the question to be reintroduced in 2011. According to users, fertility data are used to inform on trends. They are also relevant for analysis and producing population estimates and projections for local areas, the Aboriginal population and for various population groups. Some participants proposed the fertility question be extended to include males in addition to females, to collect data on the number of children born to each person.

Sex • Several participants suggested adding ‘transsexual’ and ‘transgender’ response options to the question on sex. The number of transgender individuals is believed to be underestimated, in part because of the lack of data sources on this population. Some preference for the term ‘gender’ over ‘sex’ was noted. Asking about sexual orientation is also thought to be important because of factors such as discrimination in the labour market.

Mobility • Nine comments were collected on mobility. Among these, there were recommendations for questions on tenure and the incidence of relocation. This information would serve to better understand neighbourhood stability and assist with community programs and planning. In addition, it was requested that the census ask the reason the respondent moved: Was it voluntary? Were they evicted for financial reasons? The following suggestions were also presented:

- remove the ‘15 and older’ age restriction
- include a ‘was not born’ response category to both the 1-year and 5-year mobility questions
- restructure the mobility question to collect full street address information.

Marital and common-law status • According to some, the questions on marital and common-law status could be merged. In addition, a small number of participants think that the definition of common-law is problematic. It is considered to be subject to perception, has witnessed change over time and can vary across provinces and territories.

Age and aging population • An interest in seniors has been spearheaded by the significant changes expected in policy and service areas to accommodate Canada’s aging population. Comments on this topic included the importance of capturing the evolution of Canada’s population and the idea of seniors as the focus of a postcensal survey.

Demographic characteristics content • It was reported that the information on demographic characteristics is essential for transportation planning because it assists in building customer profiles and is used for modelling.

Table 1.1 Demographic characteristics comments, by category

Category	Comments
	number
Fertility	23
Sex, gender and sexual orientation	11
Mobility	9
Demographic characteristics content	8
Marital and common-law status	6
Age and aging population	4
Total comments on demographic characteristics	61

Source: Statistics Canada, Client Services Division.

Follow-up

The decision to include new questions and modify or eliminate existing census content takes into account a number of factors, such as consultation feedback, support to legislation, program and policy needs, data quality, costs, historical comparability, respondent burden, privacy, operational considerations and alternative data sources.

For the May 2008 content test, an age confirmation component was added to the date of birth question—a strategy used with the 2006 Census online response option. The marital status question excluded the word ‘single’ from the answer category ‘Never legally married’ and the questions on mobility applied to the entire population (i.e., they were not restricted to persons 15 years and over).

Fertility • In 2001, Statistics Canada removed the fertility question from decennial censuses because of the personal nature of this question and an increasing demand to collect data on other subjects. While an important and relevant topic, there are no plans to reintroduce this content for 2011 given its sensitivity, the little support for government programs and the availability of this information from other sources.

Demographic characteristics content on the census is used for evaluating and monitoring federal legislation, policies and programs including:

- *Canada Elections Act*
- *Federal-Provincial Fiscal Arrangements Act*
- *War Veterans Allowance Act*

Source: Statistics Canada, Catalogue no. 92-379-XIE, *2001 Census Handbook*.

Note: Questions 2 to 5, 23 and 24 on the 2006 Census questionnaire (see [Appendix 3](#)) relate to demographic characteristics.

Chapter 2 Family characteristics

Most of the 131 comments on family characteristics⁵ pertained to blended families or same-sex marriages.

Blended families • Nearly all participants who commented on blended families supported extending the current options. It was felt that broadening the response categories to include stepchildren would lead to a better understanding of family transformation. A few participants specified that it was important the child or children's relationship to both parents living in the household be clearly defined.

The complex nature and changing dynamics of blended families were raised during consultation. It was suggested that survey vehicles dealing with family content, such as the General Social Survey, might be better suited than the census to monitor changes in family structure.

Same-sex marriage • Legalized since 2003, numerous participants endorsed the introduction of a 'same-sex married spouse' check box. Some recommended that the census use terminology parallel to opposite-sex married couples (e.g., opposite-sex married spouse of Person 1 / same-sex married spouse of Person 1). Others suggested adopting a standardized marital relationship response option applicable to opposite-sex and same-sex couples or deriving the information from existing response categories.

Adoption and foster children • Seventeen comments on family characteristics referred to adoption or foster children. In the case of adoption, the addition of a question on the census would help provide a more complete picture, better reflect the diversity of Canadian families and possibly lead to more services for adoptive families. There was also support for including a foster child response option on the census. Some concern, however, was expressed about the definition of family being narrow because adoption practices from different cultures are not reflected.

Shared custody • Of the comments received on this subject, several participants wanted the census to ask respondents about the number of children involved in shared custody situations and their living arrangements (i.e., distribution of time spent). It was also requested that a question about financial obligation in this regard be added.

Other areas of interest brought forth during consultation include the following:

- dependent children or parents
- polygamous relationships
- married couples living apart.

Family characteristics content • It was reported that data on family characteristics are important because they are used as a baseline in analysis.

5. The content consultation guide specified that same-sex married couple and stepchild response options were being considered for 2011. Consultation participants were asked their views on the proposed 2011 Census content changes.

Table 2.1 Family characteristics comments, by category

Category	Comments
	number
Blended families	45
Same-sex marriage	43
Adoption and foster children	17
Shared custody	12
Family characteristics content	6
Other	8
Total comments on family characteristics	131

Source: Statistics Canada, Client Services Division.

Follow-up

The decision to include new questions and modify or eliminate existing census content takes into account a number of factors, such as consultation feedback, support to legislation, program and policy needs, data quality, costs, historical comparability, respondent burden, privacy, operational considerations and alternative data sources.

Relationship to Person 1 • The removal of 'Grandparent of Person 1' and the combination of 'Room-mate' with 'Lodger and Boarder' was tested during the May 2008 content test.

Joint custody • More explicit instructions were provided for respondents in joint custody situations in the May 2008 questionnaire.

Blended families • A stepchild response category was included in the May 2008 quantitative test, recognizing this type of family structure question is better suited to a full family matrix approach which demonstrates the relationship between all members of a household.

Same-sex marriage • A same-sex married spouse response option was successfully tested in focus groups and during one-on-one interviews in the fall of 2007. Same-sex married couple terminology will continue to be examined leading up to the May 2009 Census Test.

Foster children • Following positive qualitative testing, the foster child response option will continue to be considered for the Relationship to Person 1 question and has since undergone further testing.

Family characteristics content on the census is used for evaluating and monitoring federal legislation, policies and programs including:

- Canada Child Tax Benefit
- Canada Pension Plan
- Old Age Security Program

Source: Statistics Canada, Catalogue no. 92-379-XIE, 2001 Census Handbook.

Note: Question 6 (Relationship to Person 1) on the 2006 Census questionnaire (see [Appendix 3](#)) relates to family characteristics.

Chapter 3 Activity limitations

Note to reader: The questions on activity limitations (questions 7 and 8 on the census questionnaire) are used as a filter for the postcensal Participation and Activity Limitation Survey (PALS).

A total of 27 comments were received on activity limitations content. Most participants that provided feedback on this topic stressed the importance of having more detail about the type or the severity of the respondent's activity limitations.

Detailed types of activity limitations • Many of the submissions on this subject proposed that the activities and conditions grouped in questions 7 and 8 (such as hearing, seeing and learning) be broken out. The result would be more specific information on the nature of the respondent's limitations. These data would permit researchers, policy analysts and service providers to better ascertain the number of Canadians who have single and multiple impairments.

Severity of activity limitations • Participants also commented on the limits of the current response categories and the need to specify a timeframe. Some did not think the current options, 'Yes, sometimes,' 'Yes, often,' and 'No,' sufficiently measured the gravity of the activity limitation or level of restriction faced by the respondent. It was recommended that a 'Yes, always' option be added. Distinguishing whether limitations are the result of aging was also considered important.

Understanding the duration of the ailment can be useful for policy decisions. It was suggested that the preamble to the census activity limitations questions be harmonized with that of the Canadian Community Health Survey (CCHS) which asks about any current limitations in daily activities caused by a long-term health condition or problem. A long-term condition is expected to last or has already lasted 6 months or more.

Others who provided feedback on activity limitations recommended that the census

- include a general health question
- ask whether the respondent has been diagnosed with a physical disability.

Activity limitations content • It was felt that data on limitations of daily living will become increasingly important to program delivery and the planning and monitoring of social and public policy, given that Canada's population is aging and the number of people with disabilities is growing.

Table 3.1 Activity limitations comments, by category

Category	Comments
	number
Detailed types of activity limitations	10
Severity of activity limitations	10
Activity limitations content and Other	7
Total comments on activity limitations	27

Source: Statistics Canada, Client Services Division.

Follow-up

The decision to include new questions and modify or eliminate existing census content takes into account a number of factors, such as consultation feedback, support to legislation, program and policy needs, data quality, costs, historical comparability, respondent burden, privacy, operational considerations and alternative data sources.

More detailed questions on activity limitations were tested in the recent content test. Each of the following activity limitations were listed separately: hearing, seeing, walking or climbing stairs, communicating, bending or reaching and any psychological or emotional conditions. The respondent was also able to specify the type of condition (physical; psychological, emotional or mental health; learning difficulties; or, other health) that limits their activities at home, work, school or another area. In addition, an 'Often or always' option replaced the 'Yes, often' response category.

It should also be noted that in 2006 and previous censuses a postcensal Participation and Activity Limitations Survey (PALS) was conducted and covered many more detailed questions on types and severity of activity limitations, as well as collected detailed information on other related topics. Because of the dynamic and complex nature of disability, a postcensal survey such as PALS is a more appropriate vehicle for collecting reliable and detailed information about activity limitations because this subject matter requires more space than can be provided by the census. Therefore, PALS should be used whenever possible for the analysis of disability and activity limitations.

Activity limitations content on the census is used for evaluating and monitoring federal legislation, policies and programs including:

- *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*
- *Employment Equity Act*
- *Canada Health and Social Transfer*

Source: Statistics Canada, Catalogue no. 92-379-XIE, *2001 Census Handbook*.

Note: Questions 7 and 8 on the 2006 Census questionnaire (see [Appendix 3](#)) relate to activity limitations.

Chapter 4 Citizenship and immigration

Compared with previous rounds of consultations (see [Appendix 1](#)), very few comments (23) on citizenship and immigration were generated for 2011. Federal departments and agencies were the most likely to contribute input on this topic (see [“Summary table”](#)).

Generation status • A small number of participants wanted the census to ask about the birthplace of grandparents to capture third-generation Canadians, useful for measuring long-term integration. As well, it was thought that removing the age restriction (the current question on birthplace of parents is limited to the population aged 15 and older) would allow for more complete and detailed research on generational status in Canada and a better understanding of second generation youth.

It was proposed that the question regarding the birthplace of parents could be eliminated if its only purpose is to shed light on ethnicity and ancestry. It was also mentioned that adopted children of same-sex couples are not captured since the question specifically asks for the birthplace of the ‘father’ and the ‘mother’.

Immigrant class • A few data users requested the introduction of content to determine immigrant class or entrance category, such as live-in caregiver, government-assisted refugee and entrepreneur class. The resulting information would be beneficial for income analysis in relation to the process by which immigrants entered the country.

Year of arrival • Adding a question on the year of arrival would allow researchers to ascertain the length of residence in Canada of migrants and of non-permanent residents prior to obtaining permanent residence status. This is considered a key variable in understanding integration.

Multiple citizenships • Among the comments submitted on this topic, it was recommended more attention be given to the citizenship question by asking about dual citizenship and encouraging respondents to list other countries, when applicable. Providing more space would make it easier for respondents to specify multiple countries of citizenship. Nevertheless, it was observed that reluctance by the respondent to state more than one country of citizenship may be due to a misperception that their information is being shared among government departments.

Other comments on citizenship and immigration include the following:

- ask where the respondent first landed or the province in which they resided at the time they received their citizenship or landed immigrant status in order to study interprovincial migration
- use new immigration terminology and retain the previous wording in brackets (i.e., ‘landed immigrant’ (permanent resident))
- provide additional instructions to respondents given the complex nature of the subject.

Citizenship and immigration content • It was felt that the continuation of citizenship and immigration questions on the census is important.

Table 4.1 Citizenship and immigration comments, by category

Category	Comments
	number
Generation status	8
Immigrant class	3
Year of arrival	3
Multiple citizenships	3
Citizenship and immigration content and Other	6
Total comments on citizenship and immigration	23

Source: Statistics Canada, Client Services Division.

Follow-up

Considering the factors for introducing new questions or modifying existing census content, such as consultation feedback, support to legislation, program and policy needs, data quality, costs, historical comparability, respondent burden, privacy, operational considerations and alternative data sources, the present set of citizenship and immigration questions seems to best address the needs for data in this area. Therefore, no changes are anticipated for 2011.

Citizenship and immigration content on the census is used for evaluating and monitoring federal legislation, policies and programs including:

- *Citizenship Act*
- *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act*
- Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada

Source: Statistics Canada, Catalogue no. 92-379-XIE, *2001 Census Handbook*.

Note: Questions 9 to 12 and 25 on the 2006 Census questionnaire (see [Appendix 3](#)) relate to immigration and citizenship.

Chapter 5 Ethnocultural and religious characteristics

Based on the number of comments received, ethnocultural characteristics⁶ ranked second among all census topics with 232 entries. It was the census topic most frequently addressed by participants from nearly every sector (see “[Summary table](#)”).

Ethnic origin

Most of the 58 comments on ethnic origin focused on the census questionnaire examples.

Ethnic origin examples • Input obtained during consultation confirmed many participants agreed the ethnic origin examples should accurately reflect Canadian society. Sensitivity was noted regarding the use of ‘East Indian,’ as ‘Indo-Canadian’ was preferred and new examples, such as ‘Arab’ and ‘Newfoundlander,’ were suggested.

The example of ‘Canadian’ as an ethnic origin was debated. Some researchers expressed concern about the comparability of data over time and the value of the ancestry data since ‘Canadian’ was included. On one hand, it was argued the ethnic origin question, as it is currently formulated, confuses ancestry with identity which can vary depending on factors such as social pressures. On the other hand, it was contended that for some respondents *Canadian* may be the most accurate cultural identity of their ancestors.

Other comments on ethnic origin include the following:

- exclude Aboriginal people from responding to the ethnic origin question. The Aboriginal identity questions provide sufficient information on this population
- introduce a new ethnic identity question and remove the reference to *Canadian* from the current ethnic origin question
- clarify the definition of origin—how far back do you go?

Ethnic origin content • It was reported that the ethnic origin question is essential for labour force planning and analysis. A small number of participants, however, thought the content could be eliminated because the question is considered unclear; the data are not used or are not believed to be accurate enough for their research purposes. It was also proposed that the question could be moved to every 10 years, and alternated with the religion content.

Table 5.1 Ethnic origin comments, by category

Category	Comments
	number
Ethnic origin examples	28
Ethnic origin content	17
Other	13
Total comments on ethnic origin	58

Source: Statistics Canada, Client Services Division.

6. The content consultation guide specified that examples for ethnocultural characteristics were being examined for 2011. Consultation participants were asked their views on the proposed content changes and whether they thought the question on religion should be included for 2011.

Population group

Feedback on the population group question accounted for 29 comments. Most of it focused on the answer categories which are according to employment equity legislation.

Many participants that commented on this topic considered the response categories in the population group question problematic. It was felt the options should be revised because they include race (or skin colour), country of birth and ethnic origin categories. Other issues brought forth include sensitivity to some of the response options, the need for more clarity in the instructions for mixed-raced individuals as well as more relevant and better defined response categories. Conversely, it was argued that the current question and directive should be left intact.

Population group content • It was reported that the population group data are considered essential for planning public policy and public programs and services delivery.

Table 5.2 Population group comments, by category

Category	Comments number
Issues with population group categories	13
Population group content	9
Other	7
Total comments on population group	29

Source: Statistics Canada, Client Services Division.

Religion

The topic of religion yielded 145 comments. One of the questions contained in the *2011 Content Consultation Guide* under the "Discussion points" heading related to whether religion, which is included on every decennial census, should be asked in the upcoming census. Most of the people that commented on religion did so in response to this question (see "[Religion content](#)").

Religious affiliation and religiosity • To several participants, broadening the section on religion to include a question on participation would improve results. Moreover, a better understanding of a person's spirituality could present a more accurate and detailed picture of religion in Canada.

Other comments on religion include the following:

- broaden the Muslim faith examples
- use specific denominations in the examples as it affects response patterns
- permit multiple responses
- remove the 'No religion' check box and include it in the list of examples
- ask respondents to give more detail in the 'No religion' responses (e.g., agnostic)
- define religious affiliation (i.e., whether the respondent needs to be practising) to avoid confusion
- add a question asking the religion of the respondent's parents
- consider religion for a postcensal survey.

Religion content • While trends in religion have remained relatively stable in the recent past, some believe patterns are changing given the growth in immigration. Numerous participants favoured retaining the religion question on the decennial census with some recommending its inclusion in every census. The importance of the religious affiliation question on the 2011 Census was stressed because of its historical value and the role it plays in understanding the nature and evolution of Canada's religious diversity.

Consultation participants emphasized the significance of religion data to many sectors and organization types (e.g., municipalities and regions, school boards, parishes, cultural groups) stating they were used

- by churches to know their congregations and by religious organizations for growth planning and community profiling
- to assist government in the formation of public policy with respect to multiculturalism
- to support educational policies, develop community-based programs, and for zoning and planning places of worship at small levels of geographical detail
- to better understand publicly debated societal issues such as funding for religious schools, or the wearing of a kirpan.

However, some participants deliberated the appropriateness of the census as the collection vehicle for religion data or maintained that the question should be optional. A few users thought it could be eliminated to make room for other questions or that, while essential, this information was not required for small areas and could be obtained from other surveys.

Table 5.3 Religion comments, by category

Category	Comments
	number
Religion content	112
Degree of religious affiliation and religiosity	15
Phrasing of religion question ¹	5
Other	13
Total comments on religion	145

1. Consultation input is included under the “Other comments” heading above.

Source: Statistics Canada, Client Services Division.

Follow-up

The decision to include new questions and modify or eliminate existing census content takes into account a number of factors, such as consultation feedback, support to legislation, program and policy needs, data quality, costs, historical comparability, respondent burden, privacy, operational considerations and alternative data sources.

No significant changes were made to the ethnocultural section of the 2008 content test questionnaire. The examples for the ethnic origin question were reviewed to ensure they reflect Canadian society based on the most frequent responses of the 2006 Census. The list of population group categories were also ordered according to the frequency reported in the 2006 Census results. The intent of this question is to collect data on the visible minority population to support employment equity legislation and as such the list of response categories are in accordance to the federal employment equity program. As well, the religion question (as formulated in the 2001 Census) was tested in May 2008 with the most frequent 2001 Census denominations making up the list of examples.

Ethnocultural and religious characteristics content on the census is used for evaluating and monitoring federal legislation, policies and programs including:

- *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*
- *Employment Equity Act*
- Multiculturalism Program

Source: Statistics Canada, Catalogue no. 92-379-XIE, *2001 Census Handbook*.

Note: Questions 17 and 19 on the 2006 Census questionnaire (see [Appendix 3](#)) relate to ethnocultural characteristics.

Chapter 6 Aboriginal peoples

Note to reader: Further to the 2011 Census content consultation, Statistics Canada's Social and Aboriginal Statistics Division met with Aboriginal groups, provincial, territorial and federal governments to discuss the Aboriginal identification questions in the winter, spring and early summer of 2007. A summary of the results from these regional discussions is provided later in this chapter. Some organizations and individuals contributed feedback through both the regional discussions and the 2011 Census content consultations. Consequently, comments obtained from people who participated in the two processes may be included in the chapter below as well as in the summary that follows.

During the 2011 Census content consultation round, 80 comments were submitted on the questions pertaining to Aboriginal peoples.⁷ Of these, the primary focus was the change in terminology being contemplated for the 2011 Census. Given the possible impacts of the proposed modification, participants emphasized the need to consider Aboriginal interests, ensure a good understanding of the population and examine the implications to legislation and policy.

First Nations / North American Indian • Thirty comments centred on the proposed change in terminology from 'North American Indian' to 'First Nations.' More than two-thirds of the observations endorsed the change. A number of participants considered 'First Nations' more appropriate or thought it was commonly recognized and used. As well, it was reported the term 'Indian' elicits some sensitivity or can be confusing for respondents who have ties to India. A transition period combining both terms was recommended. Options put forth included 'First Nations / North American Indian' and 'First Nations (North American Indian).'

Some provincial and federal government departments and agencies conveyed concern about the change in terminology. The need to maintain consistency in the definition and safeguard historical comparability was stressed because of the impact on research, program and policy areas. As well, it was suggested 'North American Indian' had a broader connotation than 'First Nations' which could affect results.

Status and land claims • The subjects of Aboriginal status and land claims yielded 12 comments. The results from the question on 'Treaty Indian or Registered Indian' are used by some researchers to define status. A few participants recommended modifying the current compound 'Yes, Treaty Indian or Registered Indian' response option. By offering separate response opportunities (i.e., 'Yes, Treaty Indian' and 'Yes, Registered Indian'), it was felt there would be less confusion and data quality would be improved. Other points of interest included adding a specific question confirming Status or Non-Status and asking respondents whether they are beneficiaries of land claim agreements.

Use of 'Eskimo' • Statistics Canada is considering the removal of 'Eskimo' for the 2011 Census. This proposed modification received support during consultation. The reference is thought to be derogatory by some. It could also lead to confusion, because it is associated with a group in Alaska. It was thought that Inuit was well understood by the population and aligns with today's reality. The only concern noted about the elimination of 'Eskimo' was that members of the older population still identify with the term.

Other comments on the Aboriginal peoples content include the following:

- introduce the Aboriginal identity question on the 2A questionnaire (also known as the short form) to better capture the Aboriginal population
- ensure the terminology is consistent with other Statistics Canada surveys (e.g., Labour Force Survey).

7. The content consultation guide specified the terminology for Aboriginal peoples was being examined for 2011. Consultation participants were asked their views on the proposed 2011 Census content changes.

Aboriginal peoples content • While there appears to be no consensus on the appropriate terminology for Aboriginal peoples or the existence of a universal term for Aboriginality, it was affirmed that the existing census questions attest to the multidimensional nature of Aboriginal affiliation in Canada.

Table 6.1 Aboriginal peoples comments, by category

Category	Comments number
First Nations or North American Indian	30
Aboriginal peoples content	15
Status and land claims	12
Use of 'Eskimo'	5
Other	18
Total comments on Aboriginal peoples	80

Source: Statistics Canada, Client Services Division.

Follow-up

The decision to include new questions and modify or eliminate existing census content takes into account a number of factors, such as consultation feedback, support to legislation, program and policy needs, data quality, costs, historical comparability, respondent burden, privacy, operational considerations and alternative data sources.

The new terminology tested well in the fall 2007 qualitative testing. The Aboriginal questions for the May 2008 content test included the term 'First Nations (North American Indian)'. A statement informing respondents that 'First Nations (North American Indian)' comprises Status and Non-Status Indians was added. As well, the reference to 'Eskimo' was removed and replaced with the expression 'Inuk (Inuit).' 'Inuk' is the singular form of 'Inuit.'

In the Registered / Treaty Indian status question, the terminology 'Status Indian (Registered or Treaty)' was introduced. Finally, in the Band / First Nation membership question, the previous reference to the 'Musqueam' First Nation as an example was dropped.

Aboriginal peoples content on the census is used for evaluating and monitoring federal legislation, policies and programs including:

- Aboriginal Business Canada Program
- Aboriginal Human Resources Development Strategy
- *Indian Act*

Source: Statistics Canada, Catalogue No. 92-379-XIE, *2001 Census Handbook*.

Note: Questions 18, 20 and 21 on the 2006 Census questionnaire (see [Appendix 3](#)) relate to the content on Aboriginal peoples.

Regional discussions on Aboriginal identification questions: Summary

Social and Aboriginal Statistics Division led a project to review Aboriginal identification questions used in Statistics Canada's Census of population and surveys to produce data about Aboriginal populations. As a first step in the review process, regional discussions were held with more than 350 users of Aboriginal data in over 40 locations across Canada during the winter, spring and early summer of 2007. As well, meetings were held with representatives of several provincial and federal departments and with national Aboriginal organizations.

Participants were provided with a document that allowed them to make notes and were given the option of submitting written feedback in addition to the discussion. Those who were unable to attend in person provided feedback on this form electronically. Feedback was focused on Statistics Canada data, collection methods and questions used on surveys and the census to identify the Aboriginal population.

The main issue identified by the participants was the need to have accurate data counts of First Nations, Inuit and Métis populations separately to support decision making and planning. Concerns about data quality, undercoverage, wording of questions and comparability over time were presented. There was frequent mention that the questions need to be clarified and that they should be more reflective of Inuit and Métis populations as well as those of First Nations. Participants suggested that an Aboriginal identity question should be included on the census short form (2A questionnaire) in order to get a better count of the Aboriginal population.

The question on Aboriginal identity was reportedly the most important for analysis and policy needs. Issues were raised with the terminology, notably the use of 'North American Indian', 'Eskimo', and 'Aboriginal'. Potential problems with identification were raised because some Aboriginal people may not identify with the designations in the census. Participants also cautioned against changes that could affect comparability. Inuit respondents explained that the term 'Inuit' is plural and that the questionnaire should use the term 'Inuk' to properly refer to an individual. Some participants requested a clear definition of Métis on the census questionnaire. It was also suggested that a response category for Non-Status Indians should be included.

The Indian band/First Nation question was looked at from the three main perspectives: First Nations, Inuit, and Métis. First Nations participants pointed out that 'Indian Band' and 'First Nation' do not have the same meaning as the question implies. Furthermore, with the modified *Indian Act*, bands can choose their own membership codes, and those people who regained their status through Bill C-31 often do not have band membership. Inuit groups recommended asking if respondents are beneficiaries of one of the four Northern land claim agreements, and if so, which one. Several participants also wanted to see a Métis perspective in this question.

For the Registered / Treaty Indian question, participants pointed out that this question should offer separate response categories for "Registered Indian" and "Treaty Indian". It was also noted that it would be more logical if this question preceded the previous question on the census questionnaire. Finally, some participants mentioned that with self-government agreements being signed, more First Nations would no longer be included under the *Indian Act* and asked how this would affect reporting for this question and the preceding one.

Readers interested in a more complete account of these discussions should refer to the *Report on Regional Discussions on Aboriginal Identification Questions* (See [Appendix 3](#)).

Chapter 7 Language

Participants submitted 34 comments on language during consultations. Many of these requested new questions on the language most spoken in the public domain or on the preferred language of service.

Language most spoken • More than one-quarter of the comments received on this topic expressed support for maintaining the question on language most spoken at home or requested new questions on language spoken most often in the public domain. It was felt that information on language spoken in the public domain would enhance the understanding of Canada's linguistic situation, help measure language vitality and is better suited to evaluate the efficacy of federal and provincial legislation such as the provision of services under the *Official Languages Act*.

Language of service • According to some, more insight into the preferred language of service (in the context of written and spoken communication) would help organizations such as governments and financial institutions plan their service delivery.

Other language comments include the following:

- collect data on languages of instruction at school to gauge the level of support for bilingualism in the education system
- remove the 'still understood' condition from the existing mother tongue question and introduce a second question asking the respondent whether they still understand that language. This would permit a better observation of language loss and ensure historical comparability
- incorporate examples such as 'Mandarin' or 'Cantonese' among the options to produce more precise information on non-official languages
- use a scale (1 to 5) in the knowledge of official languages question ('Can this person speak English or French well enough to conduct a conversation?') to better evaluate the respondent's ability.

Language content • It was reported that language questions are important to assure accessibility to programs, determine whether language poses a barrier for training and employment, and for emergency purposes. A few participants thought the number of language questions could be reduced or would be better suited to other surveys. At the same time, it was contended that the existing questions should be retained and not be modified in order to maintain historical continuity.

Table 7.1 Language comments, by category

Category	Comments
Language most spoken	10
Language content	7
Preferred language of service	4
Other	13
Total comments on language	34

Source: Statistics Canada, Client Services Division.

Follow-up

Considering the factors for introducing new questions or modifying existing census content, such as consultation feedback, support to legislation, program and policy needs, data quality, costs, historical comparability, respondent burden, privacy, operational considerations and alternative data sources, the present set of language questions seems to best address the needs for data in this area. Therefore, no changes are anticipated for 2011.

Language content on the census is used for evaluating and monitoring federal legislation, policies and programs including:

- *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*
- *Official Languages Act*
- Official Languages Support Programs

Source: Statistics Canada, Catalogue no. 92-379-XIE, 2001 *Census Handbook*.

Note: Questions 13 to 16 and 48 on the 2006 Census questionnaire (see [Appendix 3](#)) relate to language.

Chapter 8 Education

A total of 104 comments were collected on education.⁸ Most of the input centred on credentials, educational attainment or years of schooling.

Educational attainment • The inclusion of a ‘journeyman’s certificate’ response option in the education module is being considered for the 2011 Census. Participants contributed 25 comments on this topic. For the most part, there was support for the inclusion of this new credential. Some specified a gender-neutral term (e.g., journeyperson) would be more appropriate. However, a small number of users noted the trades and college attainment questions do not correspond to the educational structure in Quebec. As a result, it was felt this new category would only add to the existing confusion.

Some participants maintained the response categories for academic completion should be broadened to encompass the full range educational credentials, including ‘grade 9 or less’ and ‘post-doctorate.’

There was also concern about ambiguity in the terminology and definitions related to educational institutions, the narrow spectrum of institutions currently featured among the choices, and the lack of distinction between the streams leading to different certificates of qualification. The emergence of new educational institutions (e.g., degree-granting colleges) and the increase in Canada’s immigrant population were among the reasons cited.

A few people felt it was too early to provide input on the revamped education module (the data from the 2006 Census had not been released prior to consultation).

Years of schooling • While the focus of the education questions in the 2006 Census was on obtaining more comprehensive information on completion, some consultation participants continued to ask for data on years of schooling. With the removal of this question in 2006, it was conveyed that the census no longer captures information on continuous learning which is important for research on adult education. In addition, it was mentioned that users are not able to identify the proportion of those that have attended post-secondary programs without obtaining credentials. The proportion of those that do not obtain credentials can be used to calculate the proportion of those that do, which is used as a proxy for student success rate.

E-learning • With the growth in broadband and online distance education options, some participants wanted more information gathered on this emerging trend. As the option of receiving education through the Internet becomes increasingly pervasive, it was recommended that Question 31 which asks ‘in what province, territory or country did this person complete his/her highest degree, certificate or diploma’ be more precise to help reduce respondent confusion and burden.

School attendance • The following recommendations for school attendance were offered:

- add a definition of attendance (as in the 2001 Census) to better explain the question to respondents
- ask the question on attendance before the questions on attainment
- inquire whether attendance is full- or part-time
- modify the first selection in French to ‘Oui, a fréquenté une école primaire, intermédiaire ou secondaire’ for consistency and clarity between the French and English questionnaires.

8. The content consultation guide specified the introduction of journeyman’s certificate and a slight modification to the program durations in the college question were being considered for 2011. Consultation participants were asked their views on the proposed 2011 Census content changes.

Other participants that provided feedback on education wanted the census to

- ensure historical comparability to better perform trend analysis
- consider a question on literacy to measure adult and child illiteracy and better understand barriers
- seek additional detail on the location of highest degree obtained, such as city or postal code
- collect information on the year credentials were obtained
- add a question on professional certification
- ask about the respondent's fields of study for all levels of education (not only the highest) and capture them sequentially to analyse the frequency of people changing fields
- improve the formatting of, and instructions related to the questions
- adopt terminology consistent with other Statistics Canada surveys (e.g., Labour Force Survey).

Education content • It was reported that education data are important for research that crosses socioeconomic characteristics (such as income and immigration) and enables users to draw profiles, analyse labour market activities and make correlations between education, employment outcome and earning capabilities.

Table 8.1 Education comments, by category

Category	Comments number
Educational attainment	59
Education content	15
Years of schooling	6
E-learning	5
School attendance	4
Other	15
Total comments on education	104

Source: Statistics Canada, Client Services Division.

Follow-up

The decision to include new questions and modify or eliminate existing census content takes into account a number of factors, such as consultation feedback, support to legislation, program and policy needs, data quality, costs, historical comparability, respondent burden, privacy, operational considerations and alternative data sources.

The following changes to the education module were tested in May 2008:

- Journeyperson's certificate was added to Question 27, which asks: 'Has this person completed a Registered Apprenticeship or other trades certificate or diploma?'
- The duration of the certificate or diploma program in Question 28 specified '3 months to 1 year' as a category instead of '3 months to less than 1 year' and 'more than 1 year to 2 years' instead of '1 year to 2 years.'
- In Question 29, the word 'university' was added to both the first and third response categories.
- Question 32 on school attendance was modified slightly relocating the time reference to the beginning of the question (i.e., At any time *since September 2007*, has this person attended...?) and reiterated as a title above the response options. The word 'intermédiaire' was added to the first response category in French. The instruction from 2001 was reintroduced in the question. In addition, the wording for the last category in French was modified slightly to more closely match the English.

Education content on the census is used for evaluating and monitoring federal legislation, policies and programs including:

- Canada Student Loans Program
- *Employment Equity Act*
- *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act*

Source: Statistics Canada, Catalogue no. 92-379-XIE, *2001 Census Handbook*.

Note: Questions 26 to 32 on the 2006 Census questionnaire (see [Appendix 3](#)) relate to education.

Chapter 9 Labour market activity

Participants submitted 51 comments on labour market activity, with varied observations. In many of the submissions received on this topic, users requested richer data on types of workers or employment tenure.

Worker types • Participants contributed 11 comments on the types of workers. Several of them wanted information on the temporary or casual workforce which is of growing importance to labour law. Data on these types of employees could help researchers assess the number of Canadians working in precarious employment. As well, some participants wanted to know the incidence of multiple-job holders, useful for monitoring employment density.

Job tenure and duration • Also of interest was the inclusion of a question on employment duration and job tenure. According to users, more data on employment patterns (e.g., length and consecutive nature of employment) would permit better analysis of labour market results and help ascertain the scope of Employment Insurance (EI) beneficiaries (those who qualified compared with those who obtained assistance).

Others that commented on labour market activity asked for more detailed information on

- Canada's contingent workforce and underemployment
- retirees (e.g., whether retirees are working of their own volition)
- the respondent's work characteristics (e.g., start time, length of work week)
- whether landed immigrants are working in their intended field of study and the length of time they needed to find employment in that field
- the self-employed who work from home.

Labour market activity content • It was reported that labour market data are essential to support the programs and policy decisions in various domains, such as health, human resources and transportation. A few participants thought the content could be reduced (it was mentioned the Labour Force Survey currently disseminates this information in detail). However, it was also noted that no other survey provides the level of geographical detail offered by the census.

Table 9.1 Labour market activity comments, by category

Category	Comments
	number
Labour market activity content	13
Worker types	11
Job tenure and duration	5
Retirement ¹	5
Other	17
Total comments on labour market activity	51

1. Consultation input is included under the "Other comments" heading above.

Source: Statistics Canada, Client Services Division.

Follow-up

Considering the factors for introducing new questions or modifying existing census content, such as consultation feedback, support to legislation, program and policy needs, data quality, costs, historical comparability, respondent burden, privacy, operational considerations and alternative data sources, the present set of labour market activity questions seems to best address the needs for data in this area. Therefore, no changes are anticipated for 2011.

Labour market activity content on the census is used for evaluating and monitoring federal legislation, policies and programs including:

- Canada Pension Plan
- Employment Insurance
- *Old Age Security Act*

Source: Statistics Canada, Catalogue no. 92-379-XIE, *2001 Census Handbook*.

Note: Questions 34 to 45, 49 and 50 on the 2006 Census questionnaire (see [Appendix 3](#)) relate to labour market activity.

Chapter 10 Place of work and mode of transportation

Participants submitted 233 comments on place of work and mode of transportation⁹ during consultations—more comments than on any other topic (see “[Summary table](#)”). Contributions from municipalities and regions accounted for almost half of these comments.

Mode of transportation • Many participants wanted the census to disseminate information on single and multiple modes of transportation.

Separating the current modal response options would provide more insight into Canadians’ transportation habits. In some instances, participants contended it was not possible to analyse the circumstances surrounding the use of various modes of transit, given that the category ‘public transit’ includes several types of transit (e.g., bus, subway, ferry). It was recommended the options ‘as driver’ and ‘as passenger’ be excluded and a specific question on carpooling be added. It was also requested that the census include a write-in box to better capture the variety in the modes of transportation respondents use travel to work.

Commute time • Data on commute time supports the planning and development of essential infrastructure. According to participants, city planners and others could use intelligence on commute time to

- analyse the growth in traffic congestion and rush hour peaks if the census asked about departure time
- estimate the speed and level of congestion
- assess and compare the performance of public transit versus using a personal vehicle
- gauge the time that was spent commuting compared to working
- calculate the distance travelled based on the time spent commuting
- gain an understanding of commute time versus distance, which could help explain the choice of transportation and commuting behaviour.

Given the ambiguity associated with what constitutes commute time and the subjectivity associated with estimating it, participants mentioned the definition needs to be very specific so the census can collect appropriate and accurate information.

Vehicle occupancy • Some of the submissions pointed out vehicle occupancy data are used to conduct road management research, such as research on the introduction of high-occupancy vehicle lanes and various toll pricing methods. Knowing the total number of occupants per vehicle would help census data users capture the prevalence of carpooling and analyse fuel consumption, energy efficiency and greenhouse gas emissions. While many participants endorsed a question on vehicle occupancy, it was also felt that given only a limited number of respondents would report more than one person, the content may be unnecessary or the information could be estimated.

Other comments on place of work and mode of transportation include the following:

- ask commute questions of students travelling to school
- enquire about the number of cars owned and used by a household
- compile data on travel methods used in different seasons as seasonality affects the choice of transportation
- collect data on work camps
- ask whether the commute involves the use of a toll road
- measure telework; business travel
- include a question on parking expenses
- track the distance from the respondent’s place of work to public transit
- add a check box for those who do not commute.

9. The content consultation guide specified travel time and vehicle occupancy were being considered for the 2011 Census. Consultation participants were asked their views on the proposed 2011 Census content changes.

Place of work and mode of transportation content • Numerous participants stressed the importance of place of work and mode of transportation questions. According to users, these data aid city planners and others to forecast travel demand, develop public transit, and, plan new road construction and more efficient and sustainable transportation systems. While new wording for the existing questions was suggested, it was also recommended the present journey to work questions remain unchanged to allow for historical comparisons and that new content be added.

Table 10.1 Place of work and mode of transportation comments, by category

Category	Comments number
Mode of transportation	64
Commuter time	60
Vehicle occupancy	48
Season affects answers ¹	12
Place of work and mode of transportation content	9
Commuting to school ¹	7
Number of vehicles ¹	7
Other	26
Total comments on place of work and mode of transportation	233

1. Consultation input is included in the “Other comments” heading above.

Source: Statistics Canada, Client Services Division.

Follow-up

The decision to include new questions and modify or eliminate existing census content takes into account a number of factors, such as consultation feedback, support to legislation, program and policy needs, data quality, costs, historical comparability, respondent burden, privacy, operational considerations and alternative data sources.

Mode of transportation • The place of work and mode of transportation question used for quantitative testing included a more detailed list of transportation options such as ferry, subway (includes light-rail), bus (includes street car) and taxicab. Respondents were instructed to select multiple modes of travel, if applicable.

Commuter time • A two-part commuter time question asked a) what time did this person usually leave home to go to work (a.m. or p.m.), and b) how many minutes did it usually take this person to get from home to work?

Vehicle occupancy • A question on vehicle occupancy (i.e., the number of people who usually ride to work in the same car, truck or van) was included in the May 2008 test.

Place of work and mode of transportation content on the census is used for evaluating and monitoring federal legislation, policies and programs including:

- Delineation of Census Metropolitan Areas and Census Agglomerations Program
- *Canada Transportation Act*

Note: Questions 46 and 47 on the 2006 Census questionnaire (see [Appendix 3](#)) relate to place of work and mode of transportation.

Chapter 11 Unpaid work

The topic of unpaid work¹⁰ yielded 72 comments. Introduced in 1996, the three-part question asks people 15 years and older how much time they spend doing household tasks, caring for children and assisting seniors without pay. The majority of the feedback received on unpaid work concerned the need for, and use of, household activities data or the suitability of the census as the collection vehicle for this information. As was witnessed during 2006 Census content consultations, participants were divided over whether to retain the question on the census.

Unpaid work content • Approximately 30% of the 54 comments received on the importance of unpaid work content stressed the need for unpaid work data collected on the census. Participants reported the data are used to analyse gender equity, understand economic divisions, measure the volume of volunteer work and develop policies. The increasing importance of information on unpaid care to seniors for planning and program delivery was also emphasized in a number of the submissions. A few users stated the question should not be removed or cautioned against it.

Probing revealed that unpaid work data are used at varying levels of geographical detail. A small number of organizations specified they require household activities information for lower geographic levels to support research and projects. However, for some participants the availability of data at higher levels of geography sufficed. Some thought the national and provincial geographical levels were of most interest to users.

At the same time, approximately 30% of the 54 comments indicated the question on unpaid work could be removed or that the content is better covered by a different survey. Arguments in favour of eliminating the question include the following: the household activities categories are too broad and don't provide sufficient context, the question would need to be improved to make the results meaningful—especially as it relates to the time references, and, there are alternative data sources.

According to some of these users, surveys such as the General Social Survey and the Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating are better suited because they collect more detailed data on household activities and volunteering. On the other hand, a few participants considered the data available from sources other than the census inadequate because of their limited sample size and geographic coverage.

In several instances, participants expressed uncertainty over the degree to which their organizations made use of the data—if at all. Some indicated they seldom use unpaid work data. Others felt that unpaid care to seniors could become more useful given Canada's demographic profile.

Other comments on the unpaid work content include the following:

- capture information on the number of persons assisting individuals with illness or disability according to different age categories (e.g., children, working-age adult, seniors)
- obtain more detail on the care or services provided to seniors by hours per week and by type of activities (e.g., help with housework, administration of personal finances, etc.)
- ask this question on a decennial basis (i.e., every 10 years) if removed from the 2011 Census
- add more questions on volunteering so it is recognized and counted as unpaid work.

10. During most in-person consultations, participants were asked about the use and importance of unpaid work data.

Table 11.1 Unpaid work comments, by category

Category	Comments
	number
Unpaid work content	54
Helping individuals with disabilities ¹	5
Volunteer question ¹	4
Other	9
Total comments on unpaid work	72

1. Consultation input is included in the "Other comments" heading above.

Source: Statistics Canada, Client Services Division.

Follow-up

The decision to include new questions and modify or eliminate existing census content takes into account a number of factors, such as consultation feedback, support to legislation, program and policy needs, data quality, costs, historical comparability, respondent burden, privacy, operational considerations and alternative data sources.

The unpaid work questions underwent further testing in May 2008. However, given the demand to collect information on other subject areas and the availability of alternative data sources, careful consideration is being given to excluding household activities from the 2011 Census questionnaire.

Unpaid work content on the census is used for evaluating and monitoring federal legislation, policies and programs including:

- Immigrant Settlement and Adaptation Program
- National Advisory Council on Aging
- Women's Program

Source: Statistics Canada, Catalogue No. 92-379-XIE, 2001 Census Handbook.

Note: Question 33 on the 2006 Census questionnaire (see [Appendix 3](#)) relates to household activities.

Chapter 12 Income

A total of 46 comments were received on the topic of income. Support was expressed for the continued use of tax files as an alternative to completing the income questions on the questionnaire.

Sources of income • Seventeen comments pertained to the various sources of income. Of these, it was recommended the 'other income' and 'other income from government sources' components be broken out. In the case of 'other income from government sources,' knowing how many respondents received social assistance by source was considered important. The information obtained by separating income categories (welfare payments, in particular) would support the analysis of poverty in Canada and help with social policy development. Lastly, a small number of participants communicated concern that certain sections in the income module (e.g., overseas income) are underreported. It was felt there might be confusion over dividends and actual income in the case of self-employment income.

Use of tax files • The inclusion of an income permission question was new for the 2006 Census. It enabled respondents to give Statistics Canada access to their income tax files instead of filling out the income module. The following summarizes the comments contributed on the use of the tax file permission question:

- Some participants thought the data collected from T1 forms were more accurate than those from the census. As well, it was proposed the income question be more aligned with the tax form to encourage respondents to answer 'yes' to the question on permission. It was also concluded that much of the income section could be eliminated from the census if the information came from tax records.
- The income permission statement could be broadened to include other tax files (e.g., T4). More detailed data would be obtained and at the same time it would alleviate respondent burden.
- Very few participants expressed reservations about this method of collection. Concerns centred on the possibility that the content found on T1 forms would limit the type of income-related questions contained on census forms and the need for more detail on the census questionnaire regarding which parts of the tax information would be accessed. It was also suggested a cut-off date be added, after which point if the respondent has not filed they would be required to complete the income questions on the census.

Other comments on income include the following:

- remove the 'alimony' portion of the other money income question. It is considered inappropriate and is not collected on T1 forms
- add a question on land claims benefits and intergenerational transfer of money
- ask the respondent about their assets and debt
- specify whether before or after-tax child support income is required
- examine the order and response format of income questions to ensure data quality.

Income content • It was reported that income data are important to different policy areas, such as Aboriginal affairs and health and enable users to analyze of the economic impact of other variables such as education.

Table 12.1 Income comments, by category

Category	Comments
	number
Sources of income	17
Income content	11
Use of tax files	10
Other	8
Total comments on income	46

Source: Statistics Canada, Client Services Division.

Follow-up

The decision to include new questions and modify or eliminate existing census content takes into account a number of factors, such as consultation feedback, support to legislation, program and policy needs, data quality, costs, historical comparability, respondent burden, privacy, operational considerations and alternative data sources.

The phrase 'or intend to file' was added to the current income permission question to broaden the eligibility of respondents who wish to use this option. As well, a sub-category for capital gains was tested in May 2008.

Income content on the census is used for evaluating and monitoring federal legislation, policies and programs including:

- Employment Insurance
- *Old Age Security Act*

Source: Statistics Canada, Catalogue no. 92-379-XIE, *2001 Census Handbook*.

Note: Questions 51 and 52 on pages 32 to 36 of the 2006 Census questionnaire (see [Appendix 3](#)) relate to income. Information on income is also collected from tax file records, when permission is granted.

Chapter 13 Housing and shelter costs

Participants submitted 114 comments on housing and shelter costs.¹¹ A majority of the comments received on this topic pertained to the need for greater detail on dwelling types. Many participants supported refining the classification methodology which aims to better categorize private and collective dwellings, particularly in the case of seniors residences. Municipalities and regions contributed most of the input on this topic.

Dwelling types • Support for collecting data on the diversity of dwelling types in the housing market was expressed in many of the sixty-one comments received on this subject. Some participants wanted the census to track Canada's changing housing market but stressed the importance of maintaining historical comparability. Examples of structures of interest to users included duplex basement suites, secondary suites, bungalows, dwellings in marinas and stacked homes. These data would provide knowledge on a greater variety of housing stock and inform on the secondary rental market which was estimated to be from 20% to 40% of the rental market in some cities.

Several data users requested a question on income-related or subsidized housing. More information on the dwelling type and socioeconomic characteristics of households contributes to a better understanding of Canadians living in straitened circumstances. The results from a question on subsidized housing could be used to evaluate housing policy and support programs related to poverty.

Other comments on this subject had to do with senior residences, their occupants and the diverse services provided at these institutions. A number of participants expressed the need to capture the variety in seniors living arrangements. As well, additional questions on the transition period leading up to assisted care (e.g., the aid needed to remain at home) and the length of stay in institutions would help to forecast the assistance seniors need to receive.

Owner and rental costs • Some participants thought that the various expenditures included in the respondent's rent should be determined. They wanted to know, for example, whether renters paid their utilities separately, or whether it was part of their overall rent. Others asked that the census collect data on the proportion of condominiums that were rented, given the stock of condominiums is rising.

Other comments on housing and shelter costs include the following:

- add more precision to the question on the number of rooms
- keep the question on household maintainer
- obtain information on persons living in shelters in order to develop and support programs and services for the homeless
- ask about communications expenditures (e.g., phone, Internet), school taxes, home renovations, and, home heating rebates
- inquire about square-footage and the presence of home offices
- collect information on more aggregated age categories for dwellings (e.g., 1981-1990 instead of 1981-1985 and 1986-1990) and provide a picture of vacant stock.

Housing and shelter costs content • It was reported that the data collected from these questions are heavily used in market analysis, to measure overcrowding and to plan transit services. Some data users recommended these questions be historically comparable. Others did not want the content reduced. A small number of participants, however, thought the housing and shelter costs module should be reviewed. For instance, it was felt the question on the number of rooms was vague so could be excluded from the census as could the question on major repairs.

11. The content consultation guide specified that the methodology for classifying dwellings was being examined for the 2011 Census. Consultation participants were asked their views on the proposed 2011 Census content changes.

Table 13.1 Housing and shelter costs comments, by category

Category	Comments
	number
Housing and dwelling types	61
Owner and rental costs	10
Housing and shelter costs content	10
Number of rooms ¹	6
Homeless people and shelters ¹	5
Other	22
Total comments on housing and shelter costs	114

1. Consultation input is included in the "Other comments" heading above.

Source: Statistics Canada, Client Services Division.

Follow-up

The decision to include new questions and modify or eliminate existing census content takes into account a number of factors, such as consultation feedback, support to legislation, program and policy needs, data quality, costs, historical comparability, respondent burden, privacy, operational considerations and alternative data sources.

A question on subsidized housing was included on the May 2008 content test questionnaire. As well, the condominium question was relocated so that renters are included; the concept of bedroom was further clarified; and, new wording for dwelling tenure question was tested.

In addition, the identification of senior residences and nursing homes using administrative data is being explored.

Housing and shelter costs content on the census is used for evaluating and monitoring federal legislation, policies and programs including:

- *National Housing Act*
- Canada Pension Plan
- Canada Health and Social Transfer

Source: Statistics Canada, Catalogue No. 92-379-XIE, *2001 Census Handbook*.

Note: Step F on the 2006 Census questionnaire (see [Appendix 3](#)) relates to housing and shelter costs. These data are used in combination with those on the structural type of dwelling classification assigned by the field canvasser.

Chapter 14 Other

This chapter includes content and other points of interest not specifically associated with one of the previous topics. In total, 68 comments fall under the 'other' heading.

Secondary residences • Many participants expressed a need for data on the prevalence of secondary residences for the student population or children in shared custody arrangements. In the context of labour market mobility and transition workers, this subject ranked high for some municipalities and regions and in provinces such as Alberta and Newfoundland. Others demonstrated an interest in having the census determine the respondent's usual and temporary place of residence or better understanding how time is shared between primary and secondary residences.

Data comparability • The importance of historical comparability is highlighted throughout the report according to the topic, as reflected in the consultation input. Some participants, however, commented generally about the importance of keeping the census questions stable to analyse trends over multiple census years or for reference purposes. In addition, a number of users requested that census terminology be harmonized with other Statistics Canada socioeconomic surveys such as the Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics.

Permission for the release of census information after 92 years • Introduced in 2006, some participants maintained that the question which asks respondents for permission to release their information 92 years after the census could be improved by explaining the ways their information would be used; by making changes to the wording; and, by changing its placement on the questionnaire. It was also unclear whether a parent could legitimately give permission on behalf of their children.

Various other topics and general comments include the following:

- determine the use of child care
- ask about access to Internet
- include a question on the number of pets in the household
- inquire about electoral participation
- keep all existing questions; all are relevant
- lower the complexity of the language used in the questionnaire
- reduce the number of options and examples for some questions.

Table 14.1 Other comments, by category

Category	Comments
	number
Secondary residences	18
Data comparability	13
Permission for the release of census information after 92 years	5
Other	32
Total comments on 'other'	68

Source: Statistics Canada, Client Services Division.

Follow-up

The decision to include new questions and modify or eliminate existing census content takes into account a number of factors, such as consultation feedback, support to legislation, program and policy needs, data quality, costs, historical comparability, respondent burden, privacy, operational considerations and alternative data sources.

Use of child care • New content on the use of child care was tested in May 2008. Respondents were asked whether they paid for child care during the previous year so they could work at a paid job. If they answered 'yes', they were instructed to report how much they spent.

Spousal support payments • A question inquiring whether respondents paid support payments to a former spouse or partner during the previous year was added to the census test questionnaire. If they responded 'yes', they were asked to enter the amount.

Permission for the release of census information after 92 years • This question has been reworked. During previous qualitative testing, several respondents did not feel there was enough information to provide consent.

Elections Canada • A question asking the respondent permission to provide their name, address and date of birth to Elections Canada for the National Register of Electors was included in both the May 2008 content test and the qualitative testing held at the same time. This information, if collected during the census, would be used only for purposes permitted under the *Canada Elections Act*. The results generated from testing this question will better inform the decision on its inclusion in the 2009 Census Test and the 2011 Census.

Note: Question 53 on the 2006 Census questionnaire (see [Appendix 3](#)) asked the respondent's permission to make their information available for public release 92 years after the census.

Conclusion

The 2011 Census content consultation generated a large response from many different sectors. The input received is valuable in understanding data users' needs and priorities. Content-related ideas and suggestions will be considered by the 2011 Census Content Determination team and will be of benefit to Statistics Canada's socioeconomic survey areas.

As noted earlier, feedback gathered during consultations has led to the successful integration of new questions in the past. Many factors are thoughtfully deliberated, however, before a new question is added or an existing one is modified. For example, any additional content must meet a widespread need that is not met by other socioeconomic surveys. Other important elements include the requirement to support legislation and historical comparability for time series trend analysis. The costs for collecting, processing and disseminating the information are also key considerations. Content will not be added if it deemed too sensitive or intrusive. Finally, because of concerns over respondent burden, the introduction of a question must often result in the removal of another.

Some recommendations submitted during 2011 Census content consultations were included in the May 2008 content test. Others are beyond the scope of the census or have been judged more suitable for data collection by other surveys. Many ideas received during consultation will begin to set the stage for 2016 and 2021, which is already on the horizon.

Following the Census Content Test, the results will be analysed and modifications will be brought to the questionnaire prior to the 2009 Census Test. Content may be excluded from the final stages of testing if it does not meet data quality thresholds.

The final recommendations for the 2011 Census content will be formulated in the fall of 2009 for consideration and approval by Cabinet.

Statistics Canada wishes to once again thank all of those who participated in the 2011 Census content consultation process.

Please submit any questions or comments you may have on this report to the address indicated below or by e-mail to censusconsultation@statcan.ca

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Appendix 1 Historical tables

Table A1.1 Content comments, by census topic and census year, 2001, 2006, 2011

Topic	2001	2006	2011
	number		
Place of work and mode of transportation	53	15	233
Ethnocultural and religious characteristics	170	29	232
Family characteristics	269	17	131
Housing and shelter costs	139	51	114
Education	111	60	104
Aboriginal peoples	50	11	80
Unpaid work	122	42	72
Demographic characteristics	143	41	61
Labour market activity	138	65	51
Income	46	30	46
Language	83	29	34
Activity limitations	0	16	27
Citizenship and immigration	104	26	23
Other	101	35	68
Total comments by topic	1,529	467	1,276

Notes: The consultation processes, guides and comment classifications vary across census years. These figures are not directly comparable. The numbers contained here differ from Table A1.2 because they relate to content comments only.

Source: Statistics Canada, Client Services Division.

Table A1.2 Comments, by sector and census year, 2001, 2006, 2011

Sector	2001	2006	2011
	number		
Provincial and territorial departments and agencies	454	326	372
Municipalities and regions	204	141	253
Federal departments and agencies ¹	243	219	210
Statistics Canada	0	0	137
Community groups and non-profit organizations	465	8	125
Academic	130	30	66
Private industry	56	41	62
Advisory committees	71	24	36
Private citizens	27	0	15
Total comments by sector	1,650	789	1,276

1. Does not include Statistics Canada.

Source: Statistics Canada, Client Services Division.

Appendix 2.1 Dissemination

While the current round of consultation on the 2011 Census centred on content, an additional 104 comments were submitted on the census dissemination¹² strategy.

Release dates • Most participants that commented on the release schedule requested earlier availability of census data. Some were concerned the time lag in disseminating census results affects their relevance. It was suggested that data critical for public policy and programs should be among the initial releases and that the number of hits on the census pages of the Internet be used to help identify the topics of greatest interest. Disseminating summary statistics initially and following up with more detailed results would satisfy some users.

There was some disappointment that the introduction of technological processes during the 2006 Census (such as the Internet response option) did not accelerate the delivery of census results. At the same time, the importance of accuracy over earlier release dates was acknowledged.

Profiles and tabulations • Some data users wanted more standard profiles. Areas of interest included various age cohorts, religious groups, home owners and people living in collective dwellings. Proposed content for cross-tabulations consisted of children living in low-income households and mobility patterns of seniors and immigrants. Requests were also received for analysis on children less than 5 years of age and for workers in the community sector.

Variable categories • Participants mainly remarked on the variable categories used in standard census tables. The distributions in the tabulations were not sufficiently detailed, for some. For example, it was felt

- more robustness is needed in the religion, language and place of birth categories
- higher levels of income should be added
- additional information on occupied dwelling counts should be provided.

As for the religion variables, the term 'Asian' was preferred over 'Eastern Religion.' In addition, concern was noted about the grouping of ethnic origin categories.

Cost of data • Some users thought current prices for custom tabulations are too high. According to a few participants, non-profit organizations should obtain more census data free. It was also felt that standard data should be free as public good. Lastly, positive feedback was conveyed on the increased number of tabulations at lower levels of geography, such as census subdivisions, available free on the Internet.

Historical comparability • As is the case for census content and geography, stability and comparability of census data are important to data users for trend analysis. Consequently, it was argued that new variables should be consistent with those of previous census years. Concordance tables, overlapping time series and proper documentation explaining the impact for analysis are needed to manage change. In the past, some users experienced problems reconciling concepts (households) or variable categories (education).

12. The *2011 Census Content Consultation Guide* asked participants for their comments on census dissemination strategies.

Other comments on dissemination include the following:

- dissemination area (DA) level data should be available on the day of release
- clients should not have to pay for suppressed data
- true zeros should be identified in census data tables
- vignettes are popular but could be more interactive; pages with animation are busy
- the dissemination strategy over the past censuses has been excellent, providing good visibility
- standard products are better than before
- in general, data requirements are being met.

Table A2.1.1 Dissemination comments, by category

Category	Comments
	number
Release dates	23
Profiles and tabulations	17
Variable categories	17
Cost of data	12
Historical comparability	7
Other	28
Total comments on dissemination	104

Source: Statistics Canada, Client Services Division.

Follow-up

The 2011 Census dissemination consultation round is scheduled to begin in the fall of 2008.

Note: Comments on dissemination relate to the census products and services available to the public.

Appendix 2.2 Geography

Census geography¹³ yielded 162 comments. Participants were asked whether current standard geographic areas met their needs. As a result, the majority of the observations collected relate specifically to [2006 Census geographic units](#). Most of the remarks on geography products and services concentrated on standard digital products such as the Road Network File (RNF).

Levels of geography • Geography gives context to census results. Numerous consultation participants, largely those from the government and private sectors, reflected on the importance of both standard and non-standard geographies. Some were satisfied with the current geographical structure. Others presented suggestions for improvements. Consultation findings pertinent to selected census geographical units, namely designated places, dissemination areas, census tracts and dissemination blocks are summarized below.

Designated places • Designated places (DPLs) provide data for submunicipal areas. Some participants considered designated places a possible solution for users looking for census information on municipalities absorbed by amalgamation. Data for municipalities, rural towns, villages, localities and unincorporated places based on pre-existing boundaries continue to be important for comparability. To satisfy this need, some provincial and local governments requested the rules for designating DPLs be loosened (i.e., relax density and population thresholds). It was also recommended the parameters be extended to both urban and rural areas and suggested the definition of designated places be broadened to recognize the necessity for monitoring and reporting on community growth.

Dissemination areas • With an optimum population of 500 people, the dissemination area (DA) is the smallest unit for which a wealth of standard census data are available. Introduced in 2001, many data users stressed dissemination areas should remain stable. According to some, this can be achieved by using the procedure employed to split a census tract (i.e., subdivide within existing boundaries, leaving the outer perimeter intact) when dissemination areas surpass the optimum population threshold. It was also maintained that when changes to dissemination areas occur, concordance files need to be made available.

However, feedback indicated some dissemination area restructuring is necessary in specific areas. In some instances, DAs are considered problematic because they do not reflect land-use patterns or planning features (e.g., they combine industrial and residential settings); the boundaries have been incorrectly allocated; or, they do not follow existing road networks or other landmarks. As well, some dissemination areas do not respect municipally and provincially defined geographical entities. A number of local governments asked to be consulted on the future delineation or maintenance of this census geography.

Census tracts • Census tracts are well-established geographical entities. They are found in census metropolitan areas (CMAs) and the largest census agglomerations (CAs). During consultation, it was suggested the census tract program be expanded nationally rather than be limited to the largest urban centres. Concerns about census tract stability over time, size and naming conventions were brought forth as was the importance of respecting municipal boundaries and broadening coverage to include adjoining municipalities.

Dissemination blocks • Dissemination blocks (DBs), the basic unit of census geography, span all of Canada. Comments pertaining to blocks focused mainly on their size or shape. In some cases the population count is considered too high. It was also noted that boundaries should more closely follow physical features in some places and that the delineation of blocks in certain areas is problematic (e.g., the North and coastal regions).

13. The *2011 Census Content Consultation Guide* asked participants whether the current standard geographic areas meet users' needs, whether the criteria used to define these areas were appropriate, and whether other geographic areas or structures should be included in the geographic frame.

Products and services • The Road Network File (RNF) provides a digital representation of Canada's road network and contains information such as street names, types, directions and address ranges. Some users indicated that the Road Network File needs to be more accurate (e.g., be as up to date as possible prior to release). Road Network File content should also be closely aligned to municipal and provincial digital road files for consistency. In addition to debating the inclusion of a water layer and major tributaries in the cartographic and digital boundaries files, some participants underscored the continued importance of the geocoding service (e.g., for defining custom geographical boundaries such as wards or marketing districts) and hoped it could be made available even earlier during the 2011 Census cycle.

Census metropolitan area and census agglomeration compound names • Statistics Canada is considering adopting a compound name structure for census metropolitan areas and census agglomerations for 2011. The extension of census metropolitan area and census agglomeration names to include a maximum of three references based on the population was explored during in-person consultation¹⁴. The following input was collected on the compound name proposal:

- strict criteria (e.g., population) would need to be followed
- the existing census metropolitan area and census agglomeration names should be referenced first for historical comparability
- a more generic census metropolitan area name may reduce the misinterpretation of census results, which sometimes occurs when the census metropolitan area and a constituent census subdivision carry the same name
- conversely, there could be misinterpretation of the data if some compound names are adopted.

Other comments on geography include the following:

- differentiate between the rural population and those living in small towns
- confer with municipalities on all boundary modifications
- disseminate more census information by postal code, census consolidated subdivision and economic regions
- ensure the stability of geographic areas as they are important for historical comparability.

Table A2.2.1 Geography comments, by category

Category	Comments
	number
Levels of geography	98
Products and services	29
Census metropolitan area and census agglomeration compound names	8
Historical comparability ¹	7
Other	20
Total comments on geography	162

1. Consultation input is included in the "Other comments" heading above.

Source: Statistics Canada, Client Services Division.

Follow-up

The 2011 Census dissemination consultation round, which will permit users to provide feedback on 2006 Census geography products and services, is scheduled to begin in the fall of 2008.

Note: Comments on census geography relate to the units in the 2006 Census geographic structure and the products and services available to the public.

14. Additional consultation on the proposed census metropolitan area and census agglomeration compound name structure took place during the winter of 2007.

Appendix 2.3 Collection and communications

Participants submitted 64 comments on collection and communications.¹⁵ The emphasis of the observations pertaining to census communications was on awareness and education.

Undercoverage • Many data users commented on undercoverage from a collection and dissemination perspective. There were concerns about the coverage of residents living in collectives, among certain population groups (such as Aboriginal peoples), temporary residents, and in small and rural communities. Reasons speculated for undercoverage include changes in methodology, a possible mistrust of the government on the part of some immigrants, incomplete enumeration and sample size. Representatives from some local governments requested undercoverage data at finer levels of geographical detail (such as census divisions) which would permit greater precision with their population projections, important for adequate service delivery.

Internet collection • Many participants remarked positively about being able to fill out their census questionnaire online. However, it was pointed out not everyone has access to the Internet. This is a consideration not only for collection but also in the dissemination of census results. It was also felt that the Internet response option should be extended to all census forms (e.g., the Northern and Reserves Questionnaire; Form 2D).

From the feedback received, some challenges to be addressed for 2011 will include avoiding duplication (households completing both the paper and online questionnaires), overcoming on-line time restrictions, conveying receipt of Internet response in a timely way and ensuring accessibility on Census Day.

Promoting the census • It was recommended diverse communications strategies using a variety of ethnic media channels and public service announcements be used to increase awareness and visibility of the census among new arrivals to Canada and certain population groups. Reinforcing the confidential nature of the census and explaining its importance was also encouraged to help allay fears and generate a higher participation by certain groups. Lastly, it was felt that census promotion should be limited to certain Internet sites, to print and electronic newspapers and to television, and that mail promotion should be kept to a minimum.

Other comments on collection and communications include the following:

- the collection activities for 2011 should be done uniquely by Statistics Canada
- local governments can help with the collection process (e.g., verification of addresses)
- the mail-out process versus enumerator drop-off received positive feedback
- conceptual and classification changes need to be communicated more frequently
- respondents should be able to complete their census questionnaire using various technologies such as cell phones.

Table A2.3.1 Collection and communications comments, by category

Category	Comments
	number
Undercoverage (data quality)	29
Internet collection	11
Census promotion	7
Other	17
Total comments on collection and communications	64

Source: Statistics Canada, Client Services Division.

15. The *2011 Census Content Consultation Guide* asked participants for their comments on census communications activities.

Follow-up

The Census Communications Program will continue to include advertising and editorial content in third-language media (radio, print and television). The census advertising program concentrates on radio because it is the most effective way of contacting people and holding their attention. This is followed by Internet and out-of-home. All census messages contain information on the uses of the census but the message that respondents indicate has the largest impact is the reinforcement of the legal obligation of each household.

Note: Comments on collection and communications relate to field operations and the promotion of the census.

Appendix 3 Reference documents

1. *2011 Census Content Consultation Guide -*

<http://www12.statcan.ca/english/census06/reference/consultation/92-136/index.cfm>

2. *2006 2B Census Questionnaire (PDF) -*

http://www.statcan.ca/english/sdds/instrument/3908_Q2_V1_E.pdf

3. *Report on Regional Discussions on Aboriginal Identification Questions -*

<http://www.statcan.ca/bsolc/english/bsolc?catno=89-629-XWE>

Methodology

Definition of a comment

A comment on a selected topic is a statement made with the clear intention of influencing support for or opposition to any decision that may be made regarding the 2011 Census questions pertaining to that topic.

Selected methodology notes

- Each statement that only makes one comment according to the definition above is only counted once. For example, 'With the growth in e-learning, it is important to gather more information on this subject' is considered one comment and was only counted once.
- In the case when a comment makes reference to multiple topics or ideas, each has been counted separately. For instance, 'Ask about religion every five years. Religion is an important ethnocultural variable' is considered two comments and given a count of two: one comment is about how religion should be on every census and the other is about the importance of keeping religion on the questionnaire.
- A submission can contain multiple comments on one census topic. For example, one organization's proposal presented several suggestions on the topic of place of work and mode of transportation. Every idea was developed and considered distinct enough (e.g., collecting data on commute time, multiple modes of transportation and vehicle occupancy) that each was counted separately.
- General comments such as 'I agree with all of the content changes suggested in the consultation guide' (which refers to the *2011 Census Content Consultation Guide*, "Discussion points" chapter, question 1) were included under each topic referred to in that question (i.e., family characteristics, ethnocultural and religious characteristics, Aboriginal peoples, education, place of work and mode of transportation, and housing and shelter costs).
- Comments pertaining to the 2011 Census content captured during previous census cycle consultations or after the November 30, 2007 deadline were entered in 2011 Census database and are being referenced by census experts and other Statistics Canada socioeconomic areas but do not figure in the overall count or findings of this report.

The 2011 Census Content Consultation Guide • The consultation guide presented several proposed changes and included seven questions to assist participants with their submissions. Consequently, the census topics presented in the "Discussion points" chapter received more comments than others.