

The User survey of StatBank Denmark September 2002

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Results and plans

A survey on user satisfaction of the online databank 'StatBank, Denmark', has been carried out a second time. It shows that the contentment expressed by the users has increased regarding contents as well as the functionality.

The remarks we received in the user survey 2001 have given us inspiration to the further development of the user interface in the StatBank. A result is that more users experience success in finding what they are looking for: 51 % of the registered users and 44 % of the non-registered find what they need, while the figures last year were 46 % and 28 % respectively.

We might conclude that we are able to improve the databank and minimize the problems for the users if we know their situation.

The user survey will be followed up by a usability test in order to assess a prototype of planned changes in the user interface. The usability test will include 6-8 people. Some of them are experienced users others, others more or less newcomers. The results will be used in the determination of the future user interface made public on the web.

Why do we conduct a user survey?

StatBank Denmark has a remarkable number of databank users as well as retrievals compared to many other statistical offices' databanks. The number of registered users by 1 October 2002 was 57,500. Half of them have been active throughout the year. An unknown number of non-registered users also have access to the databank. External users retrieve around 900,000 cross-tables a year.

The number of users and use should be compared to the population of Denmark which is 5,3 million people. The number of registered users thus exceeds 1 % of the population.

It is an increasingly intensive use and it becomes important that we can follow the reactions to the changes and developments we present to the users. The resources we spend should pay off in satisfaction among the users.

Our experience shows that a web survey is an efficient tool to reach a large public and get feed back in a structured way - although it is not the only tool to use.

When?

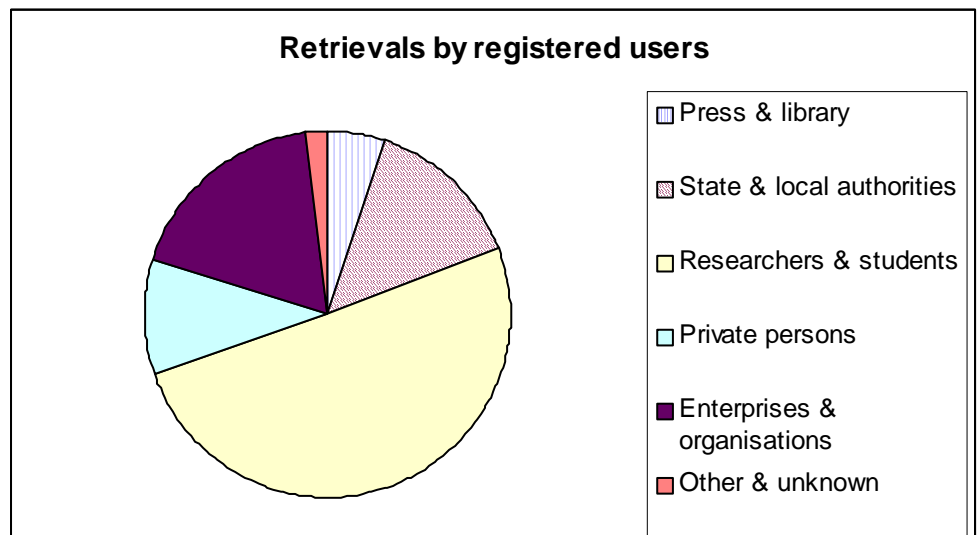
The survey took place 2 - 24 September 2002.

The questions

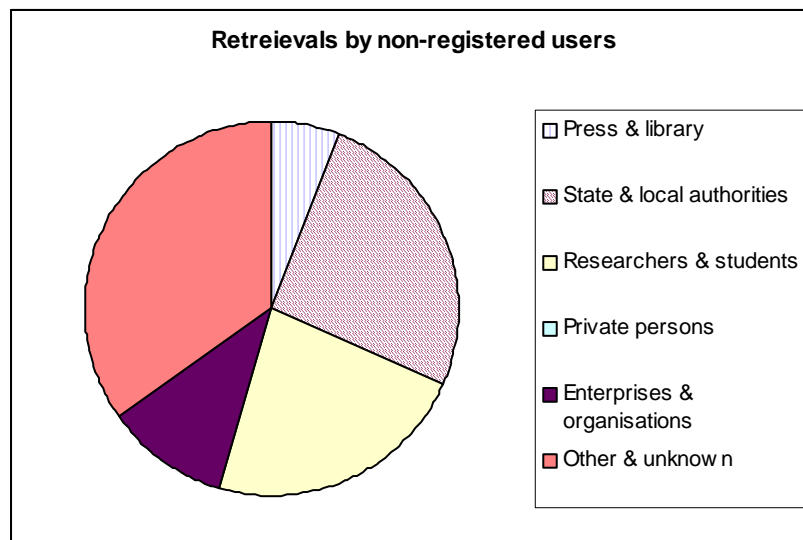
In order to compare over time, we asked the same questions in 2002 as in 2001. One additional question was added.

We did *not* ask about the users' occupation, as we already have that information in relation to the registered users. For non-registered it has been optional to indicate their belonging to a user group. The annual number of table retrievals is around 900,000 tables. The proportion is 45 % retrieved by registered users, 55 % by non-registered users.

The figure below shows that students and researchers count for almost half of all retrievals by registered users:



Retrievals by non-registered users covered 25 % by students and researchers and 25 % by state and local authorities. As much as 35 % of all retrievals were not indicated by an occupation group. Because of that we have actually stopped asking non-registered to indicate a membership of an occupational group, as it anyway did not give a full picture of the non-registered users.



Simple questions...

The questionnaire contained 12 simple questions of which some were eliminated depending on the former answer. There were two questions regarding background information (sex and age).

... and a possibility to comment

The questions were simple and closed and they should be answered within not more than three minutes.

In an open question the user could comment on anything concerning the contents or the user interface and functionality. 27% of the registered users gave their comments while 20% among the non-registered did.

The comments gave an indication of the most obvious needs. However, several comments also praised the StatBank.

Who were asked?

There are two types of users in StatBank, both have access free-of-charge to all data:

1. *Registered users* (They have registered themselves and chosen a user-ID and password. Moreover they have delivered their e-mail address. If they register they will get some advantages. The registered user can retrieve up to 50,000 data cells in one table; they can save a query; they can create own lists of values to be reused; they get a newsletter 5-7 times a year and they can set up their own user profile.)
2. *Non-Registered users* ("guests", can retrieve up to 1,000 data cells from a cross-table)

Among the registered users we selected the ones that were active during the last four months. It was 8.833 people in total.

Among the non-registered users, everybody who entered the StatBank in the period of investigation was exposed to the questionnaire. That made a total of 8.975 people.

The questionnaire popped up when they entered the StatBank. It could be answered at once or neglected. If it was not answered it popped up again in connection with the following two entrances.

The method is described in Annex 1.

The answers

Annex 2 contains the questionnaire and the answers given in 2001 and 2002.

The main results particularly in relation to the 2001 survey are highlighted below.

Response rate

The response rate is satisfactory all though it is lower than last year: 39 % among the registered responded, 7 % among the non-registered¹. In similar surveys in other Statistical Institutes the response rate has been 25-35%.

The responses are not representative for all users. The most active users are over-represented: the more active you are the more likely that you also enter the StatBank in the period when the survey takes place.

What is the users' opinion?

Non-Registered are younger and represent more women

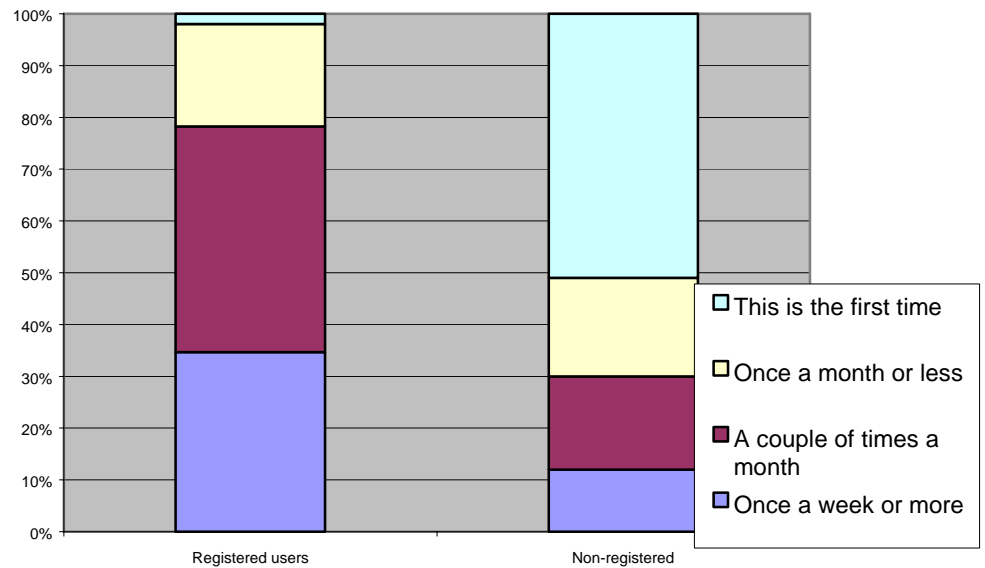
Still more men than women use the StatBank though it has become slightly more equal. Men make up 67 % of the registered users (70 % in 2001) while only 55 % of the non-registered (65 % in 2001). The typical age is 30-49 years for the registered (70 % are 30 years or more) and 18-29 years for non-registered (53 % are under 30 years). The registered group has become slightly older, while the non-registered becomes younger. 12 % are below 18 years – an increase from 8 % one year earlier.

Users who try the StatBank for the first time are generally frequent among the non-registered. As much as half of them all are newcomers using the Statbank for the first time. (Also the registered show a very small portion of newcomers. In theory it should not be possible, as we have selected the registered users that were active during the last 4 months period. However, when it comes to reality users can for practical reasons choose to share the codes. This will give them access to the same saved queries, saved tables and lists etc. In such cases a newcomer can be included to a registered user ID.)

More than 1/3 of the registered users use the StatBank at least once a week and 3/4 use it at least a couple of times a month.

¹ "Registered users" and "Non-registered users" refer to the participating parts of these groups and not the whole group.

How often do you use the StatBank?



Not just for fun

Although as much as 10 % of the respondents use the StatBank of personal interest in the information (that part has doubled during the last year) it is much more common that the results from StatBank are used in connection with work – and in particular also in connection with studies regarding the non-registered users.

Documentation

The users demand more documentation. At least that is what some of them claim in their comments. Nevertheless, fewer people than last year look into the documentation that actual exists in connection with the tables. 45 % of the registered and 27 % of the non-registered users have used the existing documentation that links to 'The Declaration of contents' and articles in the News Release and Statistical Abstracts.

It is apparently still not evident where to find the documentation. That is a pity as the ones that use it respond to a great extend (76 %- 82 %) that they are satisfied.

Among the ones that *did not* use the existing documentation, only 15 % gave the reason "*I did not need it*". That means that we still have some users in need of documentation, but who did not use it because they either did not find it or did not bother to do so.

Consequence no 1

The existing documentation is satisfactory for most users that find it. Thus it must be made more easily accessible for the benefit of all users. For instance, it should be visible in connection with the retrieved table.

Select values by search

A facility to select the values directly by writing the text or code is established as an alternative to scroll down in a list box and mark the selected lines/values. This is the only alternative if the list box contains more than 400 values. It is therefore important that it is presented in an understandable way.

It is presented in one of the three tabs found in the table-designing site. The tab is named " Select by search". More than half of the registered and one third of the non-registered had tried this facility.

Most of them reached a result although only 50% reached the result in their first attempt. 10 %-15 % of the ones that tried never got any result.

Consequence no 2

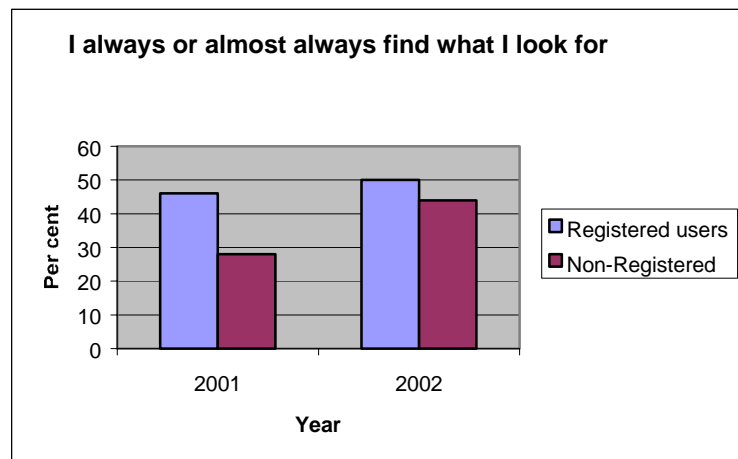
Even though most users find the selection they need, the possibility of *Select by search* should be made more intuitively understood.

The contents

The satisfaction with the contents of StatBank is in general high – and it has become higher since last year. 77 % of the registered users are satisfied or very satisfied with the contents. The same goes for 69 % of the non-registered. The previous year the corresponding figures were 72 % and 67 %.

One explanation is that the contents during the past year actually increased from 630 to 775 public tables. Nevertheless, the comments express a wish for more data, longer time series and more details.

More users have succeeded to find what they look for in 2002 compared to 2001. The situation has in particular for the non-registered users been improved. Again, the reason could be that the content has widened.



Consequence no 3

The contents of StatBank will still be enlarged when the statistical production is extended. StatBank will as a principal rule cover all official statistics.

It is easy

The users find StatBank easy to use in general. This goes for both the registered where 86 % say that it is easy or very easy and for the non-registered users where 74 % think that it is easy or very easy.

To register or not to register..??

It is not mandatory to register with a code and password in order to get access to the full contents in StatBank. But those who register get a wider functionality. And everything is free of charge.

Why do people not register? We have realised that many newcomers choose to enter the StatBank without to register. We do not know whether they continue to use the "guest entrance" or they convert to be a registered user after they tried it a few times. Or may be they register and only omit to use the registered entrance when they do not need the advantages given there.

We have improved slightly to inform about the advantages to register although it still is a long way to go. 75% of the "guests" were not aware of the advantages they could have as a registered user. The figure for the previous year was the case for 85 %.

Among the users who new about the advantages but did not register anyway, still 10 % expressed a wish of anonymity.

36% do not anticipate that they need the mentioned advantages. Last year almost 1/3 did not register because they believed that they would be charged. This has in 2002 fallen to less than 1/5 of the users. We have in the meantime made some efforts to make the difference between the alternatives more clear. Certainly, we should still do better. Last year 9 % did the log in as a registered user because they had forgotten their password. We took notice of that and made it possible to receive a forgotten password: in 2002 7 % mention they enter as guests because of a forgotten password.

Although not everybody notices the difference between to register and not to –register, we consider that it is a significant advantage to give the users both alternatives. A comparison with Statistics Sweden – where it is mandatory to register to access their databank - shows that the number of retrieved tables in Denmark is almost three times higher than in Sweden. The number of users to StatBank is also considerably higher although the Swedish population is almost twice as large.

Consequence no 4

There shall never be any doubt for the user that it is free-of-charge to register. We shall therefore consider the possibility to make it possible to register when it could be advantageous. An offer to register could for instance be made when a non-registered user tries to select more than 1,000 figures.

Comments

An open question where the user was invited to give comments resulted in response from 258 people. 27 % of the registered users and 20 % of the non-registered used this possibility.

The type of comments were as follows:

Type of comment	Total	Registered users	Non-Registered
General	108	48	60
Concerning contents	70	47	23
Concerning functionality	64	43	21
Other	16	2	14
Total	258	140	118

About half of the general comments praised the StatBank while the rest focused on search problems and documentation.

Search

Most of the comments regarding functionality covered different aspects of search problems. For instance, a link to a table that is not available.

This is a problem we have been aware of, and it is undoubtedly confusing and not satisfactory for a user.

Consequence no 5

We will improve the search facility.
The first step will be to eliminate "dead links". Secondly, we will start to log the actual search routines and the search words that are entered by the users. Thirdly, we shall make a plan for a search function that secures that the user is presented to a reasonable number of links that covers the required statistics.

More documentation and definitions are other needs that were discovered through the given comments.

Consequence no 6

We will investigate the different levels of information that could be made available together with a table (definitions, methods description, declaration of contents etc). The documentation shall be structured in such a way that the relevant information can be reached where it is needed.

Some comments raised technical problems like "Why can I not ...?": problems that the user ought not to have, as a feasible solution already exists. The user was unfortunately not able to find the solution. Help information must therefore be more visible and available in the situation when it is needed.

Consequence no7

The help facility will be improved. Specific help information shall be available in specific situations.

Conclusion

The survey shows that most of the users are satisfied with the StatBank both regarding contents and the way to navigate. Compared to the previous year where the user interface was different, more users now find what they are looking for. More registered users respond contentment with the existing documentation.

The feedback from the users will be some of the input to the StatBank developers to consider for an improved version by the end of the year. Seven activities are highlighted below that should benefit this.

A usability test is planned for November 2002. This will hopefully give us more input to how these activities exactly will be carried out.

*Activity 1
Existing documentation*

The existing documentation is satisfactory for most users that find it. Thus it must be made more easily accessible for the benefit of all users. For instance, it should be visible in connection with the retrieved table.

*Activity 2
Select by search*

Even though most users find the selection they need, the possibility of *Select by search* should be made more intuitively understood.

*Activity 3
More data*

The contents of StatBank will still be enlarged when the statistical production is extended. StatBank will as a principal rule cover all official statistics.

*Activity 4
Clear conditions*

There shall never be any doubt for the user that it is free-of-charge to register. We shall therefore consider the possibility to make it possible to register when it could be advantageous. An offer to register could for instance be made when a non-registered user tries to select more than 1,000 figures.

*Activity 5
Improved search facility*

We will improve the search facility. The first step will be to eliminate "dead links". Secondly, we will start to log the actual search routines and the search words that are entered by the users. Thirdly, we shall make a plan for a search function that secures that the user is presented to a reasonable number of links that covers the required statistics.

*Activity 6
Flexible information at hand*

We will investigate the different levels of information that could be made available together with a table (definitions, methods description, declaration of contents etc). The documentation shall be structured in such a way that the relevant information can be reached where it is needed.

*Activity 7
Help facility*

The help facility will be improved. Specific help information shall be available in specific situations.

Finally we plan to repeat the web survey in 2003.

Annex 1 Method

The users were split into two groups:

1. Registered users
2. Non-Registered users ("guests")

The staffs in Statistics Denmark were withdrawn. We made a selection of all users that had been active retrieving tables during the previous four months, a total of 8,833 registered users.

The survey took place 2 - 24 September 2002.

All non-registered users got the possibility to answer the questionnaire, and it was decided to stop the survey when a total of 1000 users (registered and non-registered) had answered. It turned out that 1125 filled in the questionnaire.

The web questionnaire popped up on the screen when the selected user either logged in. A short introduction was given and the user could choose to answer the scheme at once or return to the StatBank. If the scheme was not answered they still got two more chances to do it. After that it did not pop up any more.

A registered user that finished the scheme had their answers registered in a database. A cookie was set in the PC of the non-registered user when he had answered the scheme. This was done to prevent the scheme to pop up again. The user could of course delete the cookie himself. In that case he would be confronted with the questions again. We have no indications whether this has happened.

We realise that the more active users are over represented: the more active a user is the bigger the chance he will use the StatBank in the 3 weeks period of the survey.

Response willingness was big among the registered users...

We could not predict how many registered users that would be exposed to the questionnaire: 8,833 were potential recipients while only the persons who logged in actually got the opportunity to answer.

The actual active registered users in the survey period counted 1331 people. If all of these had answered the response rate had been 100 %. That would of course have been most unexpected. 518 people responded thus making the response rate 39 %.

..... but low among the non-registered

The response rate is considerably lower among the non-registered users: 8,975 logged in as guests. 607 or 7 % of these have answered the questions.

We consider that the users who answered are the most concerned and not necessarily representative for all users. Nevertheless, we get a picture of the problems the less experienced users face, as more than half of the non-registered are beginners.

Response:

		Registered users	Non- Registered
Number	Possible responses	1331	8975
	Actual responses	518	607
Response rate	Possible responses	100	100
	Actual responses	39	7

As the proportion of non-registered users is high the average response rate is only 11 %. However, we consider the situation for the non-registered and the registered to be quite different. Their needs for functionality vary and in order to serve both groups best we suggest to look at them separately.

The respondent was free to omit answering a question and anyhow go on to the next.

No incentives were given for answering the scheme. The estimated time to answer was 2 - 3 minutes. Neither the quality nor the response rate was considered to improve by incentives.

Annex 2 Questionnaire and answers

Responses given by registered and non-registered users in 2001 and 2002

Three minutes of your time could help us making StatBank Denmark better.

We intend to develop the database further according to the users' needs. This is why we ask you to spend three minutes to give your opinion of the database and the way it is used.

I want to answer the questionnaire now.

I want to return to StatBank Denmark.

1) How often do you use StatBank Denmark?

		2001		2002	
		Registered users	Non-Registered	Registered users	Non-Registered
Persons	Once a week or more	145	111	180	72
	A couple of times a month	133	196	226	111
	Once a month or less	35	188	101	113
	This is my first time	5	538	11	309
	No answer	-	5	-	2
	Total	318	1038	518	607
Per cent	Once a week or more	45.9	10.7	34.8	11.9
	A couple of times a month	42.1	18.9	43.6	18.3
	Once a month or less	10.4	18.1	19.5	18.6
	This is my first time	1.6	51.8	2.1	50.9
	No answer	-	0.5	-	0.3
	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

2) What is the purpose of your retrieval of data from StatBank Denmark?

		2001		2002	
		Registered users	Non-Registered	Registered users	Non-Registered
Persons	Study related	73	454	71	250
	Work related	226	368	404	234
	Personel interest	11	152	37	82
	Other purposes	7	39	5	26
	Do not know yet	1	18	1	12
	No answer	-	7	-	3
	Total	318	1038	518	607
Per cent	Study related	23.0	43.7	13.7	41.2
	Work related	71.1	35.5	78.0	38.5
	Personel interest	3.5	14.6	7.1	13.5
	Other purposes	2.2	3.8	1.0	4.3
	Do not know yet	0.3	1.7	0.2	2.0
	No answer	-	0.7	-	0.5
	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

You have access to StatBank without a registered password. However, if you choose to register - which is free of charge – you will have access to retrieve much larger tables, save queries and selection lists for re-use.

3a) Were you aware of these advantages?

		2001		2002	
		Registered users	Non-Registered	Registered users	Non-Registered
Persons	Yes	.	134	.	146
	No	.	730	.	458
	No answer	.	4	.	3
	Total	.	868	.	607
Per cent	Yes	.	15.4	.	24.1
	No	.	84.1	.	75.5
	No answer	.	0.5	.	0.5
	Total	.	100.0	.	100.0

3b) What was the reason to log on without a password?

		2001		2002	
		Registered users	Non-Registered	Registered users	Non-Registered
Persons	I wish to be anonymous	.	148	.	82
	I did not bother	.	296	.	240
	I presumed that it was a charged service	.	381	.	150
	I had forgotten the password	.	126	.	57
	I do not need the advantages of being registered	.	386	.	299
	No answer	.	-	.	-
	Total	.	1337	.	828
Per cent	I wish to be anonymous	.	11.1	.	9.9
	I did not bother	.	22.1	.	29.0
	I presumed that it was a charged service	.	28.5	.	18.1
	I had forgotten the password	.	9.4	.	6.9
	I do not need the advantages of being registered	.	28.9	.	36.1
	No answer	.	-	.	-
	Total	.	100.0	.	100.0

4) Do you usually find the statistics you are looking for?

		2001		2002	
		Registered users	Non-Registered	Registered users	Non-Registered
Persons	Always	18	62	26	27
	Almost always	127	227	230	104
	Usually	163	386	222	137
	Almost never	6	111	25	23
	I did not need anything specific, only browsing	-	140	1	3
	No answer	4	112	3	4
	Total	318	1038	507	298
Per cent	Always	5.7	6.0	5.1	9.1
	Almost always	39.9	21.9	45.4	34.9
	Usually	51.3	37.2	43.8	46.0
	Almost never	1.9	10.7	4.9	7.7
	I did not need anything specific, only	-	13.5	0.2	1.0

browsing					
No answer		1.3	10.8	0.6	1.3
Total		100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

5) Have you ever used the information under the tab "Information"/"Documentation"

		2001		2002	
		Registered users	Non-Registered	Registered users	Non-Registered
Persons	Yes	168	152	227	81
	No	143	335	276	213
	No answer	2	13	4	4
	Total	313	500	507	298
Per cent	Yes	53.7	30.4	44.8	27.2
	No	45.7	67.0	54.4	71.5
	No answer	0.6	2.6	0.8	1.3
	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

6a) Is the documentation sufficient?

		2001		2002	
		Registered users	Non-Registered	Registered users	Non-Registered
Persons	Completely sufficient	17	29	32	9
	More or less sufficient	109	101	154	53
	Insuffecient	40	21	36	16
	Completely insufficient	2	-	2	2
	No answer	-	1	3	1
	Total	168	152	227	81
Per cent	Completely sufficient	10.1	19.1	14.1	11.1
	More or less sufficient	64.9	66.5	67.8	65.4
	Insuffecient	23.8	13.8	15.9	19.8
	Completely insufficient	1.2	-	0.9	2.5
	No answer	-	0.7	1.3	1.2
	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

6b) Why did you not look into the tab "Information"? You can mark several alternatives

		2001		2002	
		Registered users	Ikke-registrede	Registered users	Non-Registered
Persons	I did not need it	39	53	219	190
	I did not know there was any information	78	182	119	86
	It is too tiresome	15	25	260	203
	I did not have the time	18	43	253	199
	Other reasons	7	43	260	200
	Do not know	-	-	241	167
	No answer	-	-	-	-
	Total	157	346	1352	1045
Per cent	I did not need it	24.8	15.3	16.2	18.2
	I did not know there was any information	49.7	52.6	8.8	8.2
	It is too tiresome	9.6	7.2	19.2	19.4

I did not have the time	11.5	12.4	18.7	19.0
Other reasons	4.5	12.4	19.2	19.1
Do not know	-	-	17.8	16.0
No answer	-	-	-	-
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

7a) Have you tried to select values from the tab "Select by search"?

		2001		2002	
		Registrerede	Non-Registered	Registrerede	Non-Registered
Persons	Yes	..	..	275	100
	No	..	..	175	153
	Do not know	..	..	56	40
	No answer	..	..	1	5
	Total	..	..	507	298
Per cent	Yes	..	..	54.2	33.6
	No	..	..	34.5	51.3
	Do not know	..	..	11.1	13.4
	No answer	..	..	0.2	1.7
	Total	..	..	100.0	100.0

7b) Did you succeed in the selection by search?

		2001		2002	
		Registered users	Non-Registered	Registered users	Non-Registered
Persons	Yes	..	..	117	32
	Yes, but not at once	..	..	134	49
	No	..	..	24	18
	No answer	..	..	-	1
	Total	..	..	275	100
Per cent	Yes	..	..	42.5	32.0
	Yes, but not at once	..	..	48.7	49.0
	No	..	..	8.7	18.0
	No answer	..	..	-	1.0
	Total	..	..	100.0	100.0

8) How satisfied are you in general with the contents of StatBank Denmark?

		2001		2002	
		Registered users	Non-Registered	Registered users	Non-Registered
Persons	Very satisfied	41	59	72	34
	Satisfied	183	277	320	171
	Neither satisfied nor unsatisfied	61	104	86	70
	Unsatisfied	27	44	24	15
	Very unsatisfied	1	4	4	3
	No answer	-	12	1	5
	Total	313	500	507	298
Per cent	Very satisfied	13.1	11.8	14.2	11.4
	Satisfied	58.5	55.4	63.1	57.4
	Neither satisfied nor unsatisfied	19.5	20.8	17.0	23.5
	Unsatisfied	8.6	8.8	4.7	5.0
	Very unsatisfied	0.3	0.8	0.8	1.0

No answer	-	2-4	0-2	1-7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

9) How do you in general find the functionality of StatBank Denmark?

		2001		2002	
		Registered users	Non-Registered	Registered users	Non-Registered
Persons	Very easy to use	68	65	94	39
	Easy to use	186	308	340	182
	Tiresom	53	103	69	57
	Very tiresom	4	11	4	9
	No answer	2	13	-	11
	Total	313	500	507	298
Per cent	Very easy to use	21.7	13.0	18.5	13.1
	Easy to use	59.4	61.6	67.1	61.1
	Tiresom	16.9	20.6	13.6	19.1
	Very tiresom	1.3	2.2	0.8	3.0
	No answer	0.6	2.6	-	3.7
	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

10) Your sex:

		2001		2002	
		Registered users	Non-Registered	Registered users	Non-Registered
Persons	Man	221	580	349	331
	Woman	96	442	168	272
	No answer	1	16	1	4
	Total	318	1038	518	607
Per cent	Man	69.5	55.9	67.4	54.5
	Woman	30.2	42.6	32.4	44.8
	No answer	0.3	1.5	0.2	0.7
	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

11) Your age:

		2001		2002	
		Registered users	Non-Registered	Registered users	Non-Registered
Persons	17 years or less	7	80	5	74
	18-29 years	150	431	197	249
	30-49 years	131	386	244	202
	50-64 years	28	126	67	69
	65 years or more	1	6	3	6
	No answer	1	9	2	7
	Total	318	1038	518	607
Per cent	17 years or less	2.2	7.7	1.0	12.2
	18-29 years	47.2	41.5	38.0	41.0
	30-49 years	41.2	37.2	47.1	33.3
	50-64 years	8.8	12.1	12.9	11.4
	65 years or more	0.3	0.6	0.6	1.0
	No answer	0.3	0.9	0.4	1.1
	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

12) Any other comments concerning the contents or user interface of the StatBank Denmark?

write::.....

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		2001		2002	
		Registered users	Non-Registered	Registered users	Non-Registered
Persons	Comments mentioned	114	204	140	118
	No comments mentioned	204	834	378	489
	Total	318	1038	518	607
Per cent	Comments mentioned	35.9	19.6	27.0	19.4
	No comments mentioned	64.2	80.3	73.0	80.6
	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0