

Experiences in the Development of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) Statistics in Ecuador

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Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) are a key component of social development. They allow people to be part of a world where learning and communicating easily makes them more productive. Moreover, they allow people to follow government decisions more closely, thus contributing to democracy and accountability. In order to measure and monitor the population's access to ICT, governments and other organizations need statistics. Ecuador is meeting this challenge.

There are two kinds of sources of ICT information in Ecuador. First, the one registered by ICT companies and organizations, such as the National Telecommunications Secretariat (*Secretaría Nacional de Telecomunicaciones*) and the Superintendency of Telecommunications (*Superintendencia de Telecomunicaciones*), related to: number of service users, prices, market structure, service quality, among others. Second, there is data that comes from specialized household surveys.

INEC, Ecuador's statistics institute, executes a module on information and communication technologies as part of its permanent household survey every December. Currently, there are statistics available for years 2008 and 2009. The survey covers a sample of 20,220 households spread over 127 cities. Also, the survey obtains representative results for national, urban, rural, regional and provincial levels.

The ICT module for households was first proposed by *Comunidad Andina*, a regional organization whose members are Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador and Perú. Technical support was provided by Spain's National Statistics Institute (INE), where Ecuadorian and other Andean statisticians gathered in June 2007 to learn about methodologies, questionnaires and indicators related to ICT statistics. This was part of a series of expert meetings on the subject¹.

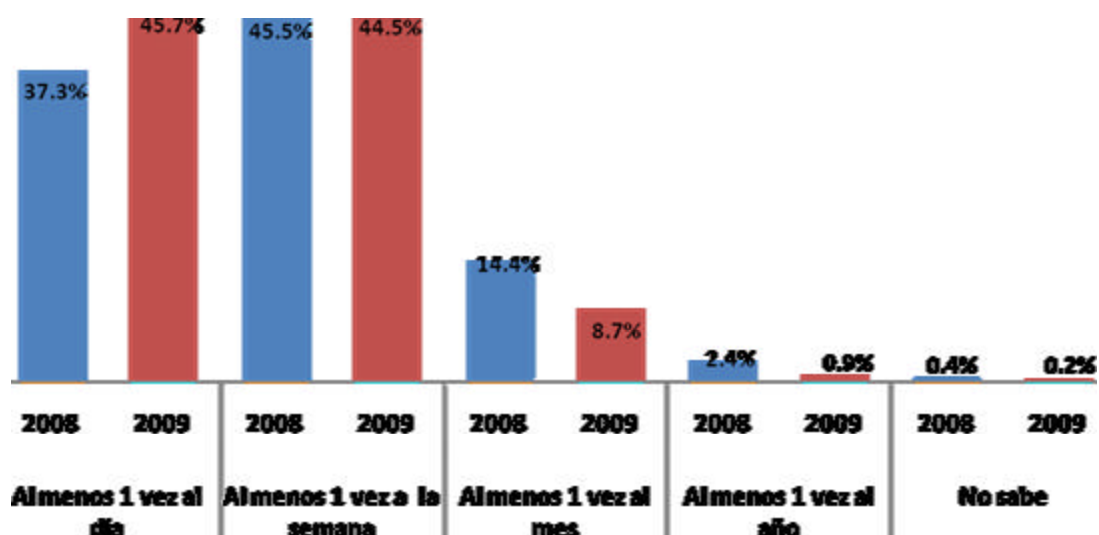
The biggest challenge INEC has faced in collecting the data relates to its effort to obtain information from direct informers (self declaration) and not just from qualified informers (household declaration). This effort has resulted in the need to often deploy survey conductors late in the evening to unsafe neighborhoods.

¹ See for example the official records of *Comunidad Andina's* Third Meeting of Government Experts on ICT Statistics (Tercera Reunión de Expertos Gubernamentales en Estadísticas de Tecnologías de la Información y Comunicaciones), which took place in July 2008, in http://intranet.comunidadandina.org/IDocumentos/c_Newdocs.asp?page=26&ChkEstVig=&GruDoc=RR&TxtNum1=&TxtNum2=&LbxTip=07&TxtPPP=&TxtRes=&chxbxExacta=&LbxEst=&Cbxtit=&LbxVig=&Ambito=1&Org=0&LbxCom=0

Despite the challenges, the ICT modules have provided Ecuador with an array of indicators, such as²:

- Household equipment: telephone, mobile phone, computer, internet access.
- Type of internet connection (modem/telephone, cable/broadband, wireless).
- Most frequent place of internet access (educational institution, home, work, public access centers, someone else's home, other).
- Main use of internet (education/learning, communication, information, work, other).
- Frequency of internet access (at least once a day, at least once a week, at least once a month, at least once a year).

ICT indicators are closely monitored by the Government as part of its National Development Program³ (*Plan Nacional de Desarrollo para el Buen Vivir*). For instance, objective 2 of the plan is "To improve the population's capacities and potentialities", goal 2.7 is "To triple internet access" and the indicator used to monitor this goal is the "percentage of the population that uses the internet at least once a week". The ICT module provides data for the monitoring of this goal, as shown in the figure.



The future of ICT statistics in Ecuador depends primarily on the availability of funding. At this moment, INEC is making efforts to secure funding for the December 2010 ICT household module. There are other ICT issues that still need to be addressed in the country. For instance, the

² Main results can be found in www.inec.gov.ec/c/document_library/get_file?folderId=954942&name=DLFE-34202.pdf, survey questions can be found in www.inec.gov.ec/c/document_library/get_file?folderId=954942&name=DLFE-34402.pdf and data bases in www.inec.gov.ec/c/document_library/get_file?folderId=954942&name=DLFE-34502.zip

³ <http://www.senplades.gov.ec/web/senplades-portal/plan-nacional-para-el-buen-vivir-2009-2013>

design and implementation of statistical projects aimed at collecting data on the use of ICT in companies and in government agencies. The participation of Ecuadorian officials in events such as the International Seminar on Information and Communication Technology Statistics contributes to raise awareness about the importance of ICT statistics and the need for future developments in this area.