



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft  
Confédération suisse  
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Swiss Confederation

Federal Department of Home Affairs FDHA  
**Federal Statistical Office FSO**

# Business Statistics and the Digital Economy

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UN Committee of Experts on Business Statistics



# Table of contents

1. How important? How to cope with it?
2. Issues often cited
3. Current issues in Switzerland
4. Open questions – Experience in other countries?



# 1. How important? How to cope with it?

- ICT has exasperated existing «black holes», but many elements have been on the agenda for a long time!
- Large data hoarding by private enterprises and public administrations – not all hoarded data is interesting for statistical production and analysis!
- Existence of private actors raises the question of accessibility to their data warehouses – central: legal access and legal framework!
- Connecting various data sources implies (a) having homogeneous and unique identifiers; (b) the capability of (co-)determining the contents in the various sources!



## 2. Issues often cited (1)

- “GDP and Welfare”: Switzerland considers that current SNA conceptual framework is sound – no need for action!
- “GDP and globalization”: Fragmentation of value chains considered as a real challenge in Switzerland (global production arrangements, relocation of intangibles (IP), etc.)
- “Deflators for ICT products”: Overstatement possible, but no measure of potential impact in Switzerland. Various avenues of thought considered (Internet scrapping, etc.)



## 2. Issues often cited (2)

- “Sharing economy”: no specific regulation in Switzerland so far, thus no administrative data – many open questions!
- “Free online contents / media”: Switzerland rather cautious – Production approach considered to be rather good.



## 3. Current issues in Switzerland (1)

1. Measure of the “ICT-Economy” – figures are currently provided for ICT-Sector only, which is quite significant

A tentative estimate will be made if and only when consensus is reached on definition of ITC-Economy

2. E-commerce: Swiss street stores and Swiss online retailers tend to have fairly similar prices/offers. Nevertheless many statistical challenges.

- (a) Operations of Amazon – greater expansion planned in Switzerland – impact not known yet!
- (b) Imports with little/no physical presence (Zalando, etc.)
- (c) Growth rates of online prices
- (d) Fast-changing purchasing patterns



## 3. Current issues in Switzerland (2)

3. Sharing economy: in Switzerland, imputation for all owned dwellings – apparently no underestimation for platforms like Airbnb, but more difficulties with transportation services (Uber, etc).

Problems with services supplied by foreign platforms (no reports on cross-border transactions / fees)

4. Analyses on Multinational Enterprises and intangibles – Who does what, when, how - study cases needed! Yet no Large Case Unit (LCU) implemented so far in Switzerland!

Google: 2200 employees in Zürich (“Zoogole”), Research Center, Intense cooperation with High Tech Schools, etc. **but** hardly present in statistical surveys!!



## 3. Current issues in Switzerland (3)

5. Decision-centers of big groups often in foreign countries – difficult to gain access to data relevant for Switzerland only!

Intensified coordination needed with Swiss Customs (for exemple project DaziT) and the Swiss Central Bank (micro-data sharing)

FCA-DaziT **DaziT transformation programme**

<https://www.ezv.admin.ch/ezv/en/home/topics/projects/dazit.html>





## 4. Open questions – Experience in other countries?

- How did your country gain access to large data bases owned by private firms? What were the steps that had to be undertaken in order to have data “fit” for statistical products?
- Was it possible to convince the international platforms that characterize the sharing economy to provide data for your country?
- Did you change the way you operate in price statistics in order to cope with the challenges arising from the digitalization of the economy?



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