

GPS and Digital Data Collection Technologies – Revolutionizing the way surveys are being done at Statistics South Africa.

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In keeping with Statistics South Africa vision of being the preferred supplier of quality statistics, as well as keeping up with technological advancements, the Geography Division of Statistics South Africa is pioneering the use of GPS instruments and handheld computers to improve data accuracy, accountability, and ensuring that information is being made available timeously and with real time reporting.

There is an international move towards a process of digital data capture and Statistics South Africa is trying to streamline the way surveys are currently conducted to ensure that the latest technological advancements are used in an attempt of eliminating the paper trail and ensuring that data is available quicker and with a greater degree of accuracy.

This paper aims to outline the processes followed by Statistics South Africa in moving towards a system of digital data collection using the Labour Force Survey as a case study. The paper will focus on a background to GPS technology (signal, accuracy, device selection), the benefits of using GPS technology, quality assurance, problems encountered, lessons learnt, software and questionnaire development on the device and what's planned for the future in terms of moving forwards digitally.