



Education Counts
www.educationcounts.govt.nz

CHARTER

June 2007

Education Counts, a website that is the first point of contact for statistical data, quantitative information, and research about education and education services in New Zealand.



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INTRODUCTION

Education Counts was developed to simplify access to quantitative education information for Ministry of Education clients. Consultation with users of education information identified the need for an online space for them to access statistical data, quantitative information, and research about the education sector.

Information requirements identified included:

- reference lists, including address and service details of education providers
- statistical information, including achievement and participation information, and education sector indicators
- publications, including research and evaluation reports, and routine monitoring reports
- technical information, such as code sets to support the collection and provision of education data and data dictionaries, to support the use and interpretation of information.

A requirement to improve access to information for internal Ministry users has also been identified.

SUPPORT FOR THE MISSION

Provision of high quality data and relevant information is a core strategy to achieve the Ministry's mission of "raising educational achievement and reducing disparity"

PURPOSE

Education Counts' vision is "to be the first point of contact for easy access to statistical data, quantitative information and research about education and education services in New Zealand".

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of *Education Counts* are:

- create an effective online "doorway" to statistical data, quantitative information, and research on education and education services in New Zealand,
- ensure all information is presented in a clear and cogent way,
- offer ways for clients to obtain additional information, including making specific information requests,
- provide a clear pathway to www.minedu.govt.nz and other Ministry of Education, and Ministry supported, websites,
- provide a clear pathway to www.edCentre.govt.nz.

AUDIENCE

Members from all the Ministry of Education's audiences visit *Education Counts*; however, the main focus is on visitors from any audience wanting statistical data, quantitative information, and research on education and education services in New Zealand.

Audiences of particular high use are:

- researchers,
- education providers,
- Ministry of Education analysts,
- government agencies,
- governance bodies,
- sector interest groups.

APPROACH TO AUDIENCE

The site is open to all audiences, in that all external users can access the same information. It is not designed to have closed communities, that is, no parts of the site beyond the Ministry of Education firewall require specialised registration and 'logging-in'.

Access to more detailed data not available on *Education Counts* will be by specific requests through channels provided on *Education Counts*. This will allow the use of existing procedures to provide level information in such a way as to meet all Ministry requirements.

AUDIENCE NAVIGATION

The primary method for organising information for visitors is structuring through information type, which is reflected in the main navigation system. The main navigation buttons are:

Education Counts Home. Provides information about the website and highlights 'Latest News' on the site. Acts as a main communication page, offering quick access to FAQs, publication search, and events calendar.

Themes. May bring together information on key topics, provides basic information and guides users to more detailed/specialised information. Complex analysis of important topics, incorporating data from multiple sources, (preferably from different parts of the website, eg groupings of different indicators and current research reports). Themes tell a simple story, often about cause, effect, and intervention.

Indicators. Provides access to education sector indicators.

Statistics. Provides access to statistical information about education and education services, including simple reference lists.

Publications. Provides access to research publications and publications with a data, or quantitative information focus. Robust search facilities will be used to maximise access, with searches available by title, author, date of publication, and subject.

Technical Information. Provides supporting information to assist the users that collection and provide information and the users to assist and understand and use other information provided on the website. Information includes, a glossary, data dictionaries, descriptions of data sources, etc.

Links. Links to Ministry of Education, Ministry supported websites, edCentre and other sites of relevance.

The search facility allows the user to search across the *Education Counts* site, with a specialised search facility of publications on *Education Counts*.

Navigation, and content, is accessible to technology aids for disabled people.

Content is specifically designed for online delivery.

CONTENT AND SERVICES

Education Counts is an audience website that provides text based content including:

- demographic information, specifically tailored for use in the education sector
- contextual information, such as labour market information, for assisting with the interpretation and understanding of education information
- reference lists, including address and service details of New Zealand's education institutions
- statistical information, various collections of statistical information obtained through Ministry of Education processes, including data on achievement, participation, and resourcing
- analysis of education information, including education sector indicators and detailed examination of key education themes
- publications, such as research and evaluation, Iterative Best Evidence Synthesis, regular monitoring reports, and specialised analysis
- pathways to edCentre, and other Ministry of Education and Ministry supported, websites
- technical information to support the collection, use and interpretation of data and information, including data collection forms, code sets, data dictionaries, glossaries, FAQs, defined standards, descriptions of analytical techniques.

Content exclusions are:

- the Ministry of Education's corporate information
- information created about a specific topic and aimed at a specific audience for which a specific alternative website exists.

CONTENT MANAGEMENT

Content is generated by Ministry business groups, particularly Data Management and Analysis Division, Research and Evaluation Division, and Tertiary Sector Performance Analysis and Reporting.

Content is developed and written in accordance with *Education Counts* design and style guidelines.

Every effort is made to present text documents as HTML pages. These pages may also be available as downloads, such as , MS Word or PDF. In line with disability guidelines, text alternatives are associated with non-text content, such as graphs and images.

Assigned Ministry personnel (content owners) are responsible for sign-off of content. Publication production cycles, with version control, are used to support content approval.

NON-MINISTRY OF EDUCATION CONTENT

Education Counts applies a quality assurance process prior to adding links to external material. This ensures all referenced content meets agreed Ministry standards. Routine investigation and maintenance of links is undertaken to ensure agreed standards are met.

LOOK AND FEEL

Visual designs comply with *Education Counts* design and style guidelines. High level branding reflects *Education Counts* and Ministry of Education standards.

Visual design expresses the following attributes:

- direct
- evidence-based
- connected
- comprehensive
- accessible

The *Education Counts* site complies with e-government standards, including NZGLS. The site is accessible to technology aids for disabled users.

TONE AND MANNER

Information shows positive and negative aspects of education and education services. The audience feel both good and bad news is available here. The site is perceived as honest and apolitical. The audience perceive that this is a site that provides facts and truth.

The audience recognises the site is comprehensive, with a wide range of topics and issues covered.

The writing is factual, informative and explanatory. Plain non-jargonistic language is used. The audience feels they can easily understand what is presented, without the feeling it is over-simplified for them.

COMMUNICATIONS FUNCTIONS

Education Counts is the main communication channel about education statistical data, quantitative information, and research findings. *Education Counts*:

- enables visitors to provide feedback on the site *via* email and telephone (during normal working hours) 0800 EdCounts (0800 3326868)
- includes on-line forms to assist visitors to make OIA requests, and other forms of information request
- allows visitors to subscribe to an alert service for new material.

Capability for multi-visitor conversations, for example, chat rooms and discussion boards, is not available.

SECURITY

The entire site is publicly accessible and does not require secure log-in.

DISTRIBUTION/ACCESS

Education Counts is an open access website with its own url. High level entry points support role-based and topic-based access.

RESPONSIVENESS

Dedicated staff are provided to handle audience enquiries and feedback. All email queries are logged, acknowledged, and a personalised response is sent within two working days.

All telephone requests are logged. A personalised response is provided within two working days.

RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHER MINISTRY CHANNELS

A link to www.minedu.govt.nz is available from all pages. That site is acknowledged as the main Ministry of Education website and visitors are offered every opportunity to access the site, with a link on every *Education Counts* HTML page. Links are also provided to other Ministry of Education and Ministry supported websites.

Other Ministry of education websites provide reciprocal links to *Education Counts*.

The Ministry's powerful search facility allows the user to search across the *Education Counts* site and the Ministry of Education website.

RELATIONSHIP WITH EDUCATION SECTOR PORTAL

Education Counts supports and complements the education sector portal (edCentre). *Education Counts* is considered a content site of edCentre.

The sector portal is a 'pass through' service that provides best value to new or infrequent users of electronic education information/services. *Education Counts*, on the other hand, is targeted primarily at the more frequent users who tend to bookmark their favourite sites, thereby gaining less value from the sector portal. *Education Counts* offers these more regular visitors a clear focus on educational information, and a depth of related/supporting material.

RELATIONSHIP WITH NON- MINISTRY OF EDUCATION CHANNELS

A number of non-Ministry of Education national education bodies exist, for example, ERO, NZQA. These agencies maintain a relevant online presence. Description of the roles of these agencies and links to their websites are incorporated in the *Education Counts*.

Links will also be provided to other relevant non-Ministry of Education web sites, such as the OECD.

COMPLIANCE WITH GUIDELINES

Education Counts complies with Ministry of Education and NZ e-Government guidelines and standards.

Education Counts has documented style, design and technical guidelines relevant to its content and business processes.

Governance

Governance is through the SIOG/ITGB.

A user group representing the key audiences has been established.

OPERATIONAL MANAGEMENT

The Data Management Unit of the Data Management and Analysis Division is the owner of the *Education Counts*.

Content is generated by Ministry business groups, particularly Data Management and Analysis Division, Research and Evaluation Division, and Tertiary Sector Performance Analysis and Reporting.

DELIVERY ROLES

Owner:	David Lambie
Web Master:	Vanessa Poutoa
Content Manager:	Dean Alexander

MONITORING PERFORMANCE

Statistical reports are compiled showing:

- visitor numbers,
- duration of visits,
- number of pages visited per visit,
- entry points and exits,
- number of views for each page,
- top 10 most visited pages,
- 10 least visited pages,
- number of searches carried out on site,
- top 10 search terms found,
- top 10 search terms not found,
- referring site,
- terms used on external search engines to access the site,
- time of day/day of week usage patterns,

Education Counts actively monitors all inbound and outbound links to ensure external sites remain relevant and accessible.