

**Internet as a new source of information for the production of official statistics.  
Experiences at Statistics Netherlands.**

**Nicolaes Heerschap\***  
**Statistics Netherlands, Netherlands**  
**nm.heerschap@cbs.nl**

**Abstract**

The internet has become an indispensable infrastructure for society. An ever growing proportion of our supply of information, communication and transactions are now also conducted via the internet. The internet has been fully integrated into our society. This does not only mean that Statistics Netherlands needs to produce statistical indicators about the nature, scope and impact of the use of the internet. It also means that it has become useful to at least investigate to what extent the internet and related techniques, such as smartphone information, itself can be used as a data source for the production of statistics. The available information does not need to be related only to the internet as a phenomenon, but also pertains to data about the “old economy” or in fact about almost “everything”. Central questions are: what internet data can be used for producing new and quicker statistics, for the integration into and support of existing statistics or to potentially entirely replace the data collection for existing statistics. This paper tries to answer some of these questions and presents examples from the experience of Statistics Netherlands such as the use of so called internet crawlers and the deployment of smartphones for the collection of data.

Keywords: Internet as a data source, internet crawlers, smartphones, internet