From: [redacted - section 9(2)(a)]
Sent: 15/06/2017 8:36:05 a.m.
To: [redacted - section 9(2)(a)] [redacted - section 9(2)(a)] [redacted - section 9(2)(a)]
Subject: RE: Religious affiliation - 2017 Census test results and steps forward

I've got no concerns after the discussions yesterday. Challenge will be to get some meaningful examples to replace what is currently on the paper form. And the write-in sits above the no religion and object tick boxes. Multiple response would be helpful but I don't think there are significant impacts on the overall data with the constraints of the AYT and ICS versus the paper. Key thing is that we should get much better quality data as respondents can give more detail on what used to be the tick boxes which was a key criticism that came through in the recent classification refresh.

[redacted - section 9(2)(a)]

[redacted - section 9(2)(a)]
Senior Researcher | Kairangahau Matua
Stats NZ Tatauranga Aotearoa

DDI |[redacted - section 9(2)(a)] stats.govt.nz

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(f) (t) (in)

From: [redacted - section 9(2)(a)]
Sent: Thursday, 15 June 2017 7:31 AM
To: [redacted - section 9(2)(a)] [redacted - section 9(2)(a)] [redacted - section 9(2)(a)]
Subject: RE: Religious affiliation - 2017 Census test results and steps forward

Thank you [redacted - section 9(2)(a)]. Not having "as-you-type" options for responses beyond the first is a pity but understand the problem very well – and the incidence of multiple response is low enough for this not to be a problem (people committed to adding more than one response will do so anyway). [redacted - section 9(2)(a)] will confirm if this is likely to create any problems but as far as I can see it is the best solution in the circumstances. The "no religion" and the required "object" options are important to retain (the latter is legally required I believe).

From: [redacted - section 9(2)(a)]
Sent: Wednesday, 14 June 2017 3:38 PM

To: [redacted - section 9(2)(a)] [redacted - section 9(2)(a)] [redacted - section 9(2)(a)]
Subject: RE: Religious affiliation - 2017 Census test results and steps forward

Hi [redacted - section 9(2)(a)]

Thanks for your comments. We had a discussion about this topic at a form development meeting this morning where [redacted - section 9(2)(a)]was present.

We discussed the option of a paper format closer to the 2013 version – QMD has drafted up a version of this but it is 'messy' with very cramped routing.

We also discussed the option of a question with the write in box with the necessary additions of 'no religion' and 'object to answer' response options.

It was decided that the best approach would be to proceed with the write-in as primary response option, as ultimately this is the information that we want to collect from respondents. Given that the 2013 format already has issues as you have identified, recreating a less respondent friendly design of this seems unideal.

We also had to consider some of the constraints of building the online version, with regards to multiple response for this question. All write-in boxes on the ICS with as-you-type functionality currently have the option for the respondent to write more text after they have chosen a response from the drop down suggestions. It was indicated that to build the functionality to 'add another religion' as is available for the iwi question would be very costly to build. The current default functionality as described would allow multiple response on the online form, if the respondent wished to do so however as-you-type functionality would not be available after they had selected their first response.

If you are comfortable with this approach, I will then discuss this with Gareth Meech and Denise McGregor before QMD and Respondent Interaction begin developing the revised question format.

Cheers,

[redacted - section 9(2)(a)]

Hi [redacted - section 9(2)(a)]

This is a seriously difficult question, thanks to the paper-size – and it is a pity the pair of questions failed. Census is an on-line first survey, so the paper form is secondary, but if we get a large number of paper forms then we need to understand how the two modes perform differently. The key points have been made in the email trail below – the purpose in collecting this information is not satisfied by the questions in the test form. I would also question how you know the data in the first question was of high quality: it is notoriously difficult to establish data quality in a box-ticking exercise and I would suggest that it is not good quality because the routing clearly did not work (your call backs will almost always evoke an "expected" response because people like to appear compliant face-to-face [voice-to-voice].

The problem is that the level of information on religious affiliation elicited by Q16 is not what is required since at least two of the tickboxes (Christianity and Other) aggregate many dozens of very distinct religions. I do agree that the prompts in Q17 should have provided enough hint of what we need but the damage is already done by the tickbox question above. Perhaps the wording "more detail" is not helping because I can imagine there would be a tendency to wonder "what more detail? Do you want an essay?". Having ticked "Christianity" I would imagine that many Presbyterians (as an example) would simply react that that is not more detail but a different question altogether. It is also more likely to produce an address rather than affiliation.

Definitely comparability is an extremely important consideration but not the only one. We are living in a rapidly diversifying society and census is one of the extremely few opportunities we have to be able to get some measure of this – so we not only need comparable data but we need contemporarily useful information that we can derive from that data. Unfortunately q16 does not come close to doing this on its own, and the paired questions have failed.

The online would be no problem – maybe just use the 2013 question, corrected of course to use nouns as the Q16 below has. The problem is the paper form and I am wondering whether one workable solution might be to reformat the 2013 question so that the call-out boxes become a subset below the headings – but this would lengthen the question significantly to the detriment of neighbouring questions (especially the 1yr ago question that we discussed

the other day and which is crucially important to get right with a write-in for country). My main question then is: does the length required to do this exceed the total length used by Q16 and Q17 together?

Given the space available, the potential for drop down categories etc on-line, the best solution would perhaps be a write-in as Andrew suggested. There will still be the old problems on a paper form of people who give their religion as "St Stephens" and we can only guess which temple they mean from their geographic locality (especially where the same names are used in multiple religions or the same building doubles service as Anglican, Catholic, Muslim etc). While it will be flying blind in terms of testing I am sure that QMD have experience with this type of question and know the most effective format for write-in. One thing to watch for though would be allowing enough characters to adequately capture a descriptor since we would need to collect up to, ideally, 4 religions (given the current low rate of multiple response I wonder whether we could drop this to 3? Thoughts, [redacted - section 9(2)(a)]?).

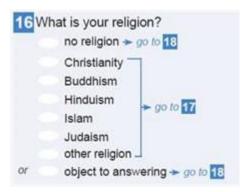[redacted - section 9(2)(a)]

From: [redacted - section 9(2)(a)]
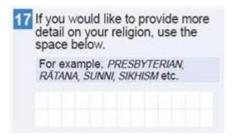**Sent:** Wednesday, 14 June 2017 10:00 AM
To: [redacted - section 9(2)(a)] [redacted - section 9(2)(a)] [redacted - section 9(2)(a)]
Subject: Religious affiliation - 2017 Census test results and steps forward

Hi all,

The 2017 Census Test data has been finalised and the data for the religious affiliation quested indicates that the question performed poorly in being able to produce comparable data to previous collections of this concept in the census.

17 If you would like to provide more detail on your religion, use the space below.

For example, *PRESBYTERIAN, RĀTANA, SUNNI, SIKHISM* etc.

While the data quality collected from question 16 – the first component was of high quality, the response rate to question 17 for those who stated a religion in question 16 is very low at 33.9%. This is consistent across denominations, for example Anglican responses making up 4.1% of the total respondent population compared to a prevalence of 11.8% in 2013.

We also called back some respondents (6) who did not respond to question 17 to get more information on why they did not respond. The overall feedback that they had already responded and were happy with the response they had given, and did not feel the need to respond to the further optional question.

If we proceeded with this question format, we would be unable to produce comparable data for any category other than those collected in question 16.

There are obviously space constraints in revising the question to a preferable format.

I have had a think about this issue might be resolved and the factors that need to be considered. I have copied in our previous discussion on this question design change prior to the 2017 test.

- The 'soft' routing to question 17 is not working successfully – a revised question needs to have direct routing to the write in box
- If we were to have a combination of tick boxes and write in box, given the limited space this would likely need to have a mix of concepts collected in the tick boxes

- The other option is to include a write-in only as [redacted - section 9(2)(a)] had previously mentioned.

It would be good to have a discussion about how we might best proceed with this question in order to output quality information on the concept. One major constraint is that we don't have another major test in order to test any revised format. There will be usability testing undertaken by QMD however. Happy to hear your thoughts.

Cheers,

[redacted - section 9(2)(a)]

Thanks for the comments.

[redacted - section 9(2)(a)] was not too keen on the Christian tickboxes given the mixing of levels being collected. We did also discuss a pure write in question which I agreed would work best in theory – especially if we are asking all religious respondents to write in detail anyway.

I will forward on the suggestions of the plural wording and the size of the write in text box – currently the column in which the religion question sits on our marked up proposed form is very vertically full but until the sign off of topics for the March 2017 Census Test is done, we cannot be certain of the full space constraints!

Cheers,

[redacted - section 9(2)(a)]

From: [redacted - section 9(2)(a)]
Sent: Wednesday, 28 September 2016 8:31 AM
To: [redacted - section 9(2)(a)]
Cc: [redacted - section 9(2)(a)]
Subject: RE: Religion question - Census 3 column IF format

Hi [redacted - section 9(2)(a)]

Is looking much better. Personally I'd be happy with just a write-in box alone – it isn't that hard a variable to code, we've reduced the codefile by half and improved the match rate and quality (using the proposed new version that we have created as part of the current refresh of the classification.) But I would go with this new design if at all possible.

I would note that the key selected stakeholders that we have consulted during the current refresh have all made some comment about the inability to collect multiple responses, and to collect sub-groupings (for want of another word) of many groupings such as Judaism, Islam, Buddhism as we lose the information by encouraging the tick-boxes. Religion is not about collecting the information to create a ranking system of the most popular, it is a measure of our cultural diversity and social-connectedness which is where a lot of the research is wanting the better detail. I can only do so much to improve the classification (which I have

at this point) but it sort of becomes pointless if the question doesn't allow for some better coverage.

Whatever you do, there will be criticisms – the agnostic/atheist groups will want a tick-box, the jedis as well, and then there is the whole dump coding to Christianity which [redacted - section 9(2)(a)] talks about (and which I agree with). Having Christianity loses the information we want about the emerging and non-traditional groupings. Nobody really cares about how many Catholics and Anglicans there are (other than those two groups). So that's my two cents as Senior Researcher for S&D and as the person doing the review of Religious Affiliation at the moment..

From a C&S perspective, the proposed change is still in keeping with the spirit and intent of the Statistical Standard so I can't see that there are any issues for making a change,

Cheers

[redacted - section 9(2)(a)]

[redacted - section 9(2)(a)]| **Senior Researcher**

Statistics New Zealand - Tatauranga Aotearoa | BNZ Centre, 120 Hereford St, Private Bag 4741, CHRISTCHURCH 8011

Email: [redacted - section 9(2)(a)]| DDI: [redacted - section 9(2)(a)]| www.stats.govt.nz

From: [redacted - section 9(2)(a)]
Sent: Wednesday, 28 September 2016 7:35 AM
To: [redacted - section 9(2)(a)] [redacted - section 9(2)(a)]
Subject: RE: Religion question - Census 3 column IF format

Thanks [redacted - section 9(2)(a)]. I think this is a much improved version and is in fact a better question format than 2013 – the primary thing I would suggest here is to reinforce that this is a multiple response question so we must provide the ability for people to provide more than 1 (we do collect up to 4), so change "religion" to "religion(s)" and add a couple of rows.

I like your options since you have been careful to include a variety of Islam and two other religions.

However, what really worries me with this format is that people will be likely to take the easy option of not giving text responses and if they do there is both a processing overhead and loss of key information. This is why I would have much preferred to see some tickboxes other than (preferably instead of) "Christianity" since people are not interested in the high level grouping category but in counts and characteristics of people who are Catholic, Anglican, etc etc. This would not actually save space, because we would still have to have write in options for other religions, but it would simplify processing.

Please keep me in the loop with this one.

From: [redacted - section 9(2)(a)]
Sent: Tuesday, 27 September 2016 3:57 PM
To: [redacted - section 9(2)(a)] [redacted - section 9(2)(a)]
Subject: Religion question - Census 3 column IF format

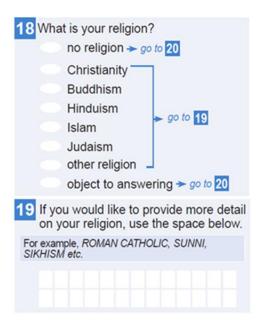Hi [redacted - section 9(2)(a)]and [redacted - section 9(2)(a)]

I am aware that [redacted - section 9(2)(a)]has already contacted you about some of the form changes we are considering for the 2018 Census individual paper form design as a result of the decision to use a folded A3 paper size.

[redacted - section 9(2)(a)] and myself have been scoping out some of these changes in order to fit the recommended content into a form this size. In general this has been quite successful – but an issue with the religious affiliation question has arisen due to reliance on horizontal spacing for the 2013 format of this question.

If a three column format is used for the 2018 Census individual paper form, the format for this question must be altered.

While vertical space is not a huge constraint for design of this question in the first instance, reactions from the Census SLT and Carol Slappendel were negative towards a second separated question on Christian denominations which would most closely replicate the 2013 format.

[redacted - section 9(2)(a)] and myself had an initial attempt at thinking about how to best design a question given this constraint in mind, this being below.

Feedback on this approach would be appreciated - with regards to retaining quality and comparable data for this question within the constraints identified above. [redacted - section 9(2)(a)] – [redacted - section 9(2)(a)] had already passed myself your comment about collecting the primary Christian denominations as tickboxes within the primary question, let me know if you think that approach would be most appropriate.

Cheers,

[redacted - section 9(2)(a)]

[redacted - section 9(2)(a)] **| Statistical Analyst/Kaitātari Tatauranga | 2018 Census Customer Needs and Data**

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Phone: +[redacted - section 9(2)(a)] **| Statistics House, The Boulevard, Harbour Quays, PO Box 2922, WELLINGTON 614**

[redacted - section 9(2)(a)]
Statistical Analyst | Kaitātari Tatauranga

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