

Census of Population and Housing 2012

eCensus

- For the first time in the 140 year history of Census taking in Sri Lanka, the Department of Census and Statistics has provided the opportunity for a selected sample of houses in Colombo and its suburbs to provide information online.
- Online Census data collection though has been popular in developed countries such as Canada, Australia, USA, UK, and Singapore etc. it was the first time a South Asian country has adopted this new and innovative technique for Census data collection.
- The objective of this eCensus was twofold. While eCensus was launched mainly as a strategy of collecting Census information from hard to reach population who are living in luxury apartments in Colombo and its suburbs, it was also envisaged as a method of data collection that can be used in future Censuses/ Surveys.
- The eCensus was conducted parallel to the field enumeration of the Population and Housing Census of 2012. The houses that will take part in the eCensus were selected prior to the Census field enumeration. Initially their consent was obtained to complete their Census information online. Since this eCensus was conducted on an experimental basis, provision was given to complete the information only in English medium.
- The online system for data collection was developed in house by a team of DCS officers attached to ICT and Population Census and Demography Divisions. The houses that have given their consent were provided with an eCensus ID and password along with the necessary technical instructions. They were requested to fill their information online during the two week period from 27 February 2012 to 11 March 2012. The DCS took every effort to maintain the security and the confidentiality of information thus provided.
- The houses which were willing to complete their information online but have failed to do so were visited by a team of specially trained enumerators between 14 March and 20 March 2012 and their information was recorded in paper form.
- It has proven that online data collection is capable of being used and successful under suitable circumstances. Therefore DCS is planning to use the experience and knowledge

gained through this exercise in forthcoming DCS data collection activities such as the economic Census 2014 and next Census in 2021.