



Homeless Enumeration

Sharing the Experience of Using iPads for Mobile Surveys

Dufferin County carried out their first homeless enumeration exercise, a joint Point-in-Time Count and Registry Week, on October 16-17, 2016. As one of the smallest Service Manager (SM) areas and with one of the smallest Community Advisory Boards (CAB), resources are often limited.

The 'Project Leadership' sub committee, which held their first meeting on Tuesday August 2, 2016 and started the groundwork for the campaign, identified early on that every opportunity should be taken to use their limited resources wisely.

Dufferin learned that another area had used remote devices as part of their survey process. Was it possible to cut out the 'double count' administration, i.e. have volunteers go out and ask all the questions and have that data entered/collated remotely in real time into something workable for use later? The answer was 'yes'.

Dufferin hired iPads from <https://www.computerrentals.ca/cities/mississauga-computer-rental.html>. They came pre-loaded with their own WI-FI 4G (so that other Wi-Fi connections were not required while surveying on the street). The rental cost for 20 iPads for one week, delivered by courier and then couriered back to the rental company, was around \$2,000.00. (There is the option of taking damage insurance at around 5% of the rental cost.)

The iPads were hired for one week to allow them to be tested, used for the volunteer training and to still be available after the count, just in case paper surveys also needed to be entered. There was concern that the mobile surveying might not work therefore all volunteers were given back-up paper copies of the survey... thankfully they were not required.

A shortcut was added to each iPad so that each one had a direct link to the survey. The survey was in a google form format. An iPad was given to each street survey team and each shelter/count site. The result was very efficient. As volunteers submitted the surveys in real time, the data appeared on a google spreadsheet, which was linked, to the google form. The data was accessible for reporting purposes immediately.

Dufferin hopes to use iPads again for the next count, this time linking them to the 'count' module in Homeless Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS 4) database.