

# Fifty years of data tables at Statistics Canada

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In 1969, nearly 50 years ago, Statistics Canada launched its Canadian Socio-Economic Information Management system, a massive statistical database better known as CANSIM.

Today, while the database no longer retains its original name, it still serves Canadians, governments and organizations, with more than 5,000 data tables available free of charge on the agency's official website. Much of the data in the database were produced by Statistics Canada, but the database also houses information from outside collaborators, such as the Bank of Canada, Transport Canada, Health Canada, and Industry Canada.

At its initial launch, the database was not as easily accessible as it is today. Originally conceived to serve a handful of researchers, it was at first only available to federal government employees. It was not until 1974, when a sales office was established, that the Canadian population at large was able to access it for a fee.

With the advent of the Internet, Statistics Canada moved the database online, making it more easily available to Canadians and organizations across the country.

Since then, the size and breadth of the database has grown in leaps and bounds. At launch, it only contained data from the National Accounts, but now it hosts information on a wide range of social and economic aspects of Canadians. Data are taken from Statistics Canada's many surveys and statistical programs, and the database has become the agency's central data repository.

In 2012, Statistics Canada removed another hurdle barring access to the database by making it available free of charge to all Canadians. Since then, more and more Canadians are using the database for a variety of purposes. The number of users who access tables keeps rising, reaching 1.8 million in 2017/2018.

This year, Statistics Canada unveiled a [new interface for the database](#) to further improve Canadians' access to the data. The new interface allows users to more easily manipulate variables, customize their data tables and download them for personal use.

Work on the database is ongoing. The agency plans on adding new features to the database in the coming years to help Canadians continue to make the most of the data available to them.

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact us (toll-free 1-800-263-1136; 514-283-8300; [STATCAN.infostats-infostats.STATCAN@canada.ca](mailto:STATCAN.infostats-infostats.STATCAN@canada.ca)) or Media Relations (613-951-4636; [STATCAN.mediahotline-ligneinfomedias.STATCAN@canada.ca](mailto:STATCAN.mediahotline-ligneinfomedias.STATCAN@canada.ca)).

