



How New Zealanders access public services

**A report on
the service
channels from
Kiwis Count 2009**

State Services Commission
July 2010

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Executive summary

Governments across the world are looking for ways to improve the quality of public services to meet changing expectations. New Zealand is no exception. In 2005 the State Services Commission (SSC) began the *New Zealanders' Experience Research Programme* (NZE) to gather feedback that would help to improve public services.

The SSC launched the first *Kiwis Count* survey in 2007 as part of the NZE to measure how New Zealanders perceive and experience public services. The survey was repeated in 2009, and the high level results were published in April 2010.¹

This report focuses on parts of the *Kiwis Count 2009* survey that relate to:

- The different channels New Zealanders use to interact with public services.
- The preferences of different groups within the community.

It is intended to help public service providers understand how different groups of New Zealanders access public services and therefore how providers might invest in channels to best meet the needs of the people they serve.

How New Zealanders access public services

New Zealanders use all channels to interact with public services. Maintaining all channels well can improve satisfaction.

- New Zealanders mostly carried out transactions in person followed by over the telephone. They mostly looked for information by telephone and the internet.
- In general, people were already using the channels they preferred to look for information or to carry out transactions.
- More mail/fax users preferred to use other channels. Mail was the preferred channel for receiving routine personal information from an agency.

¹ State Services Commission, *Kiwis Count 2009 : New Zealanders' satisfaction with public services*, <http://www.ssc.govt.nz/kiwis-count-2009>

Telephone handles high volume but has low satisfaction.

- Two thirds of New Zealanders used the telephone to find information about and to carry out transactions with public services.
- Satisfaction with telephone was the lowest of all channels and the same as in 2007.
- Cell phone is an emerging contact method with public services.

Internet has high potential to improve New Zealanders' experience of public services but it is not the complete solution.

- The internet was the only channel with more people preferring it than using it. This suggests a demand for more online public services.
- Satisfaction was highest for the internet channel in 2009, overtaking contact in person. Therefore, the internet offers great potential to improve satisfaction with public services.
- Not all New Zealanders were able or willing to access public services over the internet. The most common reasons for not using public services online were preference for another channel and/or not having a computer.
- The keys to encouraging uptake of public services over the internet are to make them simple and user-friendly and ensure privacy is protected.

Different groups' uses and preferences

Different groups of New Zealanders use different channels for their dealings with public services and have their own preferences for the channels they want to use. Age, income and ethnicity all influenced people's use and preferences.

Age

- Age is a key factor in the use of public services over the internet. People between 18 and 44 were the most likely to have used the internet to access public services.
- Use and preference for the internet generally declined with age, and declined dramatically over 65.
- Young people don't do everything over the internet. Younger people were more likely than others to have contacted public services in person.
- The youngest and oldest age groups were less likely to have used the telephone for public services although for different reasons.
- Younger people were more likely than other age groups to have used or be interested in using their cell phones to interact with public services.

Income

- People with incomes between \$10,000 and \$35,000 were less likely to have used the internet to look for information about public services. Their preference for using the internet was also lower.
- Those in high income groups showed the greatest use and preference for the internet.

Ethnicity

- **Asian people** had highest use and preference for the internet and low use and preference for the telephone and in person.
- **Pacific people** had low use and preference for the internet, and high use of telephone both for information seeking and carrying out transactions.
- **Pacific people and Māori** were the most likely to have used their cell phones to interact with public services. Pacific people were three times as likely and Māori were twice as likely as all others to have sent or received text messages from a public service or to have visited a public service website using their cell phones.

Agencies which serve specific groups may be able to target investment in ways that will increase both uptake of and satisfaction with services. Agencies which deliver services to a cross-section of New Zealanders should maintain multiple channels.

Implications for service delivery

Kiwis Count 2009 helps us understand how New Zealanders interact and prefer to interact with their public services. It provides a wealth of valuable information that can help improve services now and in the future. *Kiwis Count 2009* tells us some important things about both service channels and people:

Channels

- Multi-channel access to services is the preferred approach for a wide range of New Zealanders.
- Services with a well defined group of clients showing clear preferences can invest in specific channels to improve uptake and satisfaction.
- The telephone channel needs the most improvement.
- Internet is playing a useful role but is not the complete solution.

- A shift to online is actually a shift to self-service.

People

- Young people use the internet a lot but also use more channels than older people so internet is not their sole service channel.
- Services that target those 65 or over should focus on improving services over the telephone or in person as this cohort show little interest in using public services online.
- Services that target lower income earners should focus on telephone and in person services.
- Improving the quality and range of services and information online is likely to improve service uptake and satisfaction of Asian people.
- Pacific people and Māori are heavy users of the telephone channel and services that target these two groups should focus on the quality of their telephone services.
- Younger Pacific people and Māori are much more receptive to contact by cell phone than other age or ethnic groups.

The use of and preference for channels may change over time with changing demography and technology. Public service agencies should monitor changes in the demographic makeup of their clients as well as keep abreast of technical innovations to plan for service improvement.

1 Introduction

Governments across the world are looking for ways to improve the quality of public services to meet changing expectations and New Zealand is no exception. In 2005 the State Services Commission (SSC) began the New Zealanders' Experience Research Programme (NZE) to gather feedback that would help to improve public services.

The SSC launched the first *Kiwis Count* survey in 2007 as part of the NZE to measure how New Zealanders perceive and experience public services. The survey was repeated in 2009 with some new questions added about the different channels of communication New Zealanders use to access public services – mail/fax, telephone, in person and online. A total of 3,724 New Zealanders responded to the 2009 *Kiwis Count* survey. Understanding people's use of and preferences for different channels of communication – called 'channels' in this report – will help service delivery agencies to improve service uptake and satisfaction.

Kiwis Count 2009 asked New Zealanders:

- what channels they used to find information about or transact with public services
- what channels they would prefer to use
- how satisfied they were with different channels
- where they would like to see improvement, especially for the online channel.

SSC intends to repeat these questions in future *Kiwis Count* surveys to monitor changes in use, preferences and satisfaction with different channels over time.

This report presents its main findings in two ways before going on to review their implications. [Section 2](#) discusses the key findings about the channels themselves with the focus on patterns of channel use and preference across the entire *Kiwis Count* sample. In [Section 3](#) the focus moves to people and this part of the report highlights the similarities and differences in the ways different groups of New Zealanders interact with public services. [Section 4](#) identifies some of the implications of the findings for public service delivery now and in the future.

This report is intended to help public service providers to understand how different groups of New Zealanders access public services, therefore to decide how to invest in channels to best meet the needs of the people they serve.

2 Channels of communication

New Zealanders use all channels to interact with public services. Maintaining all channels well can improve satisfaction.

- New Zealanders mostly carried out transactions in person followed by over the telephone. They mostly looked for information by telephone and the internet.
- In general, people were already using the channels they preferred to look for information or to carry out transactions.
- More mail/fax users preferred to use other channels, but to receive routine personal information from an agency, mail was the preferred channel.

Telephone handles high volume but has low satisfaction.

- Many New Zealanders used the telephone to find information about and to carry out transactions with public services.
- Satisfaction with telephone was the lowest of all channels and the same as in 2007.
- Cell phone is an emerging contact method with public services.

Internet has high potential to improve New Zealanders' experience of public services but it is not the complete solution.

- The internet was the only channel with more people preferring it than using it. This suggests a demand for more online public services.
- Satisfaction was highest for the internet channel in 2009, overtaking contact in person. Therefore, the internet offers great potential to improve satisfaction with public services.
- Not all New Zealanders were able or willing to access public services over the internet. The most common reasons for not using public services online were preference for another channel and/or not having a computer.
- Making public services over the internet simple and user-friendly and ensuring privacy is protected are the keys to encouraging uptake.

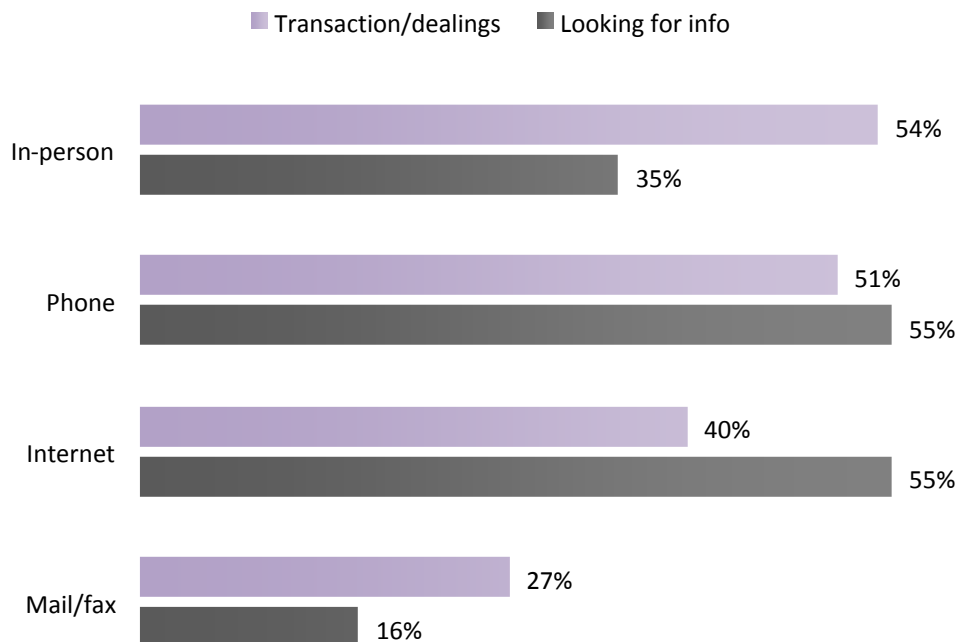
2.1 New Zealanders use all channels to interact with public services

In *Kivis Count 2009* New Zealanders were asked how they access and how they prefer to access public services. The range of ways of services can be accessed are grouped into four main channels:

- in person, face-to-face
- mail, posted letter, fax
- telephone (landline or cell phone calls, text messages)
- internet (email, websites).

In the 12 months to September 2009, New Zealanders used different channels to do different things. To look for information about public services, most people had used the internet (55%) and the telephone (55%). When carrying out transactions with public services most people had done this in person (54%) or over the telephone (51%). Mail/fax was the least used channel for both information seeking and transactions.

FIGURE 1 CHANNELS USED TO CARRY OUT TRANSACTIONS OR TO LOOK FOR INFORMATION



In general, people were using their preferred channels to look for information or to carry out transactions. The exception is mail/fax users, more of whom would prefer to use other

channels. While mail/fax is the least used and least preferred channel for looking for information and carrying out transactions, when it comes to contact by a public service for routine personal information, contact by letter (46%) was the most preferred method across all age, income and ethnic groups.

FIGURE 2 CHANNELS USED AND PREFERRED WHEN LOOKING FOR INFORMATION

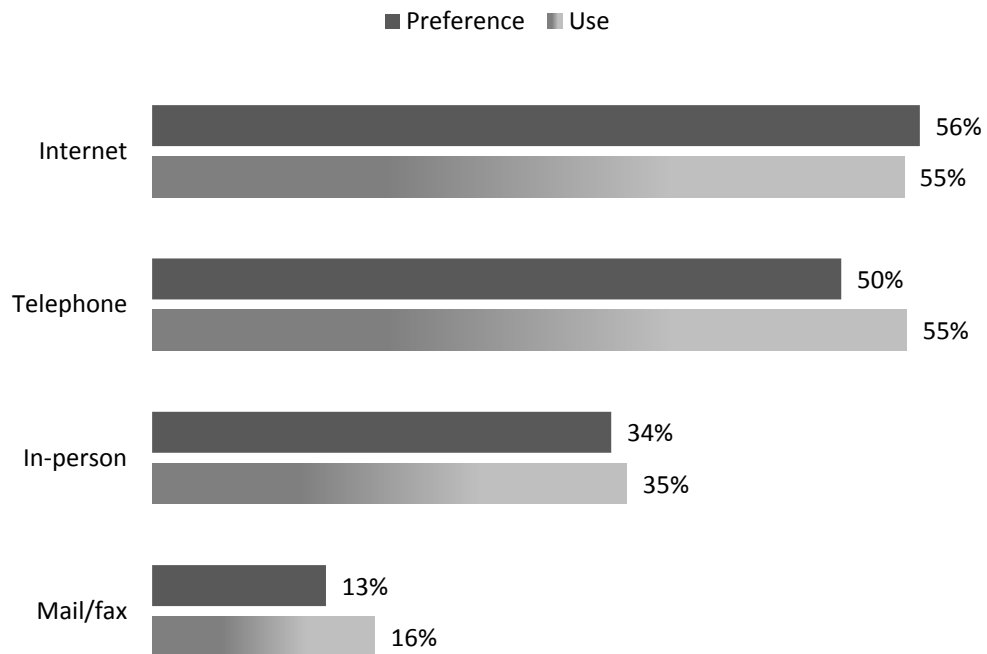


FIGURE 3 CHANNELS USED AND PREFERRED WHEN CARRYING OUT TRANSACTIONS

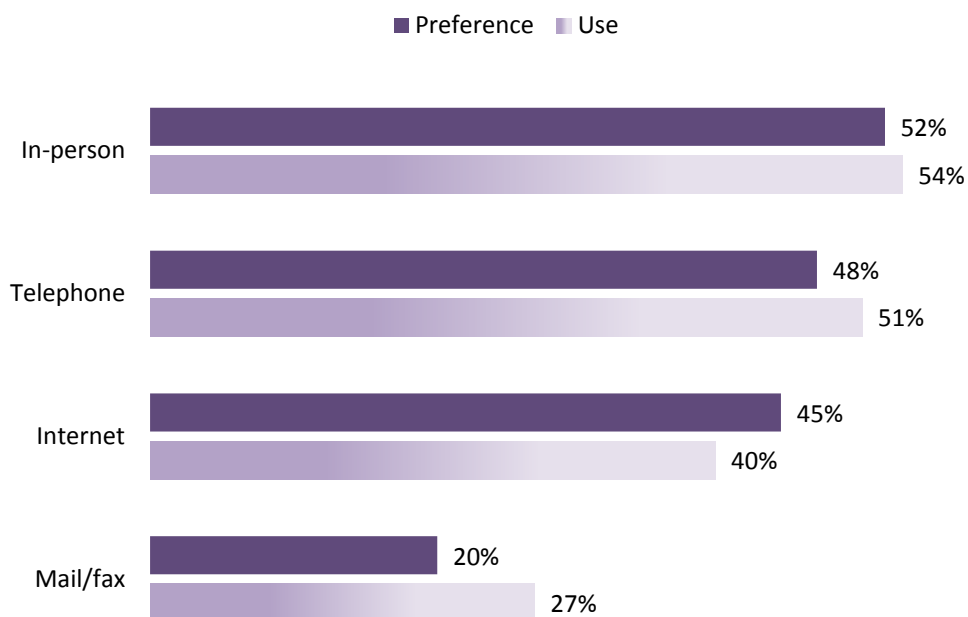


TABLE 1 PREFERRED METHODS OF CONTACT FOR ROUTINE PERSONAL INFORMATION

Method	Percentage
Contact me by letter	46%
Send me an email	22%
Contact me by phone	21%
Other	7%
Notify me on the internet	1%
Send me an SMS text message	1%

2.2 Telephone handles high volume but offers low satisfaction

Key Findings – Telephone and cell phone

- Telephone is still the most commonly used channel but satisfaction with it is low.
- Cell phone is likely to become an increasingly important channel in the future.

Many of New Zealanders' interactions with public services were over the telephone – 55% had sought information and 51% had carried out transactions over the telephone. However, satisfaction with the telephone was the lowest of all channels in both 2007 and 2009. The percentages that were satisfied with using the telephone for their most recent service contact remained unchanged at 61% (See Figure 5 on page 13).

Research carried out in Australia indicated that the uptake of the internet channel had slowed while the use of cell phones was on the rise². For this reason, some questions on cell phone use were included in the *Kiwis Count* 2009 survey to find out how likely New Zealanders were to use their cell phones to contact public services. *Kiwis Count* 2009 asked whether people had already used or would be interested in using their cell phones to:

² Australian Government Information Management Office, Commonwealth of Australia, *Interacting with Government, December 2008. Australian's use and satisfaction with e-government services.*, www.finance.gov.au/publications/interacting-with-government

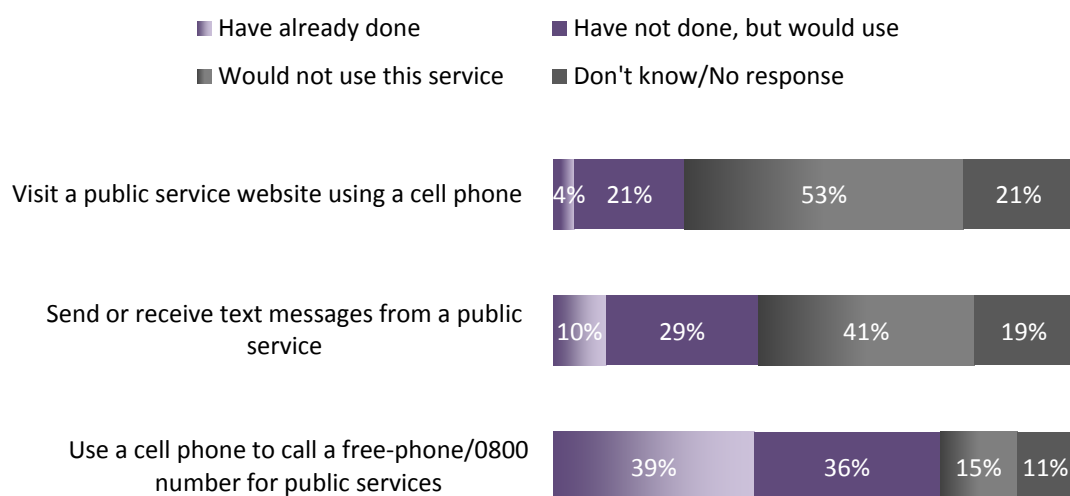
- call a free-phone/0800 number for public services
- send or receive text messages from a public service
- visit a public service website using a cell phone.

Of the three, New Zealanders were most likely to have used or to be interested in using their cell phones to call a free-phone for public services. Thirty-nine percent of respondents had already done so, and another 36% said they would.

Ten percent of New Zealanders had sent a text message to or received one from a public service, and another 29% indicated that they would be interested in using their cell phones for this purpose. However, 41% said that they would not use this service and 19% were unsure.

New Zealanders were least likely to visit a public service website using their cell phone with only 4% of respondents having done this. More than half of the respondents (53%) said they would not use this service.

FIGURE 4 OPTIONS FOR ACCESSING PUBLIC SERVICES BY CELL PHONE



The World Internet Project New Zealand reported that around 6% of their respondents accessed the internet on their cell phones, for 1-4 hours a week (including processing emails).³ Cell phones are generally cheaper than computers and their portability also makes them more useful to some people. It is likely that more New Zealanders may be interested in accessing public services via their cell phones in the future (See section [3.1](#) and [3.3](#) for demographic breakdowns on using cell phone to contact public services).

2.3 Internet has high potential but is not the complete solution

Key Findings – Internet

- The internet was the only channel with more people preferring it than using it.
- Satisfaction was highest with the internet channel in 2009, overtaking in person contact. Therefore, the internet offers great potential for improving satisfaction with public services.
- Not all New Zealanders were able or willing to access public services over the internet.
- New Zealanders want public services over the internet to be simple, user-friendly and to maintain their privacy.

Eighty-six percent of *Kiwis Count* 2009 respondents had used the internet in the previous 12 months and about half (47%) had dealt with public services over the internet. Other research on New Zealanders' use of the internet in 2009 showed similar use of the internet to access public services. Statistics New Zealand's report, *Household Use of Information and Communication Technology 2009*⁴, shows that of those who had used the internet in the last 12 months:

- 46% had sought information on government organisations
- 35% had downloaded or completed a government form online
- 20% had made payments to government online.

³ World internet Project New Zealand. *The Internet in New Zealand 2009*. Institute of Culture Discourse and Communication AUT University. March 2010. Page 3. <http://www.aut.ac.nz/research/research-institutes/icdc/projects/world-internet-project>

⁴ Statistics New Zealand. April 2010 *Household Use of Information and Communication Technology: 2009*. Table 8. Excel file. http://www.stats.govt.nz/browse_for_stats/people_and_communities/households/householduseofict_hotp2009.aspx

Similarly, results from the World Internet Project New Zealand⁵ show that of those who had used the internet in the last 12 months:

- nearly 60% used the internet to get government or council information
- around 30% accessed secured services and paid taxes or fines online.

Kiwis Count 2009 included a question on New Zealanders' day-to-day internet use to compare the use of internet for public and non-public services. Internet search and email were the two most popular online activities with nearly 80% of New Zealanders having done one or the other in the previous 12 months.

TABLE 2 INTERNET ACTIVITIES IN THE PREVIOUS 12 MONTHS⁶

Internet service used	Percentage
Internet search	79%
Email	79%
Internet banking	61%
Internet news services	61%
Internet trading	57%
Social networking	42%
Downloading	40%
Internet shopping	30%
Other internet service	24%
Games	23%

Internet was the only channel with more people who preferred it than who used it (figures 2 and 3). This suggests a demand for more online public services, especially for transactions. Fifty-five percent of people had sought information online and 56% preferred using this channel. Forty percent of people had used the internet to carry out transactions with public services and 45% preferred it.

⁵ World Internet Project New Zealand. *The Internet in New Zealand 2009*. Institute of Culture Discourse and Communication AUT University. March 2010. Figure 36. page 19. <http://www.aut.ac.nz/research/research-institutes/icdc/projects/world-internet-project>

⁶ Respondents were asked to select all the services that they had used in the previous 12 months.

The online channel has potential to improve satisfaction with services. Interest in the online channel to date has been focused on potential efficiency gains and cost saving. However, findings from Canada's *Citizens First* survey indicate that while use of online public services was on the rise, the internet was not displacing the traditional channels⁷. Their advice was that, '*service managers may now wish to focus more closely on channel integration rather than channel migration as it appears that multi-channel usage is here to stay.*'⁸

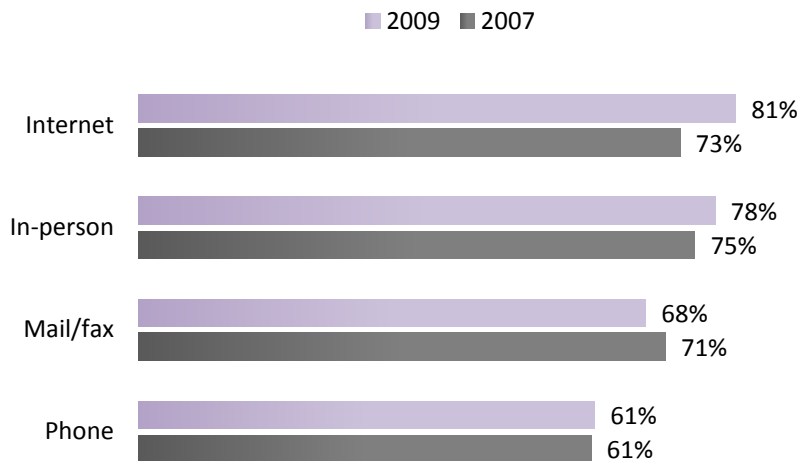
The results from *Kiwis Count 2009* suggest that the greatest potential for improving New Zealanders' satisfaction with public services might lie with the online channel. Internet was the channel that showed the greatest improvement in satisfaction between the 2007 and 2009 surveys. The percentage of users who were satisfied with using the internet for their most recent public service increasing substantially from 73% in 2007 to 81% in 2009. The internet was the channel with the highest satisfaction in 2009, overtaking the in person channel.

The fact that most people who accessed public services online had a preference for the internet channel might have contributed to the high level of satisfaction with the internet channel. If the internet became the only service channel, removing the option to use other channels, satisfaction could well decline.

⁷ Institute of Citizen-Centred Services, *Citizens First 5*, 2008, p.2. ISBN 978-0-9739524-4-5.

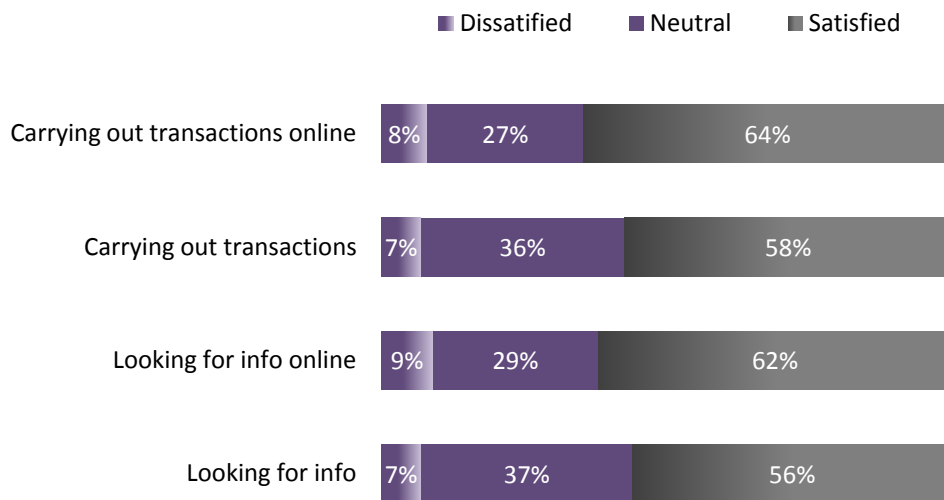
⁸ *Ibid*, p.54.

FIGURE 5 SATISFACTION WITH CHANNEL - MOST RECENT CONTACT



New Zealanders were also more likely to be satisfied with looking for information and carrying out transactions online than in general, across all channels (see Figure 6 below).

FIGURE 6 SATISFACTION WITH LOOKING FOR INFORMATION AND CARRYING OUT TRANSACTIONS



Not everyone uses the internet. Although the internet has potential to improve efficiency and satisfaction it cannot be the sole channel of service delivery as not all New Zealanders have access to the internet, can use it, or want to use it for their dealings with public services.

In 2009, approximately 75% of New Zealand households had access to the internet, up from 65% in 2006.⁹ Fourteen percent of *Kiwis Count* respondents had not used the internet in the previous 12 months¹⁰ and not having a computer was the most commonly cited reason for this.

⁹ Statistics New Zealand, (2010), *Household Use of Information and Communication Technology: 2009*, http://www.stats.govt.nz/browse_for_stats/people_and_communities/households/householduseofict_hotp2009.aspx

¹⁰ 'The Internet in New Zealand 2009' reports 17% selected this category. Page 2
<http://www.aut.ac.nz/research/research-institutes/icdc/projects/world-internet-project>

TABLE 3 REASONS FOR NOT USING THE INTERNET IN THE LAST 12 MONTHS¹¹

Reason	Percentage
Do not have a computer	65%
Not comfortable using the internet	35%
Do not have internet access	30%
Internet access is not available where I live	9%
Some other reason	7%
Don't/can't use computers	4%

As well as the issue of access, preference is another important reason why not everyone would access public services online. The most common reasons why people didn't use any public services over the internet were, *'I prefer to use the phone or visit a public service office'* (45%), followed by *'I don't have a computer'* (20%).

¹¹ Respondents were asked to select all the reasons that applied.

TABLE 4 REASONS FOR NOT USING PUBLIC SERVICES OVER THE INTERNET IN THE LAST 12 MONTHS¹²

Reason	Percentage
I prefer to use the phone or visit a public service office	45%
I don't have a computer	20%
I didn't have a need to use any public services	19%
I am concerned about internet security	17%
I am not comfortable using the internet	17%
I don't have internet access	15%
I don't like using websites or email to get information or services from government	14%
I tried but I couldn't find what I needed quickly	13%
I tried but I couldn't work out how to do it	9%
I had someone else (friend, relative, accountant) do it for me	8%
I had problems getting access to websites and email	8%
Internet access is not available where I live	4%
Some other reason	2%
The service was not available on the internet	2%

2.4 Improving uptake of public services online

New Zealanders gave a clear message about what will need to improve to encourage their use of public services over the internet. Across all age, income and ethnic groups the most common suggestion for improvement was to make public services over the internet *'simple and user-friendly'* (63%) followed by, *'ensure my privacy is protected'* (48%). However, of those in the over 65 age group, 38% said that nothing would encourage them to use public services over the internet. Eight percent of respondents said that they did not use public services over the internet because they had someone else do it for them. This point about the use of intermediaries has implications for services that require identity verification.

¹² Only those who didn't use public services over the internet were asked this question. Respondents could pick more than one reason.

TABLE 5 WHAT WOULD ENCOURAGE OR INCREASE USE OF PUBLIC SERVICES OVER THE INTERNET¹³

Areas for improvement	Percentage
Make it simple and user-friendly	63%
Ensure my privacy is protected	48%
Provide follow-up confirmation to avoid misunderstandings	37%
Advertise these services are available	35%
Improve online security	35%
Have one website for all public services	30%
Make the whole service available online	27%
Improve technical support	24%
Offer me a reward of some kind	14%
Nothing	14%
Provide a way for me to share my experiences with other people using the same service	8%
Other *	1%
Access to a computer *	1%
Cheaper broadband *	1%
Access to the internet *	1%
Improve search engines on website *	0%
Better information available online *	0%

* Not included as an option in the survey (write in responses)

¹³ Respondents were asked to select all the statements that applied.

3 Different groups' uses and preferences

Different groups of New Zealanders use different channels for their dealings with public services and have their own preferences for the channels they want to use. Age, income and ethnicity all influenced people's use and preferences.

Age

- Age is a key factor in the use of public services over the internet. People between 18 and 44 were the most likely to have used the internet to access public services.
- Use and preference for the internet generally declined with age, and declined dramatically over 65.
- However, young people DON'T do everything over the internet. Younger people were more likely than others to have contacted public services in person.
- The youngest and oldest age groups were less likely to have used the telephone for public services although for different reasons.
- Younger people were more likely than other age groups to have used or be interested in using their cell phones to interact with public services.

Income

- People with incomes between \$10,000 and \$35,000 were less likely to have used the internet to look for information about public services. Their preference for using the internet was also lower.
- Those in high income groups showed the greatest use and preference for the internet.

Ethnicity

- **Asian people** had highest use and preference for the internet and low use and preference for the telephone and in person.
- **Pacific people** had low use and preference for the internet, and high use of telephone both information seeking and for carrying out transactions.
- **Pacific people and Māori** were the most likely to have used their cell phones to interact with public services. Pacific people were three times as likely and Māori were twice as likely as all others to have sent or received text messages from a public service or to have visited a public service website.

Agencies which serve specific groups may be able to target investment in ways that will increase both uptake of and satisfaction with services. Agencies which deliver services to a cross-section of New Zealanders should maintain multiple channels.

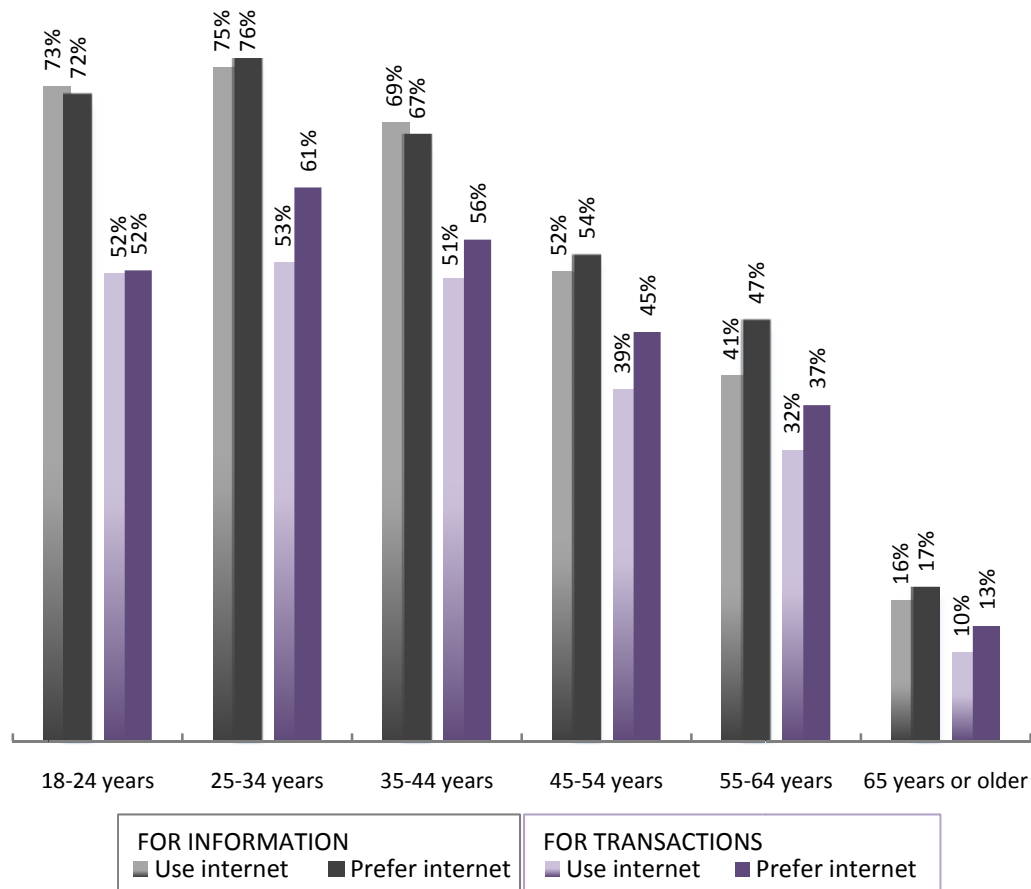
3.1 The influence of Age on use and preferences

Key Findings – Age

- Age is a key factor in the use of public services over the internet with younger people more likely to use it.
- However, young people DON'T do everything over the internet; they were also more likely to have contacted public services in person.
- The youngest and oldest groups were less likely to have used the telephone for public services

Age is a key factor in the use of public services over the internet. *Kiwis Count* derives its sample from the electoral roll, therefore only those aged 18 or above were surveyed. People between 18 and 44 had similar rates of internet use both in looking for information and in carrying out transactions with public services. They were more likely than those over 45 to have used or preferred to use the internet to deal with public services. The use of and preference for the internet generally declined with age, with a very marked reduction shown after age 65.

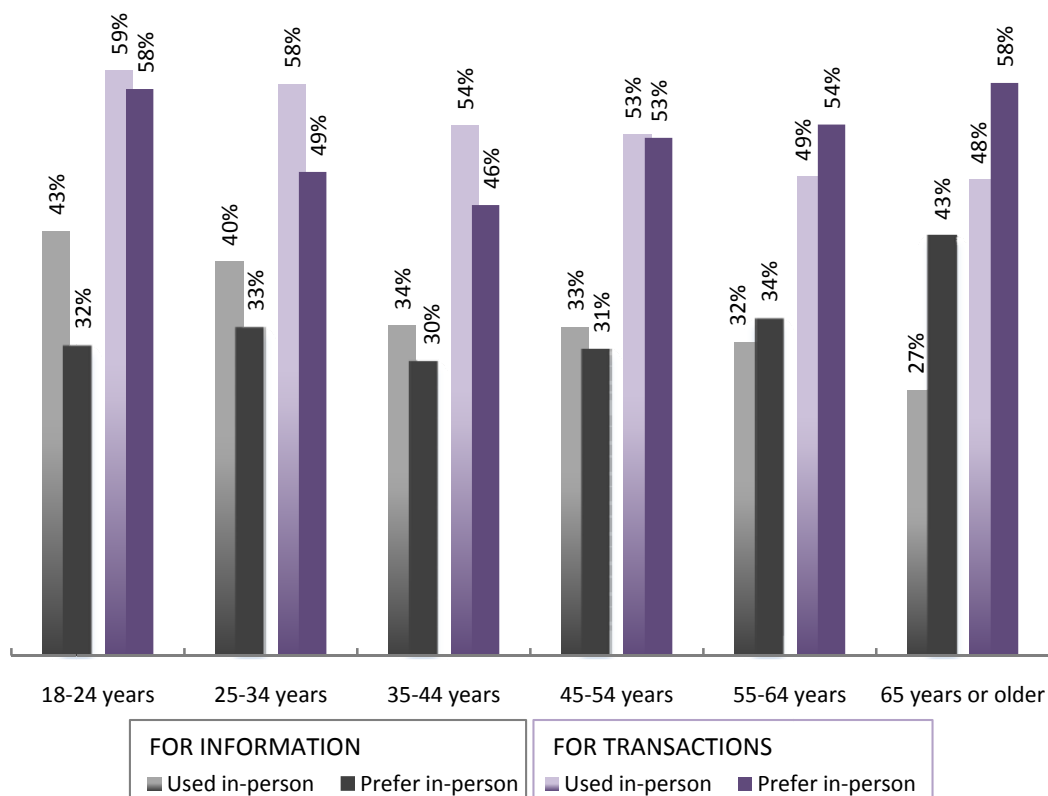
FIGURE 7 USE AND PREFERENCE FOR THE INTERNET BY AGE



Young people don't do everything over the internet. While young people were more likely to have used the internet to contact public services, they were also more likely to have contacted public services in person, whether to look for information or to carry out transactions.

The likelihood of interacting with public services in person declines with age. Forty-three percent of 18 to 24 year olds have looked for information in person compared to 27% of those over 65.

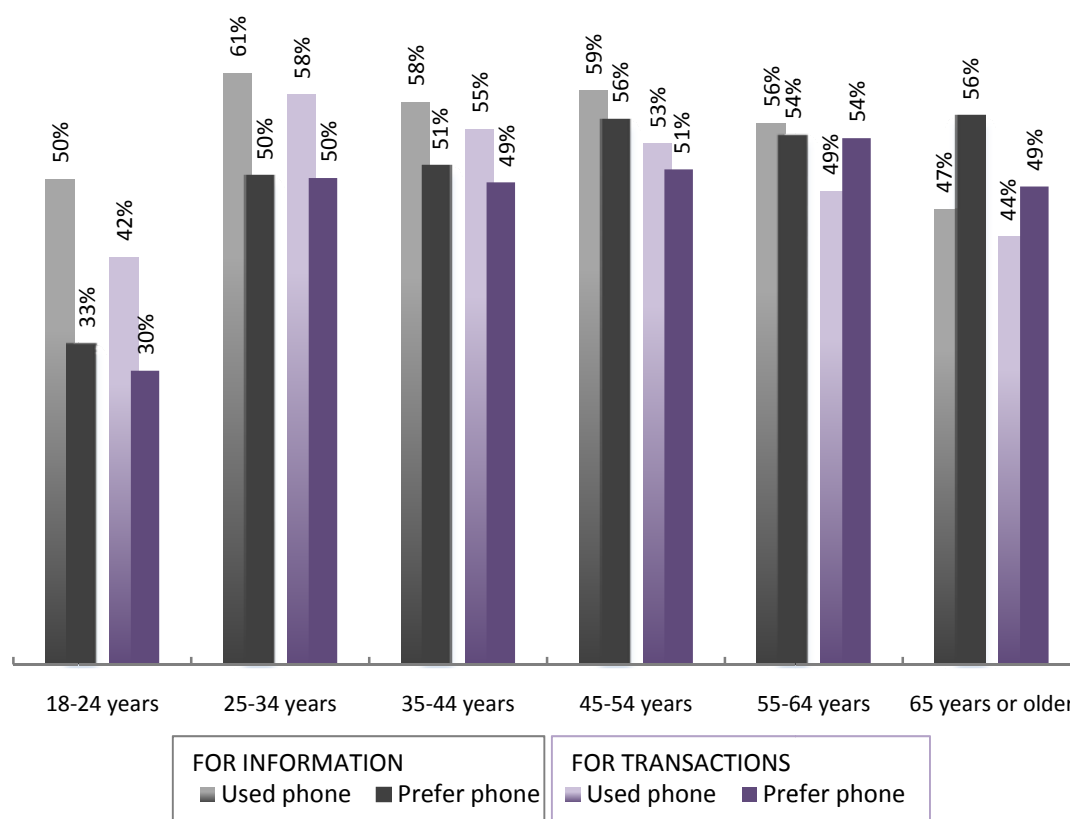
FIGURE 8 USE AND PREFERENCE FOR IN-PERSON BY AGE



Those in the 18 to 24 age group and those over 65 were less likely than other age groups to have used the telephone either to look for information or to carry out transactions with public services.

While the oldest and the youngest showed similar levels of telephone use their preferences for the telephone differed markedly. More of the 18 to 24 year olds had used the telephone to seek information (50%) but fewer preferred it (33%). More of the over 65 group preferred to use the telephone to seek information (56%) than those who had actually used it (47%).

FIGURE 9 USE AND PREFERENCE FOR TELEPHONE BY AGE



Key Findings – Cell Phones

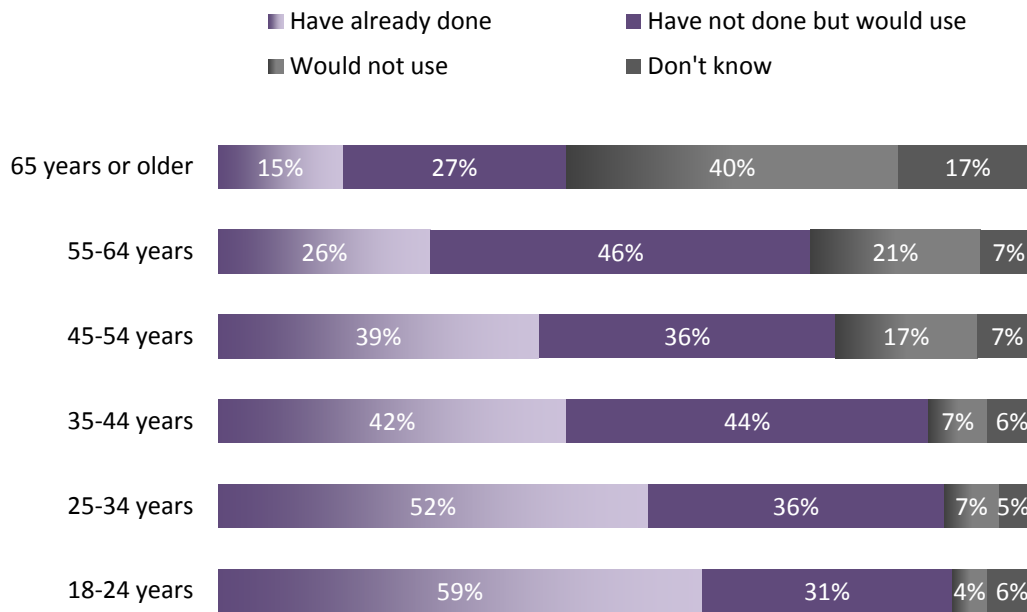
- Younger people were more likely to have used or to be interested in using their cell phones to interact with public services.

Of all the age groups, the 18 to 24 years olds were the most likely to have used or to be interested in using the cell phones to interact with public services, whether it was to:

- call a free-phone/0800 number for public services
- send or receive text messages from a public service
- visit a public service website using a cell phone.

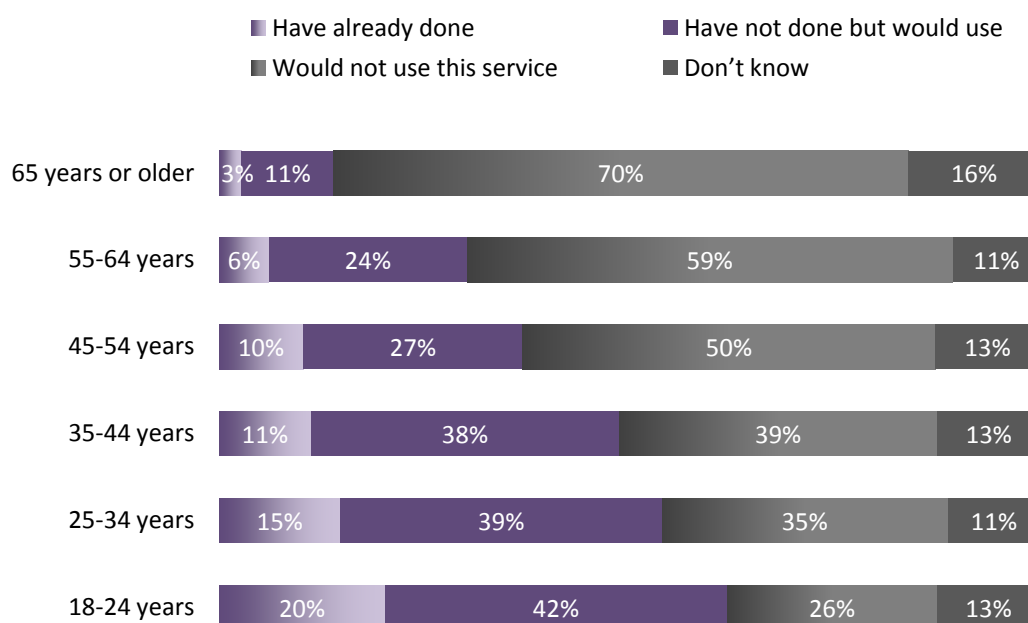
The likelihood of having used or being interested in using cell phones to access public services declined with age and dropped dramatically over age 65. Over half of those between 18 and 34 had called a public service free-phone using their cell phones, while around 40% of those between 35 and 54 had done the same. Those aged 55 or older were much less likely to have done so.

FIGURE 10 USE OF CELL PHONE TO CALL A PUBLIC SERVICE FREE-PHONE/0800 NUMBER BY AGE



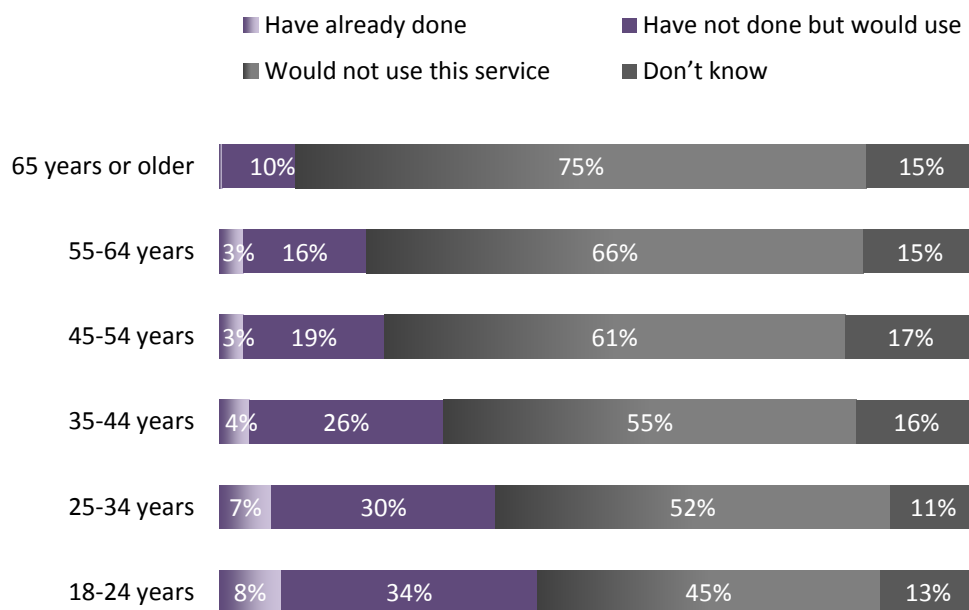
New Zealanders used text messages less than free-phone numbers to contact public services. Across all age groups, those who had sent or received text messages from a public service was less than a third of those who had called a public service free-phone number from a cell phone.

FIGURE 11 SEND OR RECEIVE TEXT MESSAGES FROM A PUBLIC SERVICE BY AGE



New Zealanders across all age groups were unlikely to have used or to be interested in using their cell phones to visit a public service website. Across all age groups, the percentage of people who said they would not use this service outweighed those who showed an interest in using it. Around 8% of the 18-34 year olds had visited a public service website using a cell phone, while less than 1% of those over 65 had done so.

FIGURE 12 VISIT A PUBLIC SERVICE WEBSITE USING A CELL PHONE BY AGE



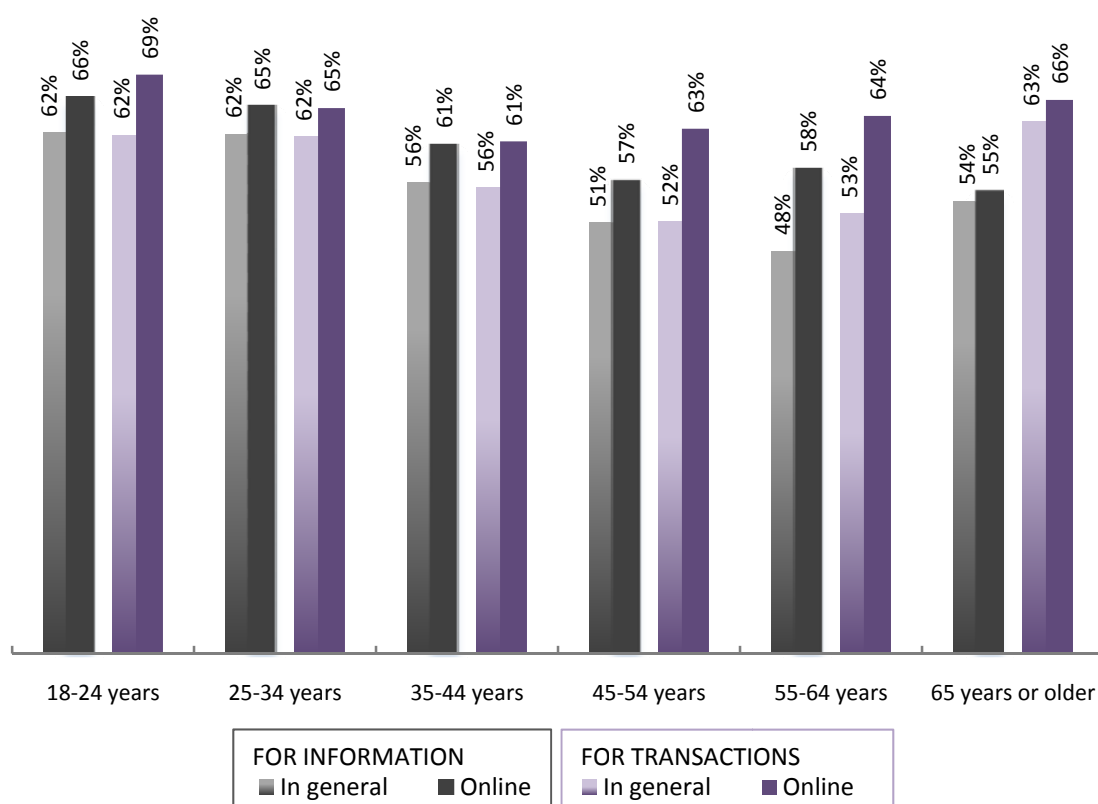
Key Findings – Satisfaction

- Those aged up to 34 were more satisfied than the older age groups both with looking for information and with carrying out transactions with the public services.
- The most dissatisfied with both were those aged from 55 to 64, with 11% of them dissatisfied with looking for information in general and 15% dissatisfied with looking for information online.

Those aged up to 34 were more satisfied than the older age groups both with looking for information and with carrying out transactions with the public services. The most dissatisfied with both were those aged from 55 to 64, with 11% of them dissatisfied with looking for information in general and 15% dissatisfied with looking for information online.

More people were either satisfied or dissatisfied with doing things online which is to say that fewer people were neutral when it comes to the internet. Overall, more people were satisfied with either looking for information or carrying out transactions online than in general across all channels.

FIGURE 13 SATISFACTION WITH LOOKING FOR INFORMATION AND CARRYING OUT TRANSACTIONS BY AGE



3.2 The influence of Income on use and preference

Key Findings – Income

- People with incomes in the \$10,000 to \$35,000 band were less likely to have used the internet to look for information about public services.
- Those in high income groups showed greatest use and preference for the internet.
- Time is likely to be a factor that influences the channels used by those in higher income groups.

The internet was the most commonly used channel for information by those in the lower income groups (\$10,000 or below) and those in income groups above \$35,000. The rate of internet use for those with incomes of \$50,000 or more was much higher than those in income groups below \$50,000.

For those with incomes between \$10,000 and \$35,000 the telephone was the most widely used channel. They were less likely than people in other income groups to have looked for information about public services over the internet and their preferences for using the internet were also lower.

TABLE 6 RANKING OF CHANNELS USED TO LOOK FOR INFORMATION BY INCOME

Income group	Most used	2nd most used	3rd most used	Least used
\$0 - \$10,000	internet	telephone	in person	mail/fax
\$10,001 - \$15,000	telephone	in person	internet	mail/fax
\$15,000 - \$35,000	telephone	internet	in person	mail/fax
\$35,000 or more	internet	telephone	in person	mail/fax

TABLE 7 CHANNELS USED TO LOOK FOR INFORMATION ABOUT PUBLIC SERVICES BY INCOME

Income group	In person	Mail/fax	Telephone	Internet
\$0 / none	35%	14%	50%	56%
\$1 - \$5,000	49%	25%	56%	66%
\$5,001 - \$10,000	41%	17%	59%	63%
\$10,001 - \$15,000	40%	14%	55%	37%
\$15,001 - \$20,000	38%	18%	57%	40%
\$20,001 - \$25,000	29%	15%	59%	35%
\$25,001 - \$30,000	39%	20%	63%	48%
\$30,001 - \$35,000	31%	12%	60%	50%
\$35,001 - \$40,000	32%	13%	55%	58%
\$40,001 - \$50,000	33%	18%	55%	55%
\$50,001 - \$70,000	32%	15%	58%	71%
\$70,001 - \$100,000	29%	16%	51%	74%
More than \$100,000	31%	12%	51%	74%

Those in high income groups showed greatest use of and preference for the internet. People in income groups above \$50,000 were more likely to have used and to express preference for using the internet to look for information and to carry out transactions. This possibly reflects their higher levels of comfort around using the internet. This finding appears consistent with the

finding from the World Internet Project New Zealand that, *'the wealthier an individual is, the more likely they are to rate their ability to use the internet as good to excellent'*.¹⁴

TABLE 8 USE OF AND PREFERENCE FOR THE INTERNET BY INCOME

Income group	Looking for information		Carrying out transactions	
	Use of internet	Preference for internet	Use of internet	Preference for internet
\$0 / none	56%	59%	40%	46%
\$1 - \$5,000	66%	65%	36%	49%
\$5,001 - \$10,000	63%	59%	45%	44%
\$10,001 - \$15,000	37%	40%	25%	29%
\$15,001 - \$20,000	40%	41%	30%	30%
\$20,001 - \$25,000	35%	39%	24%	28%
\$25,001 - \$30,000	48%	50%	37%	39%
\$30,001 - \$35,000	50%	48%	35%	39%
\$35,001 - \$40,000	58%	59%	43%	49%
\$40,001 - \$50,000	55%	56%	41%	43%
\$50,001 - \$70,000	71%	70%	53%	58%
\$70,001 - \$100,000	74%	79%	55%	71%
More than \$100,000	74%	76%	56%	69%

Of all income groups, those with incomes over \$100,000 were less likely than other groups to have used mail/fax to look for information, with only 12% having done so. However, they were more likely than others to have carried out transactions by mail/fax (40%) possibly because of the relatively small investment of time needed to carry out such transactions.

Those with incomes above \$50,000 were more likely to use channels that require less personal interaction. This is possibly because of the value they place on their time and also that they have relatively higher levels of comfort with online transactions. More research is required before this can be confirmed.

¹⁴ World Internet Project New Zealand. *The Internet in New Zealand 2009*. Institute of Culture Discourse and Communication AUT University. March 2010, page 33. <http://www.aut.ac.nz/research/research-institutes/icdc/projects/world-internet-project>

TABLE 9 CHANNELS USED TO CARRY OUT TRANSACTIONS WITH PUBLIC SERVICES BY INCOME

Income group	In person	Mail/fax	Telephone	Internet
\$0 / none	49%	25%	43%	40%
\$1 - \$5,000	44%	22%	38%	36%
\$5,001 - \$10,000	59%	27%	50%	45%
\$10,001 - \$15,000	61%	24%	52%	25%
\$15,001 - \$20,000	56%	25%	50%	30%
\$20,001 - \$25,000	52%	23%	49%	24%
\$25,001 - \$30,000	54%	25%	56%	37%
\$30,001 - \$35,000	58%	23%	59%	35%
\$35,001 - \$40,000	55%	26%	52%	43%
\$40,001 - \$50,000	52%	28%	52%	41%
\$50,001 - \$70,000	51%	28%	52%	53%
\$70,001 - \$100,000	51%	34%	56%	55%
More than \$100,000	47%	40%	48%	56%

3.3 The influence of Ethnicity on use and preference

Key Findings – Ethnicity

- **Asian people** have highest use and preference for the internet and low use and preference for the telephone and transactions in person.
- **Pacific people** have low use and preference for the internet, and high use of telephone.
- **Māori and NZ Europeans¹⁵** have similar patterns of channel use to seek information and to carry out transactions.

¹⁵ This analysis was based on those in the Europeans group, which primarily consisted of those who identified with the NZ Europeans or Pakeha categories. It also includes a small number of people who specified one or more European ethnicities.

Of all ethnic groups, Asian peoples were the most likely to have used the internet to seek information and to carry out transactions, and to prefer to do so. Internet was the most commonly used channel by Asian people both for seeking information and for transactions. They are the only ethnic group who had the internet among their top two most commonly used channels for carrying out transactions. While across almost all ethnic groups, more people preferred to use the internet than those who had actually used it, the gap between use and preference for carrying out transactions online is particularly obvious for Asian people. Forty-seven percent of Asian people had carried out transactions online while 55% expressed a preference for it.

Of the ethnic groups, Asian people had the lowest use of and preference for the telephone, both for information seeking and carrying out transactions although telephone still rated as their second preference (Table 10 below). Forty-seven percent of Asian people had sought information over the telephone and 42% had carried out transactions over the telephone. Across all four ethnic groups, there were more people who had used the telephone than those who preferred it.

Pacific people had the lowest use and preference for the internet to either seek information or to carry out transactions. Forty-four percent of Pacific people had sought information over the internet while 32% of them had carried out transactions this way. Telephone was the most commonly used channel by Pacific people both for information seeking (66%) and for carrying out transactions (57%). They were also the group with the biggest gap between use and preference for the telephone. Only 53% preferred to seek information over the telephone and 46% preferred to use it for transactions.

FIGURE 14 USE OF AND PREFERENCE FOR THE INTERNET BY ETHNICITY

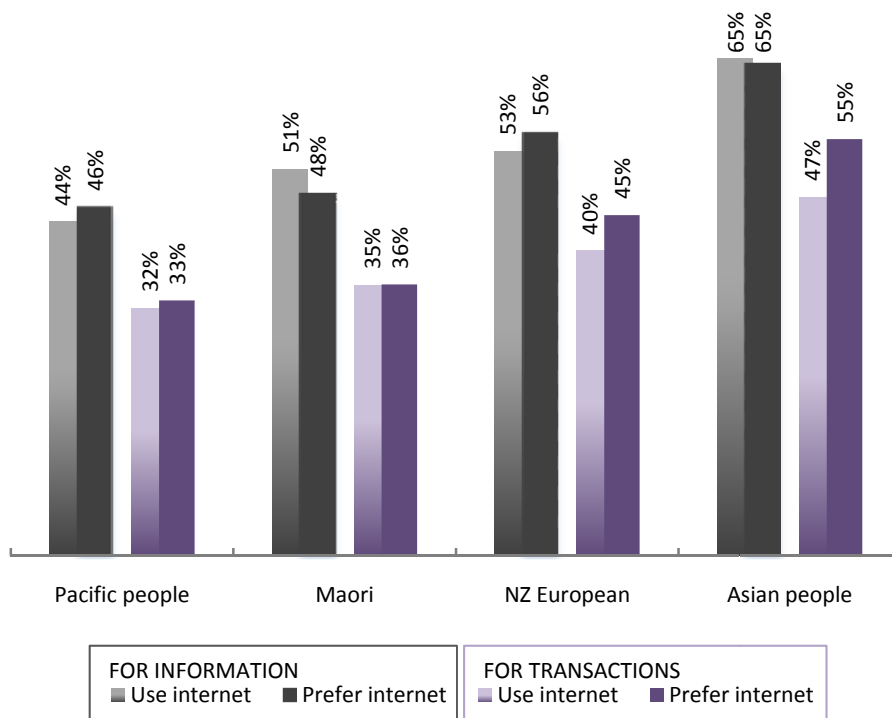
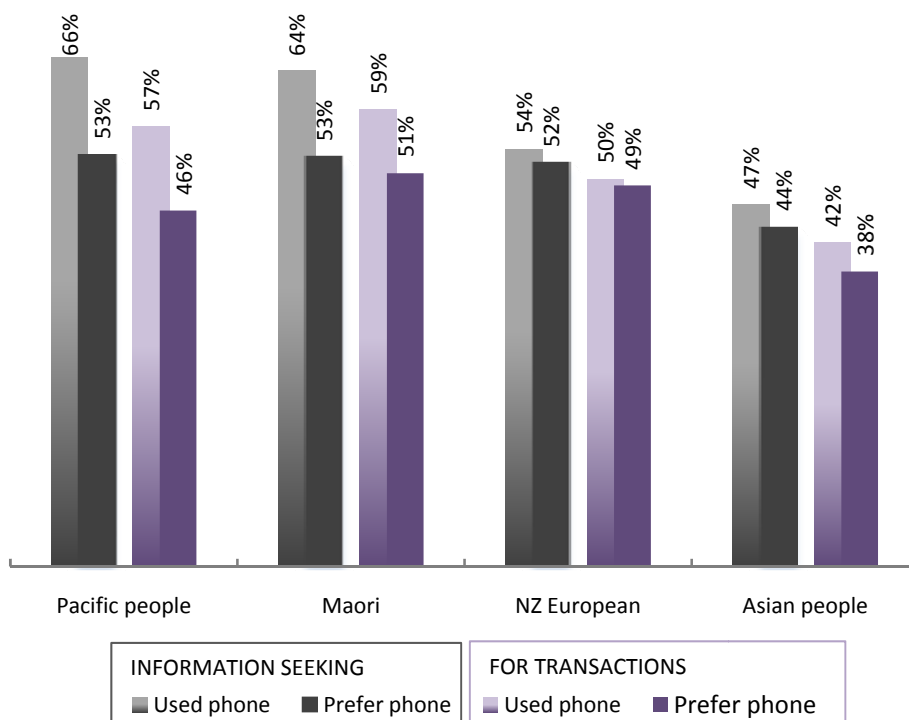


FIGURE 15 USE OF AND PREFERENCE FOR THE TELEPHONE BY ETHNICITY



Māori and NZ Europeans used channels similarly to seek information and to carry out transactions with public services. Both groups were most likely to have used the telephone,

followed by the internet to look for information. Both groups were most likely to have carried out transactions in person, followed by using the telephone.

TABLE 10 TOP TWO CHANNELS TO LOOK FOR INFORMATION AND CARRY OUT TRANSACTIONS BY ETHNICITY

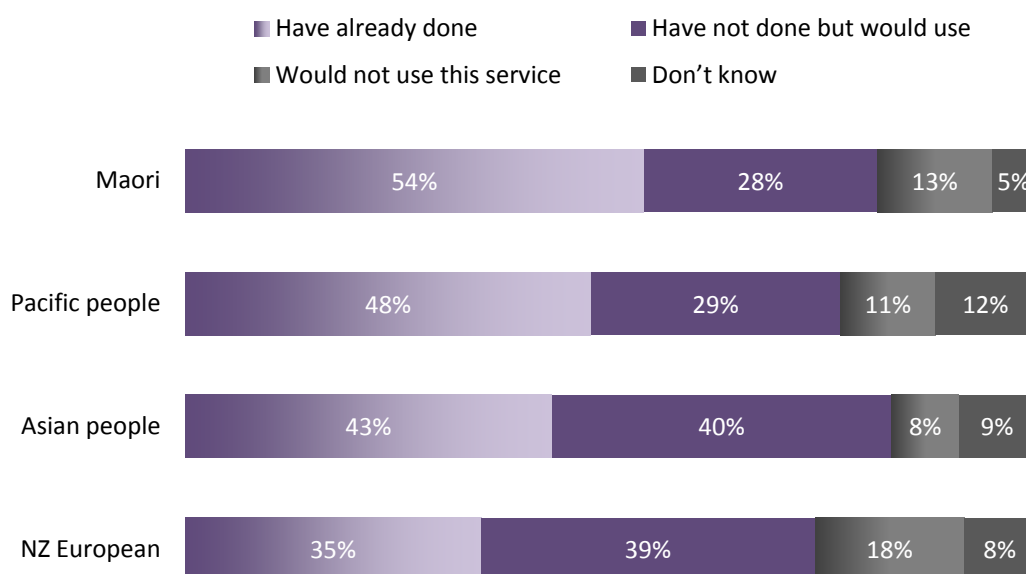
Ethnic group	Looking for information		Carrying out transactions	
	1st	2nd	1st	2nd
NZ Europeans	telephone	internet	in person	telephone
Māori	telephone	internet	in person	telephone
Pacific people	telephone	in person	in person	telephone
Asian people	internet	telephone	internet	telephone

Key Findings – Cell Phones

- **Pacific people and Māori** were the most likely to have used their cell phones to interact with public services.

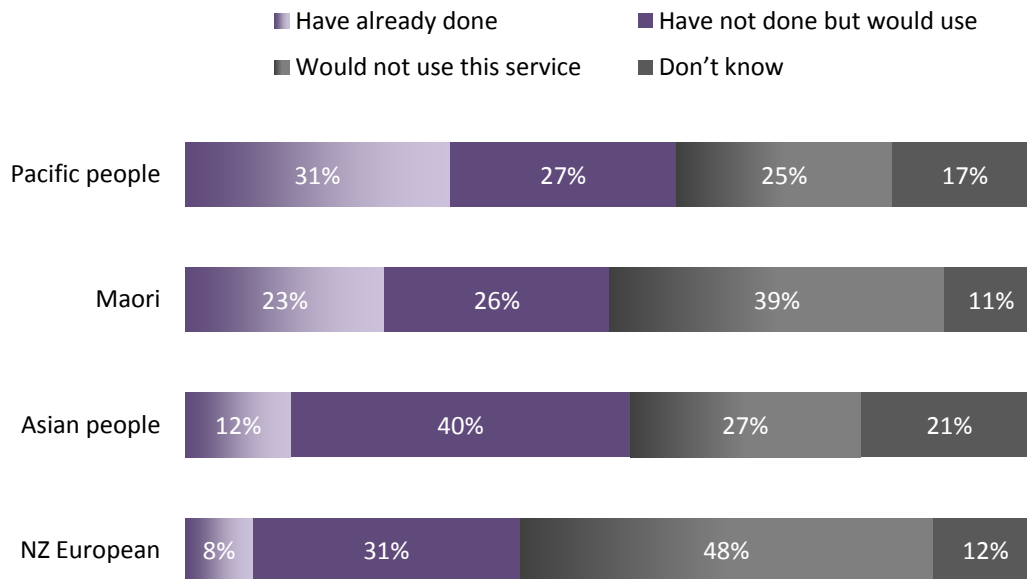
Pacific people and Māori were the most likely to have already used their cell phones to interact with public services, while NZ Europeans were the least likely to have done so.

FIGURE 16 USE A CELL PHONE TO CALL A FREE-PHONE/0800 NUMBER BY ETHNICITY



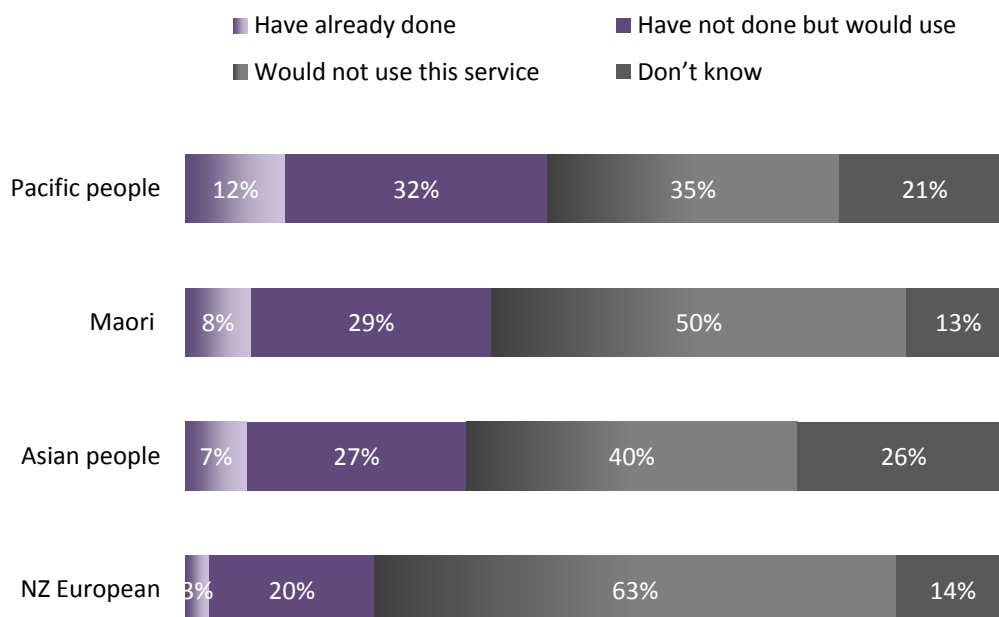
Pacific people were three times as likely (31%), and Māori were twice as likely (23%), as all other survey respondents (10%) to have sent or received text messages from a public service.

FIGURE 17 SEND TO OR RECEIVE TEXT MESSAGES FROM A PUBLIC SERVICE BY ETHNICITY



Pacific people were three times as likely (12%), and Māori were twice as likely (8%), as all other survey respondents (4%) to have visited a public service website using a cell phone.

FIGURE 18 VISIT A PUBLIC SERVICE WEBSITE USING A CELL PHONE BY ETHNICITY



Key Findings – Satisfaction

- **Pacific people** were the most satisfied with both looking for information and carrying out transactions with public services in general.
- **Māori** were the most satisfied with both looking for information and carrying out transactions online.

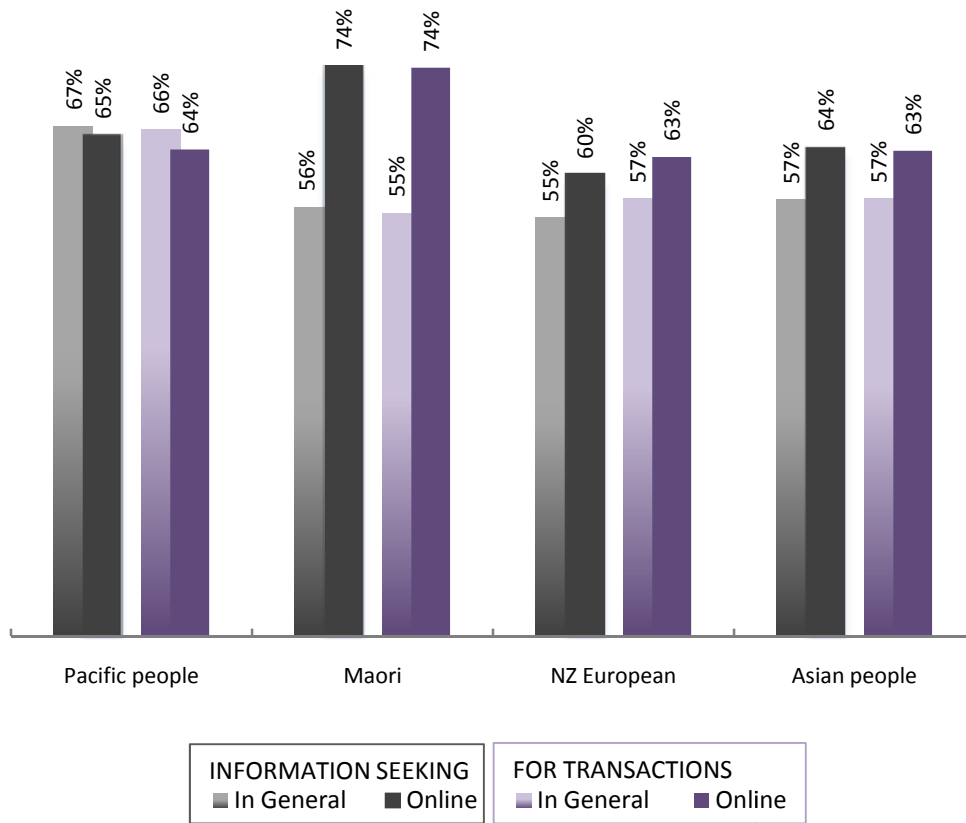
Of all ethnic groups, Pacific people were the most likely to be satisfied both with looking for information (67%) and with carrying out transactions (66%) across all channels. However, with respect to looking for information online Pacific people were slightly less satisfied than the others.

Of those who had either looked for information or carried out transactions online, Māori were the most likely to be satisfied. Seventy-four percent of Māori who had done either of these were satisfied, compared to 62% of all respondents who looked for information online and 64% of those who had carried out transactions online.

For Māori, satisfaction with public services online is much higher than for other groups. However, many fewer Māori had dealt with public services online which might have contributed

to the marked difference between their satisfaction in general and their satisfaction with online services.

FIGURE 19 SATISFACTION IN GENERAL AND ONLINE BY ETHNICITY



4 Implications for service delivery

Kiwis Count 2009 helps us to better understand the channels New Zealanders use and prefer to use to interact with public services. It provides a wealth of valuable information that can help improve services now and in the future.

Kiwis Count 2009 tells us some important things about **channels**:

- Multi-channel is the best approach to serving a wide range of New Zealanders.
- Some services would be advised to invest in specific channels for defined groups of service users.
- The telephone channel handled a high volume of interactions with New Zealanders, but satisfaction was low. By improving this channel, overall satisfaction should improve.
- Internet is playing a useful role but is not the complete solution.
- A shift to online is actually a shift to self-service.

It also gives an insight into how best to meet the needs of different groups of **people**:

- Young people do use the internet, but also use more channels than older people, so the internet cannot be the sole service channel.
- Services that target those 65 years or over should focus on improving services over the telephone or in person, as this cohort show little interest in using public services online.
- Services that target lower income earners should focus on telephone and in person services.
- Improving the quality and range of services and information online is likely to improve service uptake and satisfaction for **Asian people**.
- **Pacific people and Māori** are heavy users of the telephone channel and services that target these two groups should focus on the quality of their telephone services.
- Younger **Pacific people and Māori** are much more receptive to contact by cell phone than other age or ethnic groups.

4.1 Channels

Multi-channel is the best approach to serving a wide range of New Zealanders

There is no single channel that will address all the needs of New Zealanders. If agencies cannot easily predict their audience, or, when delivering services to a wide range of people, a multi-channel strategy will optimise how people access and experience the service offered.

Invest in specific channels for defined groups of service users

Investment in particular channels will pay off where the service has a well-defined group of clients who clearly prefer certain channels. For example, we know that older people currently use fewer channels than the rest of the population. They are also less likely than younger people to access public services over the internet. Therefore, services that target older people should not be delivered solely online, as both the uptake and satisfaction are likely to be low.

Telephone channel needs to improve

Satisfaction with the telephone channel has not improved over the two *Kiwis Count* surveys despite it being a high volume channel and preferred by some groups. Because it is so widely used, improving the telephone channel is likely to improve satisfaction scores for public services. The SSC has devoted special attention to this channel and has identified what drives satisfaction with public services over the telephone. Agencies who want to improve their telephone services can refer to the *Guide to Using the Common Measurements Tool* for more information.¹⁶

Internet is playing a useful role but...

Kiwis Count 2009 results suggest that putting more public services online has potential to improve satisfaction scores. However, the message from New Zealanders is clear: agencies must design online services that are simple, user-friendly, and which ensure that privacy is protected if people are to use public services over the internet more than they do now. In May 2010, SSC began work to identify the drivers of satisfaction for public services online. Results from this work will be available in 2011.

¹⁶State Services Commission. *Guide to Using the Common Measurements Tool*. p.5, http://www.ssc.govt.nz/upload/downloadable_files/Guide-to-using-the-CMT-March10.pdf

A shift to online is actually a shift to self-service

Experience in Canada has shown that putting services online will not necessarily reduce the cost of service delivery¹⁷. Despite the increased uptake of online services, the use of other channels is relatively stable. For example, the call centre may also become a help desk for people using the web accessible service, making sure people can complete what they start to do online.

The internet will not replace other channels of service delivery but will perform a special role providing a self-service option. Self-service over the internet, done well, can help manage service spikes and response times, provide access at the person's convenience with a 'service counter' that is always open, comes to them, gives immediate service, and can remember the last time they visited.

Not all New Zealanders can or want to use online self-service. A forced shift to self-service will be a poorer service from some people's point of view (a bit like requiring motorists to pump their own petrol). At present there is a high level of satisfaction with the internet for accessing public services, possibly because it is a choice but not the only option. In general, New Zealanders need and expect more options than just self-service.

4.2 People

With the changing composition of New Zealand's population, public services must be ready to deal with the needs and expectations of different segments of the New Zealand society.

Investment in different channels should be based both on the function of the service and the use and preferences of target user groups.

Young people

Providing more services over the internet or cell phones might improve uptake by young people. However, younger people aged from 18 to 34 used more channels than the older age groups to deal with public services so internet cannot be the sole service channel.

¹⁷ Institute of Citizen-Centred Services, *Citizens First 5*, 2008, p.54. ISBN 978-0-9739524-4-5.

Elderly people

Services that target those 65 years or over should focus on improving services over the telephone, or in person, as this cohort show little interest in using public services online. The situation might be different for seniors in the future as those who are currently in the 55 to 64 age group show much greater use of and preference for the internet than the over 65 cohort.

Low income earners

Services that target lower income earners should focus on channels that can provide personal interaction and assistance throughout the process, such as telephone or in- person.

Ethnic groups

Improving the quality and range of services and information online is likely to improve service uptake and satisfaction of **Asian people** as they are more interested in dealing with public services online and less interested in using the telephone or visiting a public service in person.

Pacific people and Māori are heavy users of the telephone channel, and relatively light users of the internet. Services that target these two groups should ensure that their telephone services are adequately resourced and staff are well trained.

Service delivery designers for younger **Pacific people and Māori** might consider providing services that are accessible via cell phones as they are much more receptive to this method of contact than other age or ethnic groups.

4.3 Future-proofing public service delivery

The SSC has conducted research on what drives satisfaction with public services for different groups of New Zealanders.¹⁸ *Drivers of satisfaction are the main factors that have the greatest influence on New Zealanders' satisfaction with public services.* Read in conjunction with this report, the Drivers of Satisfaction research can help agencies build a more in-depth understanding of their clients' expectations and help them to design services to improve satisfaction.¹⁹

The use of and preference for channels may change over time with changing demography and technology. Public service agencies should monitor changes in the demographic makeup of their clients as well as keep abreast of technical innovations to plan for service improvement.

¹⁸ State Services Commission. *Satisfaction and Trust in the State Services* ('drivers' survey), <http://www.ssc.govt.nz/drivers-report>

¹⁹ State Services Commission. *Understanding the Drivers: Summary Report*, <http://www.ssc.govt.nz/understanding-drivers-report>

5 Find out more

The New Zealanders' Experience Research Programme (NZE) is designed to provide the evidence that can be used to improve public services. There are a number of ways you can find out more about the programme.

Kiwis Count Survey

Kiwis Count is a biennial all-of-government survey based on *Citizens First*, a Canadian Government project that measures satisfaction and identifies areas for improvement in public services. The survey provides rich information on how New Zealand's public services were performing in the eyes of the people who use them.

Link to *Kiwis Count* 2009 summary report:

<http://www.ssc.govt.nz/kiwis-count-2009>

Link to *Kiwis Count* 2009 technical report:

http://www.ssc.govt.nz/upload/downloadable_files/Technical-Report-Kiwis-Count-2009.pdf

Common Measurements Tool

As well as producing a range of reports on New Zealanders' experiences, NZE has also developed the Common Measurements Tool to help public agencies get a better understanding of how their own services perform. The Common Measurements Tool is a set of survey questions and scales that allows public agencies to measure client satisfaction and to identify areas for improvements. By using a common set of questions, agencies can compare their performance with other public services, with the *Kiwis Count* national survey and measure how they are progressing over time.

More information about the Common Measurements Tool can be found at

www.ssc.govt.nz/common-measurements-tool or by contacting commonmeasurementstool@ssc.govt.nz

Drivers of Satisfaction

Fact sheets, a video and other publications have been produced to provide more information on the drivers of satisfaction with public services. Engaging with more than 40 focus groups across New Zealand, this research explored in depth what contributed to people's satisfaction with and trust in public services, and therefore the areas that services need to concentrate on in order to improve. More information about the drivers research, and all the publications, can be found at www.ssc.govt.nz/nzers-experience or by contacting newzealanders.experience@ssc.govt.nz.



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