

2011 Census Update: Online Completion in London

The 2011 Census, conducted on the 27th March 2011, was the first census in England and Wales to allow respondents to complete online. This update provides some provisional and early analyses of the take-up of the online questionnaire in London as compared with the rest of the country. The online questionnaire went live on 4 March 2011 and was available until 22 May 2011. The first response was received 38 minutes after the system became live. All data are sourced from the ONS 2011 Census updates and evaluation reports.

Key Findings

Over 16 per cent of census returns were completed online in England and Wales

Tower Hamlets ranked the highest for online returns in the country (29.3 per cent)

Eight London boroughs feature in the top 10 national rankings for online returns:

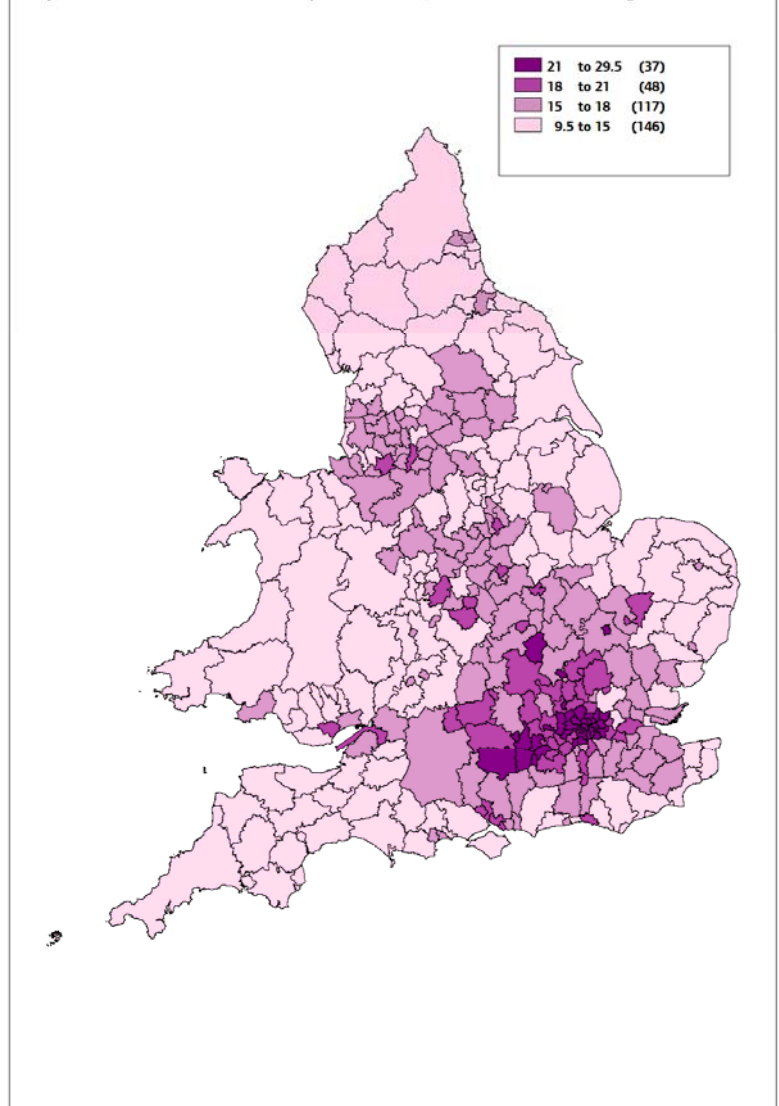
Tower Hamlets
City of London
Westminster
Newham
Hounslow
Kensington and Chelsea
Brent
Camden

The remaining two other local authorities are Slough and Wokingham.

Over 71 per cent of London wards had online completion rates of 20 per cent or above.

Only nine percent of the remaining wards nationally (excluding London

Proportion of census returns completed online, local authorities in England and Wales



wards) had online completion rates of 20 per cent or more.

Urban areas had higher online completion than rural areas. Early analysis of the census returns by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) shows that certain groups were more likely to respond online than others, including young people. ONS analysis also shows that large households were more likely to respond online than smaller ones with over half of households with more than six people responding online compared to 15 per cent of one and two person households. Similarly ONS analysis suggests people who rent their home or have a mortgage were more likely to complete their questionnaire online than those who own their home outright. This is likely to be correlated to the age of respondents. Such characteristics are particularly prevalent in London and hence will certainly have contributed to the particularly strong online completion in London boroughs. However as yet the GLA IU does not have any detailed London data to explore specific characteristics further. It is expected that this information will become available in July 2012.

Table 1 London boroughs, online completion rates

London Borough	% Internet returns	Rank within London (out of 33)	Rank within EW (out of 348)
City of London	28.1	2	2
Barking and Dagenham	19.6	28	49
Barnet	21.6	22	33
Bexley	18.3	30	81
Brent	24.4	7	8
Bromley	17.9	31	89
Camden	23.8	8	9
Croydon	20.9	26	39
Ealing	23.3	9	12
Enfield	19.0	29	60
Greenwich	21.7	21	31
Hackney	22.0	19	27
Hammersmith and Fulham	22.5	14	17
Haringey	21.8	20	29
Harrow	22.1	18	24
Havering	14.7	33	212
Hillingdon	21.1	25	37
Hounslow	24.9	5	5
Islington	23.2	10	13
Kensington and Chelsea	24.5	6	6
Kingston upon Thames	21.2	24	36
Lambeth	22.7	12	15
Lewisham	22.2	16	22
Merton	21.5	23	35
Newham	25.0	4	4
Redbridge	22.4	15	18
Richmond upon Thames	19.7	27	47
Southwark	23.2	10	13
Sutton	17.4	32	103
Tower Hamlets	29.3	1	1
Waltham Forest	22.2	17	23
Wandsworth	22.7	12	15
Westminster	25.1	3	3

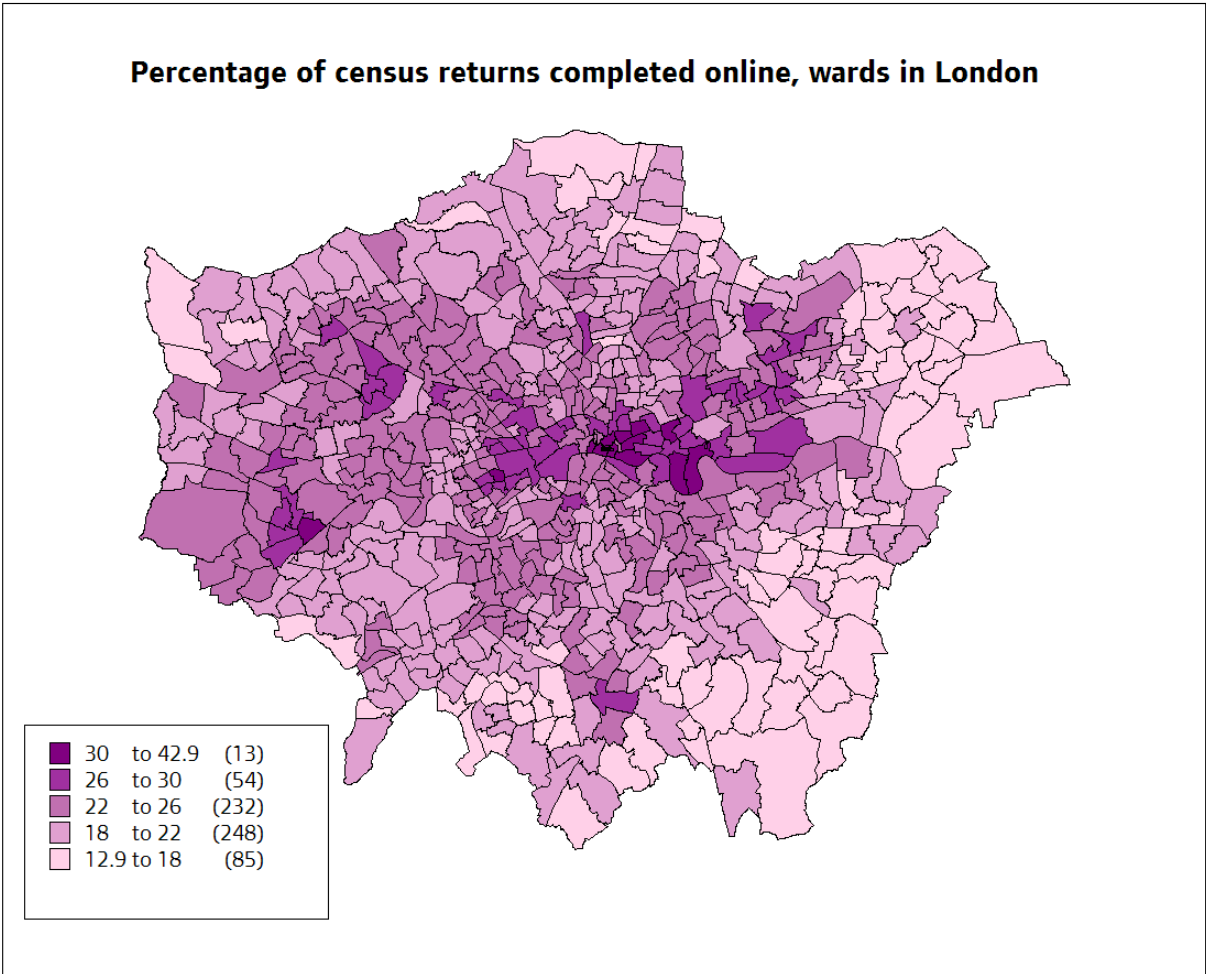
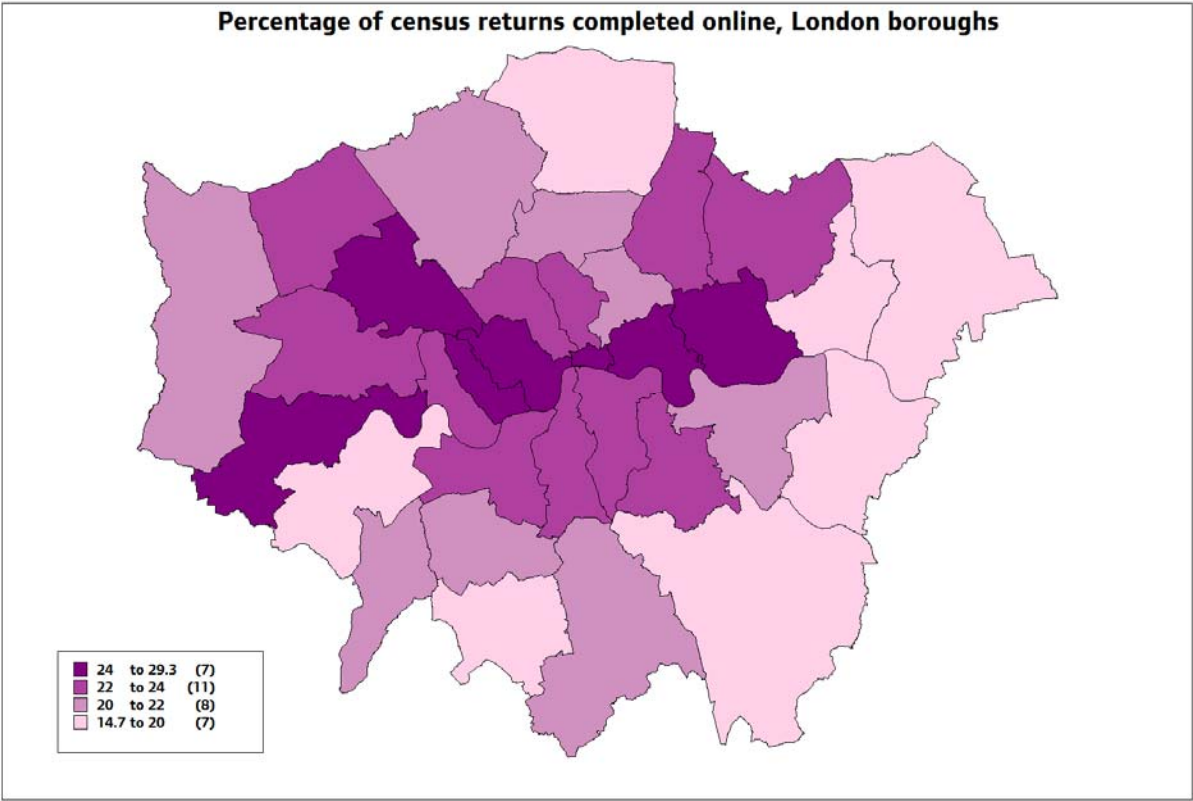


Table 2 London wards, online completion rates, Top 50

London Ward	% Internet returns	Rank within London (out of 634)	Rank within E&W (out of 8483)	London Borough
Tower	42.86	1	1	City of London
Bishopsgate	41.07	2	2	City of London
Farringdon Within	38.03	3	3	City of London
Millwall	36.59	4	4	Tower Hamlets
Queenhithe	36.22	5	5	City of London
Bethnal Green South	34.35	6	6	Tower Hamlets
Mile End East	32.68	7	9	Tower Hamlets
Dowgate	32.65	8	10	City of London
Hounslow Central	32.64	9	11	Hounslow
St Katharine's and Wapp	32.52	10	12	Tower Hamlets
Whitechapel	31.6	11	13	Tower Hamlets
Blackwall and Cubitt To	31.01	12	14	Tower Hamlets
Queen's Gate	30.92	13	15	Kensington and Chelsea
Spitalfields and Bangla	30.37	14	17	Tower Hamlets
Wembley Central	29.51	15	22	Brent
Abbey	29.36	16	25	Barking and Dagenham
Surrey Docks	29.17	17	27	Southwark
Hounslow Heath	29.12	18	28	Hounslow
Bryanston and Dorset Sq	28.66	19	31	Westminster
Heston East	28.54	20	32	Hounslow
Loxford	28.53	21	33	Redbridge
Shadwell	28.47	22	34	Tower Hamlets
Hyde Park	28.43	23	35	Westminster
Hounslow West	28.36	24	36	Hounslow
Knightsbridge and Belgr	28.25	25	37	Westminster
Lancaster Gate	28.25	25	37	Westminster
East Ham North	28.11	27	40	Newham
Courtfield	28.06	28	41	Kensington and Chelsea
Green Street East	27.95	29	43	Newham
Castle Baynard	27.91	30	44	City of London
Tokyngton	27.9	31	45	Brent
Bayswater	27.73	32	49	Westminster
Bloomsbury	27.67	33	50	Camden
King's Cross	27.63	34	51	Camden
Abingdon	27.49	35	52	Kensington and Chelsea
Clayhall	27.39	36	57	Redbridge
Fairfield	27.38	37	58	Croydon
Riverside	27.34	38	60	Southwark
Greenhill	27.32	39	63	Harrow
Forest Gate South	27.28	40	64	Newham
Bromley-by-Bow	27.25	41	65	Tower Hamlets
Limehouse	27.18	42	67	Tower Hamlets
Heston Central	27.15	43	68	Hounslow
Preston	27.13	44	69	Brent
Stratford and New Town	27.13	44	69	Newham
Canning Town South	27.1	46	71	Newham
Weavers	27.1	46	71	Tower Hamlets
Alpertown	27.07	48	74	Brent

Background

ONS developed an internet data capture (IDC) service for the 2011 Census to work alongside the paper questionnaire. This service gave householders and other respondents the opportunity to complete their census online, to find information about the census, and to find help with answering specific questions.

In providing an online service, ONS aimed to both comply with government policy and fulfil public expectation that interaction between the public and government should be possible online.

The key benefits to the ONS were:

- time and resource savings in paper scanning and data capture
- improved data quality (because online capture removes scanning error which can be subject to issues such as handwriting)

To complete their census questionnaire online, householders needed an internet access code (IAC). IACs were included on the paper questionnaires which were posted to each household. Any household that didn't receive a census questionnaire could request one from the contact centre or via the online help website.

The online questionnaire had several features which were designed to create a positive user experience.

- It routed users past questions they were not required to complete, based on previous answers potentially resulting in fewer errors.
- It had capacity for more than six people in a household to complete. If completing on paper, households of more than six people needed to request a continuation form
- Any fields asking for answers already given, for example the names of people, were pre-populated

The ward level statistics have been produced via best fit OA to Ward.

For more information on the GLA IU InstantAtlas interactive mapping tool available on the London Datastore see:

<http://data.london.gov.uk/visualisations/atlas/census2011-ward-internet-response-rates/atlas.html>

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To see the ONS report go to:

<http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/census/2011/the-2011-census/the-2011-census-project/2011-census-updates-and-evaluation-reports/2011-census-update--providing-the-online-census.pdf>

