



SUBMISSION GUIDE

*Review of the measurement of
digital platform work and workers*

*Opening: 14 October 2022
Closing: 30 November 2022*

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), like most national statistical organisations, is working to expand its statistics on relatively new and emerging forms of employment, including digital platform workers.

While digital platform workers and their work have always been included within existing labour statistics on employment and hours, they are a relatively small group of workers who have not been separately identifiable.

Specifically measuring digital platform workers and their working arrangements will provide insights into the extent to which this working arrangement is used in Australia, how this is changing over time, the nature of digital platform work and the characteristics of digital platform workers.

1.1 CONCEPTUAL UNDERSTANDING

The international statistical community are in the process of developing conceptual and measurement approaches for new forms of employment, including digital platform work. The ABS is involved in these discussions and is leveraging the experience of a broad range of countries, given this is still a relatively new area of labour statistics around the world.

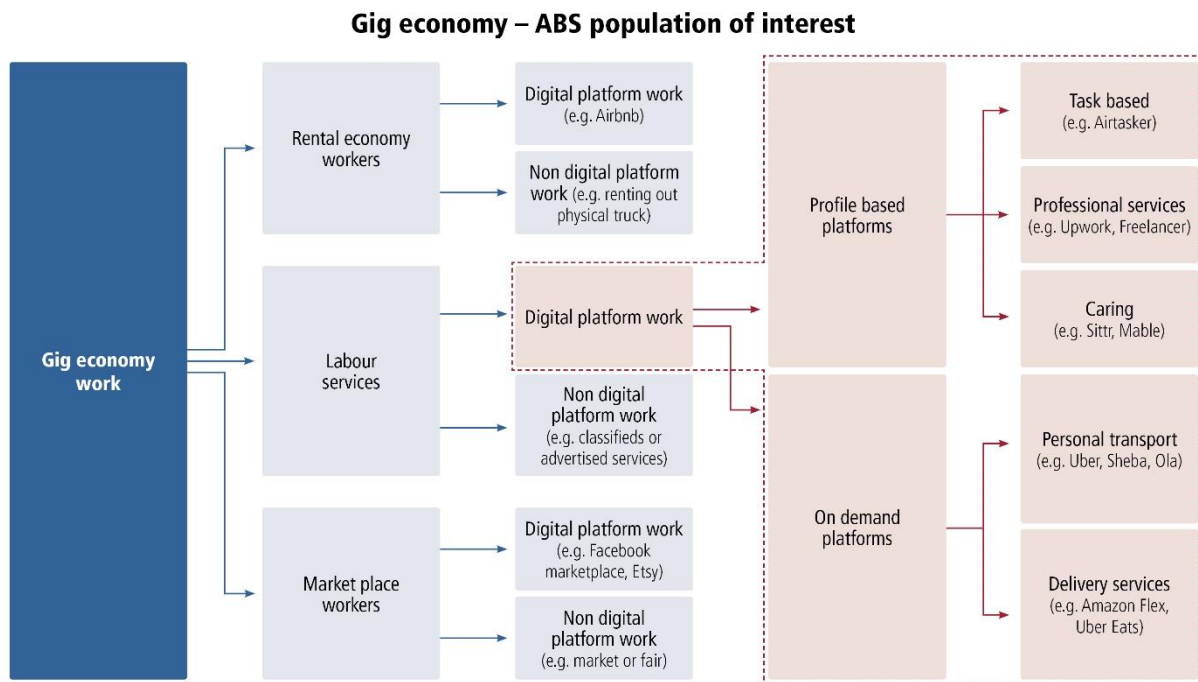
The ABS is taking the evolving international conceptual and measurement frameworks for digital platform workers and applying it in the Australian context, beginning with a series of experimental questions that will be asked in conjunction with the Labour Force Survey, asked of respondents in the outgoing survey rotation group.

The ABS has outlined its conceptual understanding, as applied to the Australian context, recently released as part of the [Labour Statistics: Concepts, Sources and Methods \(CSM\)](#).

The diagram below demonstrates the digital platform workers within the gig economy that the ABS is currently focusing on measuring, within the broader context of the gig economy. This area of measurement is more likely to encompass workers who have less economic control over setting their pay and working conditions and who are more likely to be in precarious employment.



Figure 1: Scope of ABS efforts to measure digital platform work and workers



1.2 INDICATIVE DATA VARIABLES BASED ON THE INITIAL SURVEY MODULE

The potential outputs from the new survey module are listed below, based on the initial set of questions being asked during 2022-23. The number of digital platform workers in the sample, along with the frequency of each variable, will determine what initial experimental statistics can be produced from 2022-23 data.

Labour Force variables:

The Labour Force Survey collects information on industry, occupation, hours and other working arrangements, and a range of demographic characteristics (for example, age and sex). Some of this information will also be available to understand digital platform work and workers.

Whether digital platform work is a main or secondary job:

- main job
- secondary job

Duration of engagement in digital platform work:

- eg. 1 year, 2 years etc ... 5 years or more

Main motivation for initial engagement with digital platform work:

- To supplement income
- For flexible working hours
- Interest in the work
- Difficulty finding other work
- Limited work options due to visa restrictions
- Other reason

Type of digital platform activity:

- Providing personal transport
- Delivering food
- Delivering other goods
- Caring for other people (including caring for children)
- Caring for pets
- Home maintenance
- Professional services
- Events or short-term hospitality work
- Other app based work

Number of apps or websites used:

- 1 app/website, 2 apps/websites etc

Number of hours engaged in digital platform work (in previous week):

- Number of paid hours
- Number of unpaid hours

Proportion of personal income earned from digital platform work:

- Less than 25%
- 25% to less than 50%
- 50% to less than 75%
- 75% to less than 100%
- 100%

1.3 MEASUREMENT APPROACH

The ABS has developed an initial experimental survey module on digital platform workers, which it is currently in the process of testing. The initial module is included in the ABS Multi-Purpose Household Survey, which is asked of outgoing respondents in the monthly Labour Force Survey, for the 2022-23 financial year.

From this, the ABS expects to progressively analyse data through 2022-23, to identify further refinements to the survey questions for 2023-24, and to determine what initial experimental statistics can be produced from 2022-23 data. In time, the ABS will add a dedicated module within the 'Characteristics of Employment' supplementary topic in the Labour Force Survey, which already collects a broad range of working arrangement information from employed people on an annual basis.

The ABS is seeking feedback on its proposed approach to measuring digital platform work and workers in 2022-23, to inform plans for 2023-24.

In addition to providing feedback, if you are interested in the measurement of digital platform work and workers and would like to subscribe to receive future updates please provide contact details via measuring.employment.consultation@abs.gov.au



2. WHY ARE WE CONSULTING?

2.1 MEASURING DIGITAL PLATFORM WORK AND WORKERS

Like other international organisations, the ABS is working to address the measurement challenges associated with addressing new forms of employment, such as digital platform workers. Feedback from other Australian Government organisations, academics, and members of the community will assist the ABS to ensure that their data needs are met.

The ABS is now seeking input on the conceptual understanding of digital platform workers and the initial survey topics.

3. HOW DO YOU HAVE YOUR SAY?

To make a submission:

1. Please read one of the following documents:
 - **Labour Concepts Sources and Methods - [digital platform workers](#)**, or
 - **Overview of ABS activity to measure digital platform work and workers** (linked under the [Related](#) heading)
2. A link is provided on the ABS Consultation Hub where you will be guided to provide feedback through a series of questions. You are not required to respond to every question, although your submission will be strengthened by your ability to answer as thoroughly as possible and by providing supporting evidence where possible. To help prepare your submission a copy of the survey questions is provided [here](#)

The closing date for submissions is 30 November 2022.

4. WHAT GOES INTO YOUR SUBMISSION?

A link is provided on the ABS Consultation Hub [Overview](#) page where you will be asked the following series of questions. A copy is provided below for reference:

4.1 MEASURING DIGITAL PLATFORM WORKERS CONCEPTUAL UNDERSTANDING

1. Is the initial ABS approach capturing the most important elements of digital platform work and workers?
2. Do you have any comments on the initial approach the ABS is taking to measuring digital platform work and workers?



3. Are there any other examples of measuring digital platform work or workers that the ABS should consider in its approach?

If you would like more information to assist with your submission, please email us at:
measuring.employment.consultation@abs.gov.au

5. NEXT STEPS

The ABS will consider all submissions received from this consultation and will provide an update on future directions in early 2023.

The ABS will not respond to individual submissions, instead a summary will be published in response to all submissions.

Public consultation and ongoing engagement will continue to inform the evolutionary approach to measuring digital platform work and workers.

