

NEPSdata No. 7

Further Major Data Releases Achieved: NEPS Data Now Available On Starting Cohorts 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and the Additional Studies in Baden-Wuerttemberg and Thuringia

The latest major NEPS data releases from May to July 2013 comprise scientific use data from Starting Cohort 6–Adults, Starting Cohort 5—First-Year Students, as well as data from the additional study in Baden-Wuerttemberg.

Data from Starting Cohort 6—Adults now available in Version 3.0.0

The Scientific Use File of NEPS Starting Cohort 6—Adults (SC6 3.0.0) now comprises data from Panel Waves 1 to 3. The field time of the adult survey started already in 2007, that is, prior to the foundation of the National Educational Panel Study. The adult survey 2007/08 was conducted by the Institute for Employment Research (IAB) under the name of “Working and Learning in a Changing World” (ALWA). Afterwards, the data collection of the adult survey continued under the umbrella of the NEPS.

Field times: Wave 1 (IAB-ALWA): August 2007 to April 2008, Wave 2 (NEPS, 1st Main Study): November 2009 to August 2010, and Wave 3 (NEPS, 2nd Main Study): October 2010 to May 2011.

The third wave of this substudy concludes data on competencies in reading, mathematics, sciences, and ICT, as well as on noncognitive variables (such as personality, motivation, and social skills).

General information on competence tests including an overview of the number of tests administered, a description of the scaling model, and guidance on how to analyze competence data are now available. Usually, for each domain there is a brief description of the construct with sample items, a description of the data in the SUF, and of the psychometric properties of the test. The additional documentation of data regarding Starting Cohort 6 in Version 3.0.0 (doi: 10.5157/NEPS:SC6:3.0.0) will be updated step by step.

Data from Starting Cohort 5—First-Year Students now available in Version 3.0.0

This release comprises first data on competencies and educational choices of first-year students from 2010, now undergraduates in higher education.

The main focus of the study is on the students' competencies and competence development during the course of studies. Another main goal is to reveal the determinants of educational decisions and success in studies while studying at university—such as dropout, change of subject, studying abroad, and pursuing a Master's degree. Furthermore, the data provide information on the entrance into working life and how job chances depend on acquired competencies and formal qualifications.

About 18,100 students took part in the survey, about 6,000 in the competence assessment integrated in the first wave. Two waves were conducted via Computer-Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) and one wave has been conducted via Computer-Assisted Web Interviewing (CAWI). Competence testing was realized by Paper-and-Pencil Interviewing (PAPI)

Scientific Use Files for the additional study in Baden-Wuerttemberg are released

In many Länder of the German Federal Republic, changes concerning the structure and contents of the Gymnasiale Oberstufe (final years in upper secondary education qualifying for university education) are taking place. For example, the time spent in Gymnasium (secondary school qualifying for university education) has been cut from 9 years (G9) down to 8 years (G8). The reduction from 9 to 8 years combined with a reorientation of the study schedule was also implemented in Baden-Wuerttemberg in 2004. This supplementary study of the NEPS aims to study particularly those changes and to record its effects.

The last cohort of students entered the curriculum-oriented (i.e., input-oriented) G9 in fall 2003, whereas one year later, in fall 2004, the first cohort of students entered the outcome-oriented G8, which focuses on reaching educational standards (Bildungsstandards).

These two year groups took their Abitur exam in 2012 and were attending the same course level (during the last two school years). The G8 reform study in Baden-Wuerttemberg consists of three cross-sections; that means, it is not a panel survey.

During the first two survey waves, the graduating classes are tested and questioned:

(1) Abitur year 2010/11, in which almost all students attended school for 13 years. (With the exception of 15% of the students who could voluntarily choose a shorter time in secondary school before the official implementation of G8).

Usage of the RemoteNEPS Technology

NEPS offers three modes of data access, which differ according to the level of anonymization:

- Distribution of Scientific Use Files made available for download on the NEPS website. The data available for download feature the highest level of anonymization.
- Data use via a modern remote-access technology (RemoteNEPS). Scientific Use Files made available through RemoteNEPS feature a moderate level of anonymization.
- Data access in the context of a visit on-site (“On-site”). These data feature the lowest level of anonymization.

These three solutions are designed to support the full range of users’ interests and maximize data utility, while complying with strict standards of confidentiality protection. The combination of these different ways of data access will maximize the flexibility of data access.

The development of the data enclave RemoteNEPS represents pioneering work as the NEPS is thus the first large-scale provider of a remote-access solution in Germany.

RemoteNEPS offers a “virtual desktop” in a controlled environment allowing users to access more sensitive microdata remotely. The online resources of the enclave

(2) Abitur year 2011/12, in which G8 as well as G9 students graduate (Doppeljahrgang).

(3) Abitur year 2012/13, which is the first group of students who take their Abitur examination after 12 years of school.

Data concerning these two waves are now available to the scientific community in Version 2.0.0 (doi:10.5157/NEPS:BW:2.0.0).

The research database of the NEPS is growing continuously. In sum, data on Starting Cohorts 2 (Kindergarten), 3 (Grade 5), 4 (Grade 9), 5 (First-Year Students), 6 (Adults), and the additional studies in Baden-Wuerttemberg (from G9 to G8) and Thuringia (Organizational Reform Study in Thuringia) are now ready for scientific use.

Over the next year, data of the last of the six cohorts, that is, Starting Cohort 1—Early Childhood (i.e., infants born and first assessed in 2012) will be released.

are easily accessible. No software has to be installed and users can work on any operating system. The only requirement is access to the Internet: An encrypted connection with RemoteNEPS provides the gateway to the data. After registration, authorized researchers may access the enclave using an innovative and highly secure biometric authentication system (keystroke biometrics, certified by TÜV).

Data are only available for online analysis and will not be transmitted to the user’s system. After data analysis is complete, researchers can request the delivery of output. The NEPS staff reviews all output requests for confidentiality and uses strict controls to ensure the integrity of the output as well as its correct and timely delivery to the researcher.

RemoteNEPS usage

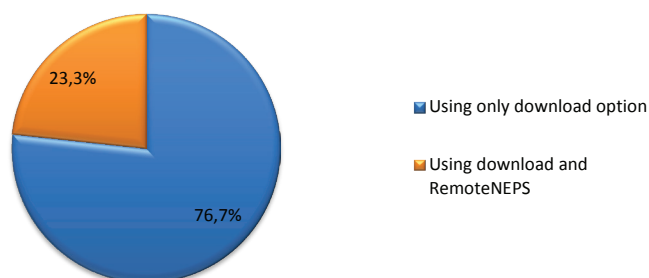


Figure 1. The usage of the RemoteNEPS technology in percent of total users.

Latest NEPS User Statistics

Figure 2 shows the development of NEPS data usage since the release of the first NEPS data in August 2011 (beta release of SC6).

The figure depicts the development of three indicators measuring NEPS data usage:

(1) the total number of users who have signed a data use agreement with the NEPS (unique, contracted users with at least one contract),

(2) the number of projects with NEPS data as defined in the contracts (several users can be registered in one project), and

(3) the number of user-project relations (users can have several contracts or projects with the NEPS).

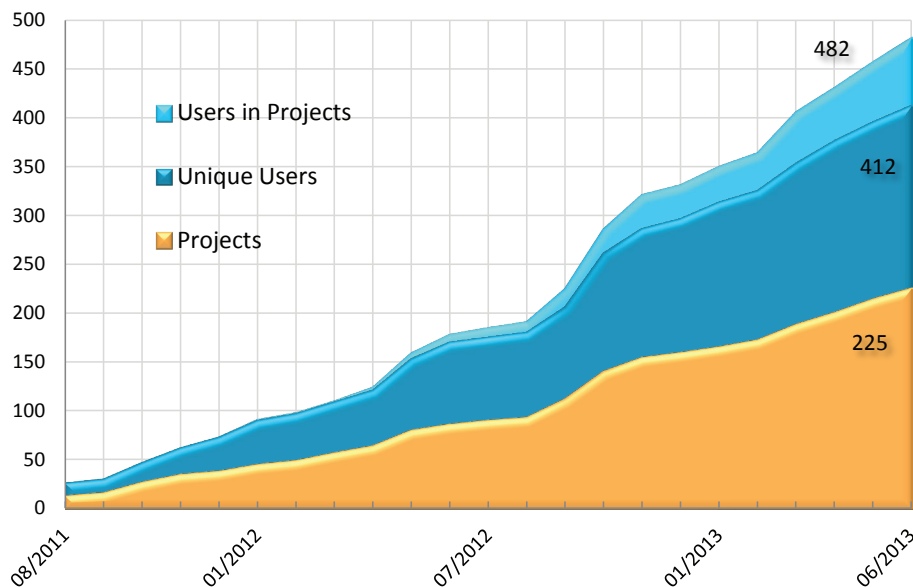


Figure 2. Development of NEPS data usage (* censored time interval). Depicted are contracted users (unique), projects defined in contracts, and users in projects (users can be involved in several projects).

NEPS Data Workshop at the Social Science Research Center Berlin (WZB)

On June 25, 2013, Knut Wenzig and Manuel Munz gave an introductory training course on NEPS data as part of the Public Science Workshop organized by the College for Interdisciplinary Educational Research (CIDER) at WZB Berlin.

The participants were introduced to the structure of the NEPS study, its data, and access to further information in connection with NEPS data, such as the NEPSplorer or the contents of our research data section on the NEPS website.

The course instructors also gave a presentation on data protection and data security issues and the different options of how to gain access to the NEPS data.

The introduction was finally completed by a split session on introductions to either Starting Cohort 2 (Kindergarten) and Starting Cohort 3 (Grade 5), or Starting Cohort 4 (Grade 9) and Starting Cohort 5 (First-Year Students). This introductory course initiated an animated discussion among the workshop participants and instructors about the NEPS data portfolio and their application in further research projects.

Further International User Trainings

First international NEPS user training at the Educational Research Institute in Warsaw

On April 4, 2013, NEPS gave a user-training workshop at the Polish Educational Research Institute (IBE, Instytut Badań Edukacyjnych) in Warsaw. Due to the fact that the IBE is also conducting a study on adults, the training primarily focused on NEPS Starting Cohort 6—Adults.

Besides a short introduction to NEPS, Dr. Jan Skopek, Operational Manager of the NEPS Data Center, presented the data structure of the Scientific Use File concerning Starting Cohort 6 and illustrated the potential of NEPS adult data by way of exemplary analyses.

In addition to this, he gave an introduction to data privacy laws, which are a requirement for data use, to the usage of the remote-access technology RemoteNEPS as well as the metadatabase NEPSplorer.

This 1-day workshop was accompanied by very fruitful discussions as views and experiences concerning the collection of life-course data as well as their provision to the international scientific public were exchanged.

Finally, the training made an important contribution to identifying potential possibilities for further cooperation between the NEPS and the IBE.

Second international NEPS user training at the European University Institute in Florence

On May 23 and 24, 2013, Dr. Jan Skopek, Operational Manager of the NEPS Data Center, gave a user-training course at the European University Institute in Florence.

Alongside a brief introduction to the project, he presented the data structure of the NEPS Scientific Use File and illustrated its analytic potential by way of exemplary evaluations. Furthermore, the participants gained a first insight into requirements concerning data protection laws in relation to data usage, the use of data access technology RemoteNEPS, and the metadatabase NEPSplorer.

This very productive 2-day workshop launched an intense discussion about research questions and methodological approaches adopted by participants using NEPS data in their current research projects.

Current NEPS Working Papers

The following NEPS Working Papers have recently been released:

- Hoch, C. (2013). *Die Determinanten der Panelmortalität: Eine Analyse am Beispiel des Nationalen Bildungspanels* (NEPS Working Paper No. 26). Bamberg: Otto-Friedrich-Universität, Nationales Bildungspanel.
- Zinn, S. (2013). *Replication weights for the cohort samples of students in Grade 5 and 9 in the National Educational Panel Study* (NEPS Working Paper No. 27). Bamberg: University of Bamberg, National Educational Panel Study.

All NEPS Working Papers are available for download on our [website](#).

For any further questions, please contact us:

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