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**An analysis of the first seven months of the SAT
helpline and website**

Report Number HSL/2005/38

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The SAT (Slips Assessment Tool) is a freely downloadable computer software package that allows an operator to assess the slip potential of pedestrian walkway surfaces. It was launched on the Internet in November 2004 via a dedicated website that included a user registration facility. A free email helpline was established at the same time to provide users with assistance in SAT related matters.

Objectives

This report details the findings of the first seven months of the SAT helpline together with a summary of the user registration and website statistics.

Main Findings

The majority of problems reported via the helpline arose from users being unable to download the SAT, often due to IT security policies implemented by individual organisations. Another major source requests were users requesting their password. This is set upon registering but is not currently needed.

After a few 'teething' problems, the target of 3 working days for an initial response to a query is being met, and in the majority of cases a response is given the same day.

Nearly 500 users have registered the SAT and after an initial peak, user registrations have levelled out to approximately 50 a month. This shows a continuing steady interest in the SAT.

Statistics obtained from the web administration toolkit show that after an initial peak, the SAT website receives around 3000 unique visitors a month. Statistics also show that over 4000 copies of the SAT were downloaded during this period, and although this is very encouraging it does indicate that the majority of users have not registered the SAT.

Recommendations

The SAT Internet site was based on the HSE Internet style at the time of release. However, the style of HSE web pages has since changed the SAT site should be updated to reflect these changes.

Users can request the SAT on a CD if they are unable to download it. However this is expensive and although the numbers are currently relatively small, consideration should be given to having a number of CDs professionally duplicated for future SAT releases.

It is unclear as to why users are requesting passwords as they are not needed but it is likely that they are trying to re-register. This should be confirmed but the website should let the user know that they have already registered. In addition, consideration should be given to withdraw the password requirement.

Consideration should be given to forcing the user to register before they can download the SAT. In addition, more information could be included on the registration form including type of user (EHO, HSE inspector, member of public etc.) and making the company name mandatory. An ideal time to do this may be when a new version of the SAT is released.

1 INTRODUCTION

The SAT (Slips Assessment Tool) is a freely downloadable computer software package that allows an operator to assess the slip potential of pedestrian walkway surfaces. It was launched on the Internet in November 2004 via the dedicated website <http://www.hsesat.info>. Operators can either download the SAT software and install it on their computers or use the SAT on-line.

The SAT website is hosted on HSL's dedicated web server and is styled similar to HSE's original Slips and Trips website <http://www.hse.gov.uk/slips/index.htm>. Since the release of the SAT, the Slips and Trips website style has been updated and consequently the SAT website will be redesigned to reflect this.

A helpline was established at the same time as the launch to provide users with free support on downloading, installing and using the SAT and any hardware or general slips queries. This is an email system with the address: sat@hsl.gov.uk. An email system rather than a telephone system was implemented because it offers an improved query audit trail and queries can be processed at mutually convenient times. This report includes information on the response time and type of queries that are asked.

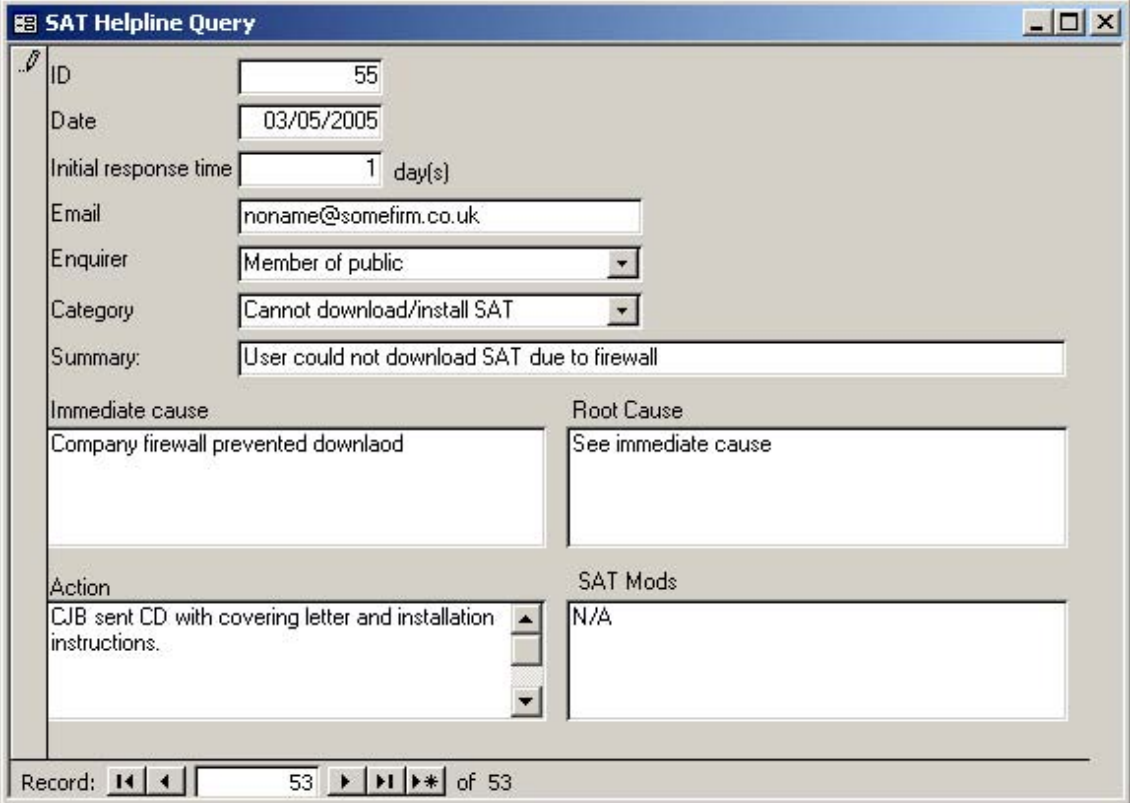
Part of the website includes a user registration database enabling users to register the SAT. This is used to keep registrants informed of any updates to the SAT or other SAT related issues and can be accessed from <http://www.hsesat.info/satregister.asp>. Registration information is included in this report.

Website statistics including the number of visitors and the number of SAT downloads are also contained in this report.

The figures contained in this report refer to the first 7 months of operation - November 2004 to May 2005 inclusive

2 HELPLINE QUERIES

The helpline is regularly checked for new queries, normally twice a day. As previously stated, queries are received as emails and once received a summary is entered into a database for administration purposes. A typical example of a database entry is shown in figure 1.



The screenshot shows a window titled "SAT Helpline Query" with a form containing the following fields:

- ID: 55
- Date: 03/05/2005
- Initial response time: 1 day(s)
- Email: noname@somefirm.co.uk
- Enquirer: Member of public
- Category: Cannot download/install SAT
- Summary: User could not download SAT due to firewall
- Immediate cause: Company firewall prevented download
- Root Cause: See immediate cause
- Action: CJB sent CD with covering letter and installation instructions.
- SAT Mods: N/A

At the bottom, there is a record navigation bar showing "Record: 53 of 53".

Figure 1 - Typical database entry

As well as providing a repository for received queries, the database also provides a method of analysing the queries it contains.

Queries generally fall into two groups:

- Those relating to downloading, installing or running the SAT – these type of queries are generally processed by software developers working in HSL's Control and Instrumentation section
- Those relating to the meter, SAT results and general slip related issues – these type of queries are generally processed by slips experts working in HSL's Pedestrian Safety section

To simplify administration, a single contact is responsible for monitoring the helpline and forwarding the queries to appropriate member(s) of staff.

2.1 RESPONSE TIME

It is aimed to provide an initial response to emailed queries within 3 working days unless exceptional circumstances occur (e.g. no team members are available due to annual leave etc). In practice, the response time is usually quicker than this, often within the same working day.

Initially, a slips and trips expert took responsibility for monitoring the helpline. The nature of work dictated that he was often away from the workplace, which sometimes resulted in response times outside the target. Figure 2 shows the initial response times from 13/01/2005 (unfortunately there are no figures available before this date).

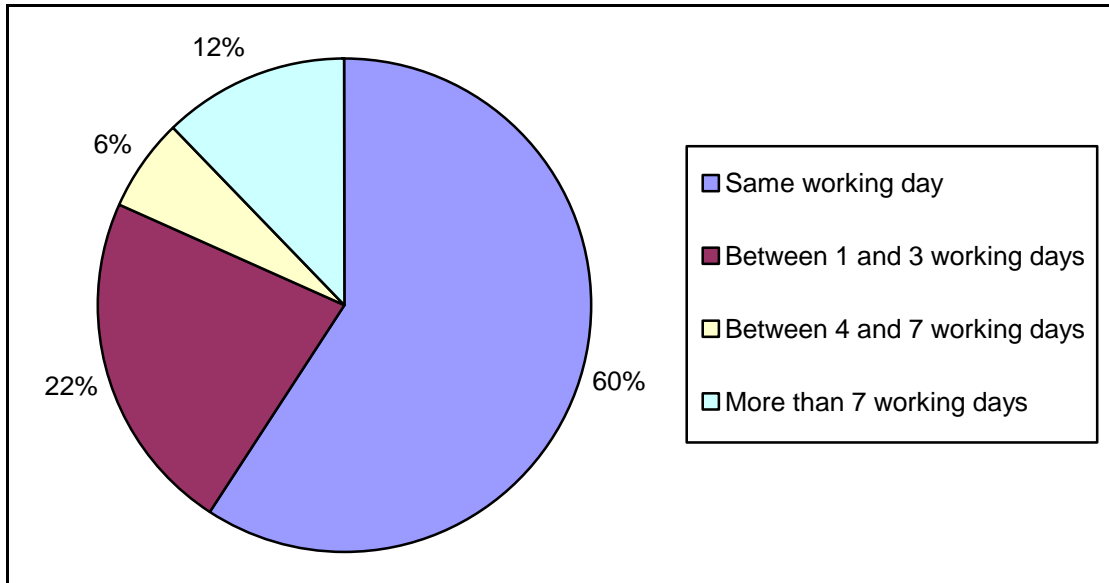


Figure 2 - Helpline initial response time from 13/01/2005 to 31/05/2005

When the response time problems became apparent, another team member with a more appropriate work pattern took over the helpline administration. This change occurred on 08/02/2005 and has resulted in improved response times as can be seen from figure 3.

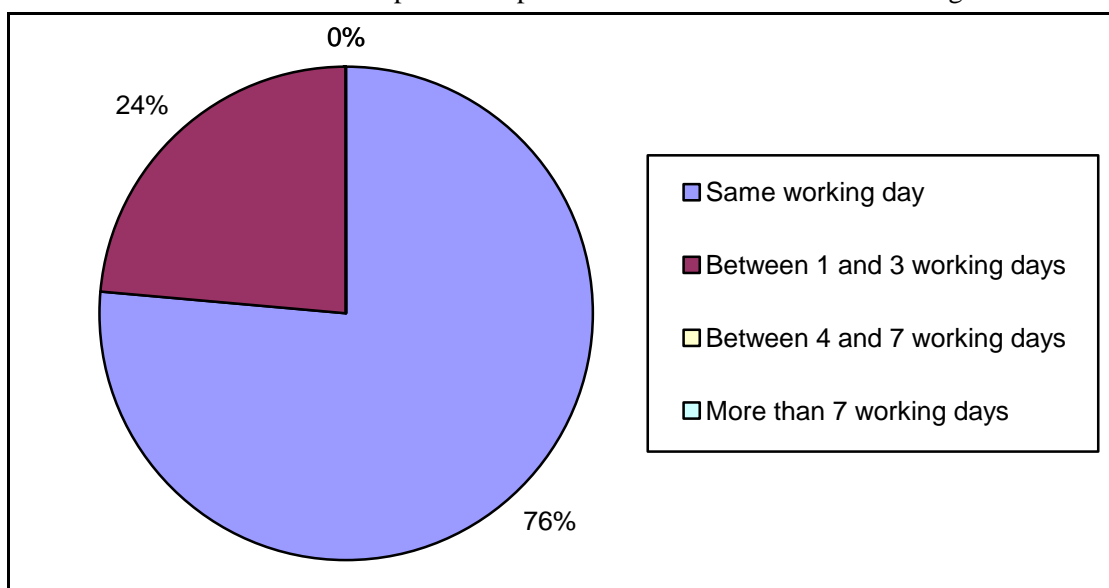


Figure 3 - Helpline initial response time from 08/02/2005 to 31/05/2005

2.2 QUERY TYPE

An analysis of the type of queries revealed that they could be grouped into the following categories:

- Cannot download and/or install the SAT
- Cannot run the SAT
- Request additional feature
- Other software problems
- Password request
- Clarification of information contained within the system
- Request additional information about the SAT
- Request additional information about slips
- Encountered a problem with the meter
- Request information on using meters
- Other

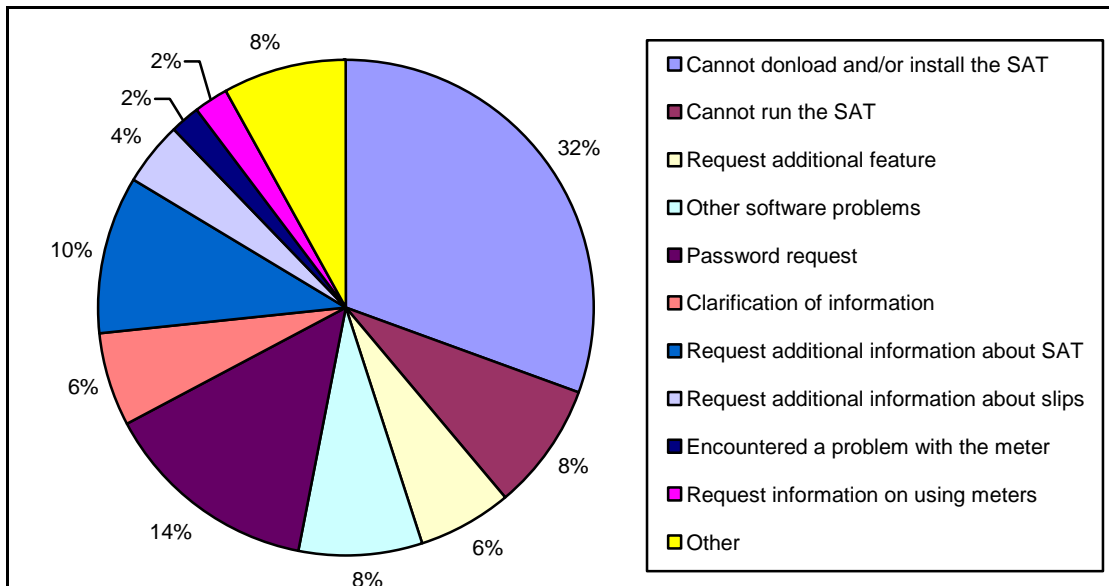


Figure 4 - Query categories

It can be seen from figure 4 that the largest category of queries (32%) relates to download or installation problems. The reason for the majority of problems is likely to be a company's firewall blocking downloads of this type. The solution is to supply the SAT on a CD-ROM, although this is not ideal due to time and cost implications. Consideration should be given to having a number of CDs professionally duplicated for future SAT releases.

The second largest category (14%) originated from users requesting their password. This is interesting because users currently do not require a password to use any part of the SAT or website, although this may change in the future. However, it is probably due to users trying to re-register, as an email reminder request is generated if this occurs. Ideally, an automated email response system would be used but the current the security settings for the web server prevent the implementation of this. It may be appropriate to remove the need for a password if it is unlikely to ever be required.

Another fairly significant category (8%) originated from users who could not run the SAT after it had been successfully downloaded. On investigating, it was found that the majority of the

time users were trying to execute the SAT directly from the zipped file rather than extracting it first. A review of user instructions will be made in the future to ensure clarity.

Several users asked for additional features, the most popular being the ability to print the graphical representation of the slip risk contributing factors. This will be investigated with a view to implementing it in the next release.

One problem with the SAT that has been identified via the helpline is that if certain characters are entered into the assessment details screen (such as the '&' and '<' characters), stored assessments are not displayed in the previous assessment list box. This problem was subsequently included on the website's 'known issues' page (<http://www.hsesat.info/satswissues.asp>) and will be rectified in the next release of the SAT.

2.3 QUERY ORIGIN

Also of interest is the origin of the queries, shown in figure 5, which can be grouped into the following categories:

- Member of Public (MoP)
- Environmental Health Officer (EHO)
- HSE Inspector

The only information about the query source is the email address. Therefore, one way of determining the origin category is by the email address domain i.e.

- HSE inspectors address should end in **hse.gsi.gov.uk**
- HSL employees address should end in **hsl.gov.uk**
- EHOs (or other government employee) should end in **.gov.uk** (but not any of the above)
- The remaining registrants will be considered as MoP

This may be over simplistic as, for example, government employees may use a private email address to register and non HSE/HSL **.gov.uk** addresses are not necessarily EHOs.

Ideally, this information should be normalised with the number in each category who are using the SAT. However, it is currently not possible to obtain accurate details of the number of people using the SAT because it is apparent that not every user has registered.

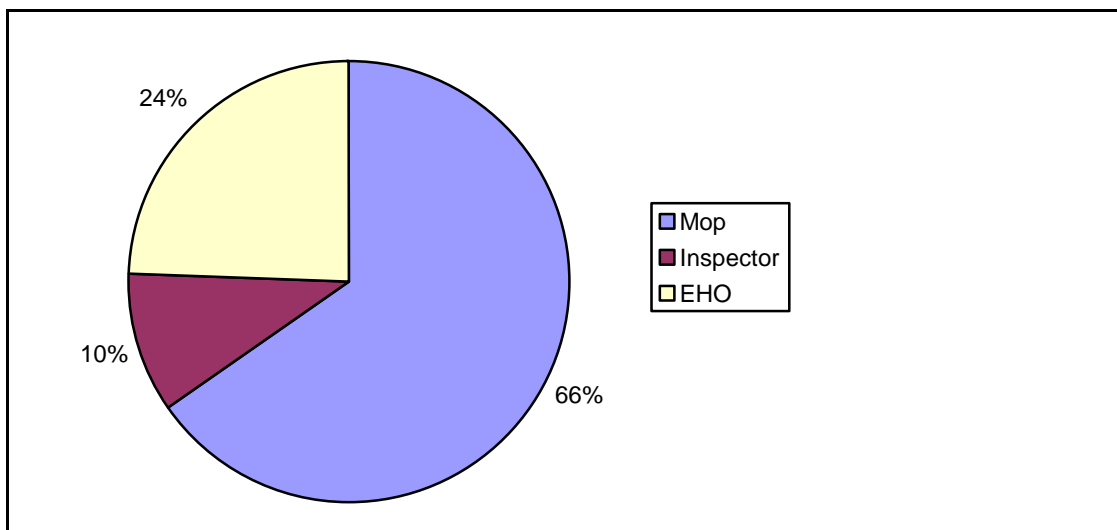


Figure 5 - Breakdown of enquiries by organisation

3 USER REGISTRATION

Users are encouraged to register the SAT by completing the online registration form at <http://www.hsesat.info/satregister.asp>. This form, shown in figure 6, populates a Microsoft Access 2000 database residing on the web server.

Registration is not mandatory but benefits the user by enabling them to be informed of any SAT related information including updates or problems.

HSE Homepage A-Z Index Feedback Search Contact us Sitemap

HSE
Health & Safety Executive
reducing risks - protecting people

SAT New User Registration

Please provide the following details which will enable us to inform you about future updates to SAT:

Title*

First name*

Last name*

Company

email*

Password*

Updated 10.11.04
©2004. Disclaimer

*Indicates a required field

Data Protection Act
These details will not be disclosed to any other party for any purpose. You have a right to check the accuracy of these details and you may have these details removed at any time.

Figure 6 - User registration web page

3.1 REGISTRATIONS PER MONTH

There were 482 user registrations in the first seven months and a breakdown of registrations by month is given in figure 7. As can be seen, the greatest numbers of registrations were in the first month after release, followed by the second. Subsequent months show a fairly consistent number of registrations per month, indicating a steady interest in the SAT.

However, the website statistics detailed in section 4.2.1 indicate that over 4000 people have downloaded the SAT, implying that many users have not registered. It may therefore be pertinent to force users to register before they can download the SAT.

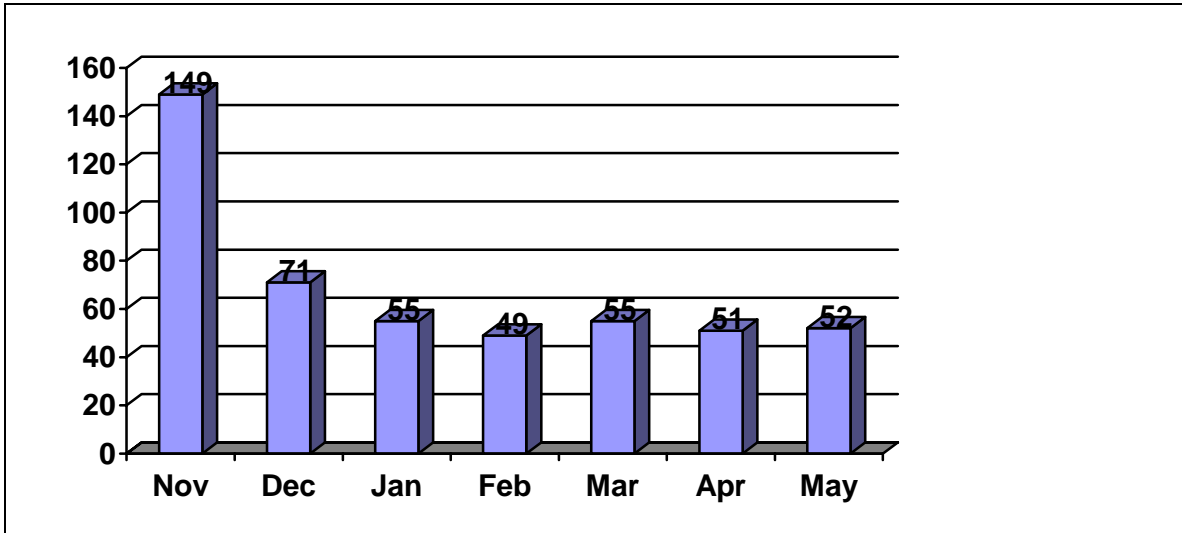


Figure 7 – User registrations per month

3.2 REGISTRATIONS BY ORGANISATION

As can be seen from the registration form in figure 6, a field for sector or organisation has not been included. Therefore, the method of determining the organisation is by the registrant's email address as described in section 2.3. In future it may be worthwhile to include an extra field on the registration form for organisation type and making the company field mandatory.

Figure 8 shows that 79% of registrants are members of the public, indicating that the SAT is being widely used by private organisations. There are very few HSE inspector registrations but this is not surprising, as inspectors are not expected to register.

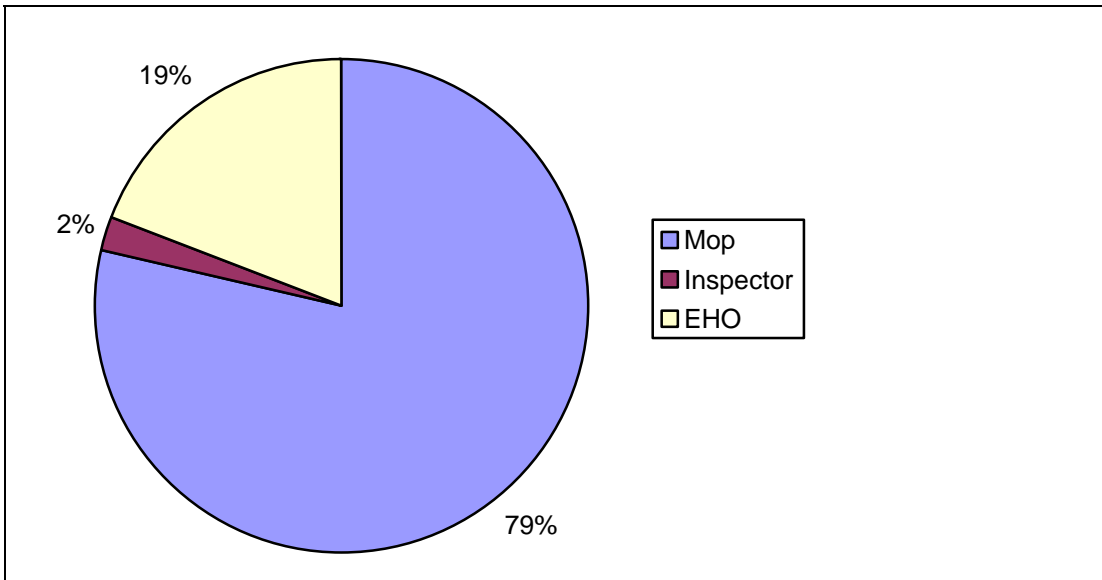


Figure 8 - Registrations by organisation

4 WEBSITE STATISTICS

As well as a method of deploying or running the SAT, the website provides additional SAT and slips related information including the latest FAQ, known software issues and links to meter manufacturers. Users are therefore encouraged to visit the website on a regular basis.

These web site statistics are taken from the Web Log Analysis reports provided by the site administration toolset. A summary of pertinent information is included here.

4.1 VISITORS PER MONTH

Table 1 shows the number of unique visitors per month.

Date	Number
November 2004	4299
December 2004	2692
January 2005	2990
February 2005	2788
March 2005	3022
April 2005	2640
May 2005	3228
Total	21659

Table 1 – Number of unique visitors per month

As can be seen from table 1, after an initial peak in the first month, the site is receiving around 3000 unique visitors per month.

4.2 DOWNLOADS PER MONTH

Users can currently download 2 objects: The SAT program and a proforma.

4.2.1 SAT program

The SAT consists of several files, packaged as a 'zipped' file named **satfiles1_00.zip**. After downloading the zip file, the user should then extract the files to a suitable location. Table 2 shows the number of SAT downloads per month.

Date	Number
November 2004	1078
December 2004	552
January 2005	436
February 2005	454
March 2005	507
April 2005	417
May 2005	559
Total	4003

Table 2 – Number of SAT downloads per month

4.2.2 Proforma

Users are encouraged to complete assessments on site using a laptop computer. This has the advantages of being able to immediately generate the results and enter a number of additional ‘what if’ scenarios. However, this may not always be possible so users have the option of collecting the data on a paper proforma. The proforma is a printable Adobe Acrobat PDF document and is used to gather the information required by the SAT. The information collected may then be transferred into the SAT at a later date. Table 3 shows the number of proforma downloads per month.

Date	Number
November 2004	1167
December 2004	773
January 2005	712
February 2005	739
March 2005	848
April 2005	576
May 2005	792
Total	5607

Table 3 – Number of proforma downloads per month

4.3 USERS RUNNING THE SAT ON-LINE

Users are encouraged to download and install the SAT on a PC. This has the advantages of faster operation and once downloaded, no requirement for an Internet connection. However, users have the option of running the system on-line. Table 4 shows the numbers of users accessing the on-line version and does not necessarily reflect the actual numbers who have completed an assessment.

Date	Number
November 2004	260
December 2004	171
January 2005	146
February 2005	142
March 2005	141
April 2005	120
May 2005	187
Total	1167

Table 4 – Number of on-line users per month

4.4 GRAPHICAL REPRESENTATION OF STATISTICS

A graphical representation of the data has been included at figure 9 for completeness.

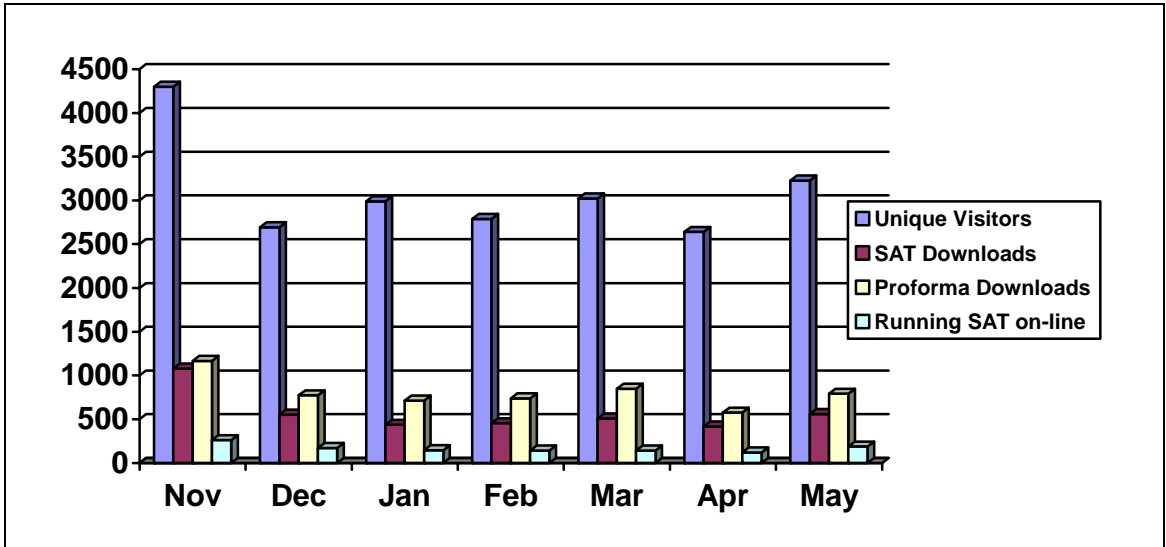


Figure 9 - Graphical representation of the website statistics