

Editorial

This issue opens with a comprehensive review by Neil Storer from the London Borough of Camden of what has been involved for a local authority in one of the areas selected by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) for the 2007 Census Test which took place on 13th May. From Neil's experience, it seems that local authorities might have a greater contribution to make to the 2011 Census than in previous Censuses, which will have an impact on resources but which should contribute to improved results.

Another development with a potential impact on all public bodies is European Directive 2007/2/EC which came into force on 15th May. This is the INSPIRE Directive which relates to spatial data and its uses.

Two web site developments which provide support to different aspects of local authority activities are also featured. In Wales, the Children's Commissioning Support Resource (CCSR) offers information to those providing support services for 'looked after children'. The web site *renewal.net* has a rather wider geographical remit from Communities and Local Government (CLG) to provide an on-line guide to 'what works in neighbourhood renewal'.

UPTAP, on the other hand, offers the chance for 'young and mid-career researchers' to advance their personal data analysis skills. UPTAP co-ordinator John Stillwell explains how, and showcases some results from the first rounds of funding.

Finally we have the usual collection of

news and events to report on, this time most notably a report of BURISA's own Conference which was held on 18th May at the Royal Society. If this (very brief) summary whets your appetite, most of the presentations are available to subscribers as PowerPoint® slides or .pdf files from the BURISA web site.

BURISA Workshops

At various times BURISA has organised one day or half day workshops on topics of interest. Workshops would normally offer some in-depth analysis and expert input, with guidance for improving skills and opportunities for delegate participation. The Board would like to offer a number of such workshops over the next few years, and is inviting suggestions from readers for topics of interest. For example, were there any presentations at the BURISA Conference you'd love to know more about? Please email the editor or secretary - the addresses are inside the back cover of every newsletter.

Royal Statistical Society and Statistics User Forum

Subscribers are reminded that BURISA is a member of the Statistics User Forum (SUF) and is thereby affiliated to the Royal Statistical Society (RSS). This means that you can join the RSS as a linked associate member at a reduced subscription. For further details, application forms, and information about the activities of the RSS:

Web: <http://www.rss.org.uk/main.asp?page=2573>

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The 2007 Census Test in Camden

Neil Storer, LB Camden

Abstract

The 2007 Census Test took place on 13th May in five Local Authority areas in England and Wales. One of these was the London borough of Camden. Neil Storer, Assistant Census Liaison Manager for Camden, describes the preparatory (and ongoing) activities. This article is updated from a presentation made to the LARIA Annual Conference in March 2007.

Introduction

In April 2005 the National Statistician invited the London Borough of Camden and four other local authorities - Stoke-on-Trent, Liverpool, Bath & North East Somerset and Carmarthenshire - to be involved in this year's Census Test which took place on 13th May 2007. Although voluntary, the Test encouraged the highest possible level of response from residents, and forms part of the planning process for the 2011 Census. Its purpose is to check census procedures; assess new questions and differences in rates of response; and evaluate closer local authority liaison to take advantage of the detailed local knowledge that might be lacking from a centralised approach. The Test therefore included:

- a higher level of ONS liaison with participating local authorities, including reliance on local authorities to provide local data;
- new questions, including a personal income question;
- post-out of census questionnaires as well as traditional enumerator delivery;
- a test of field force recruitment using a recruitment agency instead of hand-picked teams.

If successful, these innovations will be used in the full Census Rehearsal in 2009 and if still successful they will be used in the 2011 Census. In recognition of the commitment made by the local authorities, ONS agreed to make a contribution to cover staff costs of £8,000 spread over the two years. In Camden, the 2007 Test set out to contact approximately 25,000 addresses (about 25%) located across the borough in clusters (enumeration districts) and across the range in terms of difficulty to enumerate.

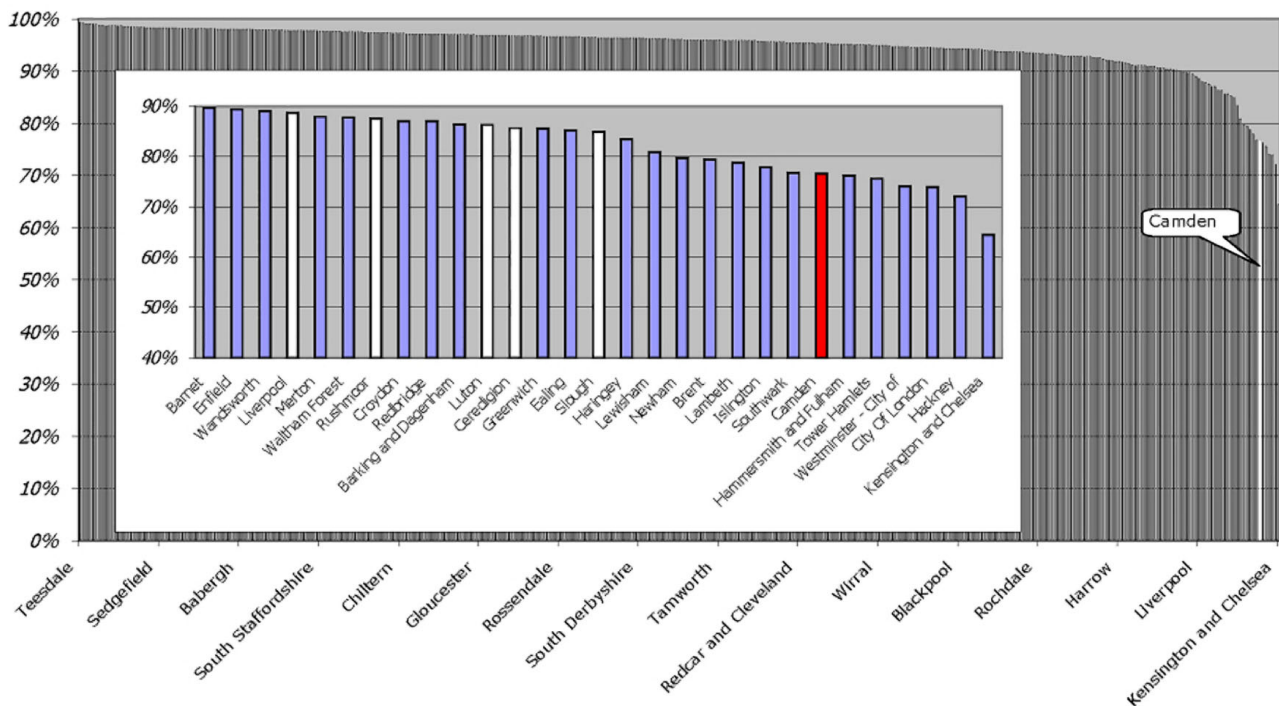
Why Camden?

Camden is a central London borough with a very diverse, possibly unique, character, being part 'employment hub', part 'university town', part 'inner city', part 'leafy suburbia' and part 'retail centre'. Prospering and deprived areas are often found in close proximity, as are commercial and residential properties. The majority of the accommodation is in purpose-built blocks of flats, with smaller proportions found in terraces and semis, and a small number of detached houses. Large areas are covered by conservation area status and there is a wealth of listed buildings. Camden was chosen as a Census Test area for a number of reasons, though a big factor was the large undercount in the 2001 Census. The 1991 Census undercount was approximately 6%, but by 2001 it was estimated that the census missed 23% of the people and 24% of the households, making Camden the 7th worst enumerated local authority area in England & Wales - despite the active involvement of the council (Figure 1). A number of factors contributed to Camden's underenumeration in the 2001 Census:

- visitors were not counted, though undoubtedly a number were Camden residents;
- logistical problems - post-back to enumeration teams was muddled, shortages of staff, shortages of census questionnaires, late sorting and poor management information;
- publicity/public perception - at front doors enumerators encountered people who had no idea what the census was, the message hadn't got across to large swathes of the public;
- high proportions of hard-to-count groups and areas;
- students - both in halls of residence and in private households;
- mobile/24hr populations, including the 'work hard/play hard' who are never in;
- gated estates/mansion blocks - Camden has a high proportion of accommodation in purpose-built flats or apartments, often with controlled (intercom) access or gates;
- language/cultural barriers - Camden has a diverse population, with different cultures, customs and languages;
- and ... people who just didn't want to be counted!

Apart from the 2001 Census undercount and the high proportion of hard-to-count areas and households, other factors contributing to Camden's selection as a Test area included a proven record of liaison (post-census, we reported back to ONS on problems that had been encountered to help improve intelligence for the future); the quality of our Local Land and Property Gazetteer (LLPG) which provides an excellent address listing for the borough; and the high population turnover which

Figure 1: 2001 Census Response Rates by Local Authority Area



Source: ONS

the borough is experiencing. The findings from the Test in Camden should be applicable to other London boroughs, as well as to other metropolitan areas.

Pre-planning for the Census Test

LA Census Liaison Managers. The first act of the ONS/ local authority partnership was to establish Census Liaison and Assistant Census Liaison Managers. The ONS intention was that the Census Liaison Manager would be a person of sufficient seniority in the local authority hierarchy to ensure data provision and assistance. In Camden this person was the Assistant Director of Planning, a member of the Extended Camden Management Team. The Assistant Census Liaison Manager is an officer-level contact who is expected to do the bulk of the work. That’s my role, and it’s been a very busy one! Like many people working for local authorities I have been carrying out the liaison duties for the Census Test in addition to my normal job. For the local authorities participating in the Census Test ONS is making compensating payments to set against staff time: however, these payments have been ruled out as too expensive for all local authorities for the 2011 Census. Local authorities will have to earmark resources to set against census preparation in 2010/2011 for local liaison and data gathering if these are proved to have a positive outcome in improving, or halting the slide in, census response.

Service Level Agreement (SLA). This should have been easy, but wasn’t! The agreement was intended to be a simple (non-legally binding) document laying out the principles of the arrangement between ONS and the Council. Essentially these included the census liaison managers, the provision of data by the Council to ONS and a written report to be produced by the Council; the successful completion of the latter two elements acting as trigger points for the payments from ONS. However, the Council’s legal opinion was concerned that the SLA, couched in “legal-ese”, was very biased toward ONS. It was obvious that the other 4 Test authorities were going through the same process and a number of improvements were made to the SLA. It was finally accepted following a number of changes, and after it was fully explained that the nature of the document was to enable a close relationship, that it was mutually beneficial and it was emphasised that it was not legally binding. This is certainly a lesson for the future!

Raising the profile. Camden’s Chief Executive, Moira Gibb, originally agreed to Camden’s involvement in the Census Test in April 2005. In April 2006, as the work started in earnest for the Census Test, it was appropriate that the Chief Executive was brought up to date with the latest plan of action and for us to achieve “management buy-in”. A meeting with Moira showed her level of interest and understanding of the importance of the census and she re-confirmed the Council’s commitment to the process. It was intended that the Census Test process should also

be presented to the Extended Camden Management Team (which includes all chief officers and service heads), though this did not come to fruition, senior managers being informed by briefing instead.

Gathering Local Information

A major part of preparing for the Census Test was to gather local information to create local Area Profiles, designed to give ONS more local information and to provide Census Test field staff with a better understand of their patch. I am privileged to be working for an authority that has embraced joined-up working: Camden has a positive data-sharing agreement that dictates that information should be shared unless there is a very good reason (legal/data protection) not to. The data providers are used to collaborative working - Council Tax, GIS, Electoral Services and Planning are all tied into the LLPG and use it as the authority's central address list. The majority of the information collected for the Census Test was aggregate data which was provided swiftly and with helpful advice. All the data providers have confirmed that they will readily give similar assistance in the run up to the 2011 Census. ONS queried some data records and it was good that they identified some genuine mistakes in the data we provided and which we were thus able to remedy. On the down side it is difficult to deal with data received in multiple formats - pro forma files were often ignored and some data took time to process into a common format. Information gathering took place in an intense period some 6-12 months prior to the Census Test, embracing a wide range of critical areas:

Address checking. Crucial to the Census Test strategy of posting-out is the requirement for a complete, up-to-date and accurate address list. ONS used Ordnance Survey's Master Map Layer 2 as the basis for its address list and supplemented it with a complete survey of the Census Test Enumeration Districts (EDs). A team of address-checkers visited every address in each ED and checked for subdivision (flats). The results for Camden showed that address checking found approximately 6,000 more addresses. ONS has also done background work comparing Mastermap Layer 2 with the information being collated by the National Land & Property Gazetteer (NLPG), to which Camden contributes. Camden also supplied a complete address listing from our LLPG (which contains more detail than NLPG) to ONS for comparative purposes. ONS followed-up with a visit to see how Camden's LLPG is compiled and had a very positive meeting with our addressing experts. Camden recognises that addressing will be crucial for the next census whether it is on the basis of post-out or enumerator delivery. The concern is that ONS will use a nationally applicable address product, rather than the best address list - our own LLPG.

Electoral Registration statistics. ONS required levels of response by area using statistics from the annual electoral canvass, trying to spot areas which might be difficult to enumerate in the Census Test. ONS were also interested in being able to identify larger households to make an estimate of continuation forms that could be required. Thus a large household indicator was added to the feedback file for addresses where 6 or more individuals had the same family name. All this information was compiled as aggregate data for polling districts and wards, not causing any concerns on the grounds of confidentiality. Again, Electoral Services in Camden were very happy to provide the data and showed an interest in the Census Test. This is not surprising because Electoral Services, GIS (LLPG) and Council Tax personnel have a close working relationship using a common address list. Electoral Services also provided good quality advice to ONS about difficult to enumerate areas and nominations of electoral canvassers who could be used as enumerators in the Census Test.

Council Tax records. Another rich source of data is from Council Tax exemptions. ONS requested the proportions of households in each ward with exemptions for second and holiday homes; all student households; lone occupiers; and for vacant properties. Camden's Council Tax team were very quick to respond and dealt with queries about the data provided promptly.

Communal establishments. People living in communal establishments accounted for nearly 5% of Camden's population in the 2001 Census, one of the highest proportions in the country. Camden was provided with a list of establishments by ONS that had been constructed from various administrative sources which were checked against Camden electoral registration records and the LLPG, removing ones that didn't exist and adding others. The work was relatively simple, but required liaison with other services. It was decided some time in advance of the Test that the communal establishments were not going to be included, but it was a useful test of procedure. Some work was required in this process but the corporate GIS Team took an interest and did the matching work promptly and without charge.

Housing change. Development monitoring data was used to gather information about planned developments between the time of the address check and the date of the Census Test (a period of about 6 months). This was achieved by GIS records held against individual sites by Camden's Development Monitoring specialist to pick up on potential changes.

Gated communities. The 2001 Census found that 47% of accommodation in the borough was purpose-built flats, 41% of which were council owned. A great many council flats are either gated or protected by entry-phone systems. Camden's district housing offices provided a complete address list of all blocks that had been fitted with gates or

entry-phone systems, but unfortunately there is no information relating to private apartment or mansion blocks.

Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs). We know that we have a lot HMOs in the borough. At the time of data collection, Camden Environmental Health was in the process of licensing all HMOs. It was only possible to pass on partial data about HMOs to ONS because the licensing database is new and is still being populated. It is also apparent that landlords appear to be reluctant to class their properties as HMOs and therefore there could be under-reporting. HMOs are hard to enumerate and detailed knowledge about them will certainly be very important for the census proper. It should be possible by 2010 to have a much more refined list, at least in Camden.

Hotels, B&Bs. A full list of hotels and B&Bs by individual address was gleaned from the LLPG. Although this has not been used in the 2007 Census Test because communal establishments are not being enumerated, it provides a basis for a list for 2011.

Mobile/temporary accommodation. Camden has very few mobile/temporary homes and all sites were located by address and GIS. These include some permanent moorings on the Regent's Canal and advice was given to look out for visiting boats during the Census Test.

Community contacts. Camden's CINDEX ('Camden Index') provided a very full listing of the plethora of cultural, religious and community groups in the borough. This was used to guide the Census Team Managers to find community contacts in their areas. There might have been information overload on this one!

Enumerator safety. ONS wanted to identify areas where more care would be needed by enumerators. A general guide was outlined by Electoral Services based on past reports, although Community Safety were correct to emphasise that, while 'no go' areas do not exist in the borough, that people need to show awareness of what is going on around them.

Languages. To try to understand the main languages that might be spoken in Camden, data was provided from Camden's annual schools language survey. This gave a list of languages spoken by Camden-resident children by their ward of residence. We also provided general information about the most requested language support requested from Camden's Interpretation and Translation Service.

Field Force Recruitment and Training

The Census Test team in Camden is headed by Emma Wood (ONS) as Census Area Manager. As part of the Test, ONS outsourced the recruitment of the field staff to

Hays, who advertised and recruited 10 Census Team Managers and approximately 100 delivery/follow-up enumerators. This is a change from normal procedure where the Census Area Manager would select their Team Managers, who in turn would recruit their enumerators. Criteria for selection included looking for candidates who might have language or social knowledge of the communities that exist in Camden. Managers were assigned to their EDs by the Census Area Manager while their enumerators were assigned directly by Hays.

A last minute thought was that it might be good for the Census Test if one of the local authorities could trial the use of a council staff member to be Census Area Manager (instead of an ONS manager). Camden had a person in mind who had the expertise and experience, but a number of factors combined to make the proposal unworkable in practice. These included the major problem of whose responsibility it was to recruit and manage the post; insufficient funding; bad timing (one month before the Christmas break); and coinciding with a time of internal restructuring.

It was envisaged that for the Test in Camden 87 enumerators would be required for delivery and 97 for follow-up (collecting unreturned questionnaires), though the expectation is that a number of the delivery enumerators would then go on to work on the follow-up. The Hays recruitment advertisement was circulated to Camden's main community contacts. Feedback from Hays has pointed to take-up of good quality staff who appeared motivated and had an interest in the census process, including people who had worked on Camden's electoral canvass, previous census workers and social survey staff. To help minimise the drop-out rate from recruitment time until start of delivery, Hays provided a weekly newsletter. By the time delivery started, Hays reported that they had a full list of enumeration and reserves to hand.

Publicity and Liaison for Enumeration

Camden's communications team had been on hand, ready to help publicise the Census Test in local newsletters and to liaise with local media. However, quite late in the day and contrary to their original plans, ONS announced that there wouldn't be any publicity other than the postcards and leaflets being sent to participating addresses. The fear was of raising awareness of people not in test areas who might then swamp ONS help-lines demanding forms. Although there weren't any public announcements, Camden Councillors were informed about the Census Test and some positive feedback was received. Information about the Test was put up on the Camden website, including a link for residents to check whether their address was in a Census Test area. Internally an email "message of the day" announced to council staff that the Test would be taking place and provided information about the Test.

Camden provided significant support and liaison in the build up to the Test enumeration. The Assistant Census Liaison Manager attended Census Team Manager meeting and enumerator training. Camden also provided bulk storage of Census Test questionnaires and stationery, as well as some crucial parking dispensations to aid with logistics.

Post-enumeration and Outstanding Issues

Local authority liaison. Camden saw a positive reason to be involved in the Census Test. We wanted to learn from any mistakes that were thought to have been made in 2001 and to start building towards 2011. ONS has worked hard with us and the other Test authorities to assemble relevant information to assist in the enumeration process. A major concern for the 2011 Census is that it might be difficult to get the same level of engagement with all local authorities and for ONS to cope with the sheer volume of information. This might be addressed by a rolling programme of approaching/inducting authorities sooner rather than later and spreading the work over a longer period. Once systems are set up to provide the data required, it is relatively simple to update. A final thought on liaison is that 2-tier authorities will

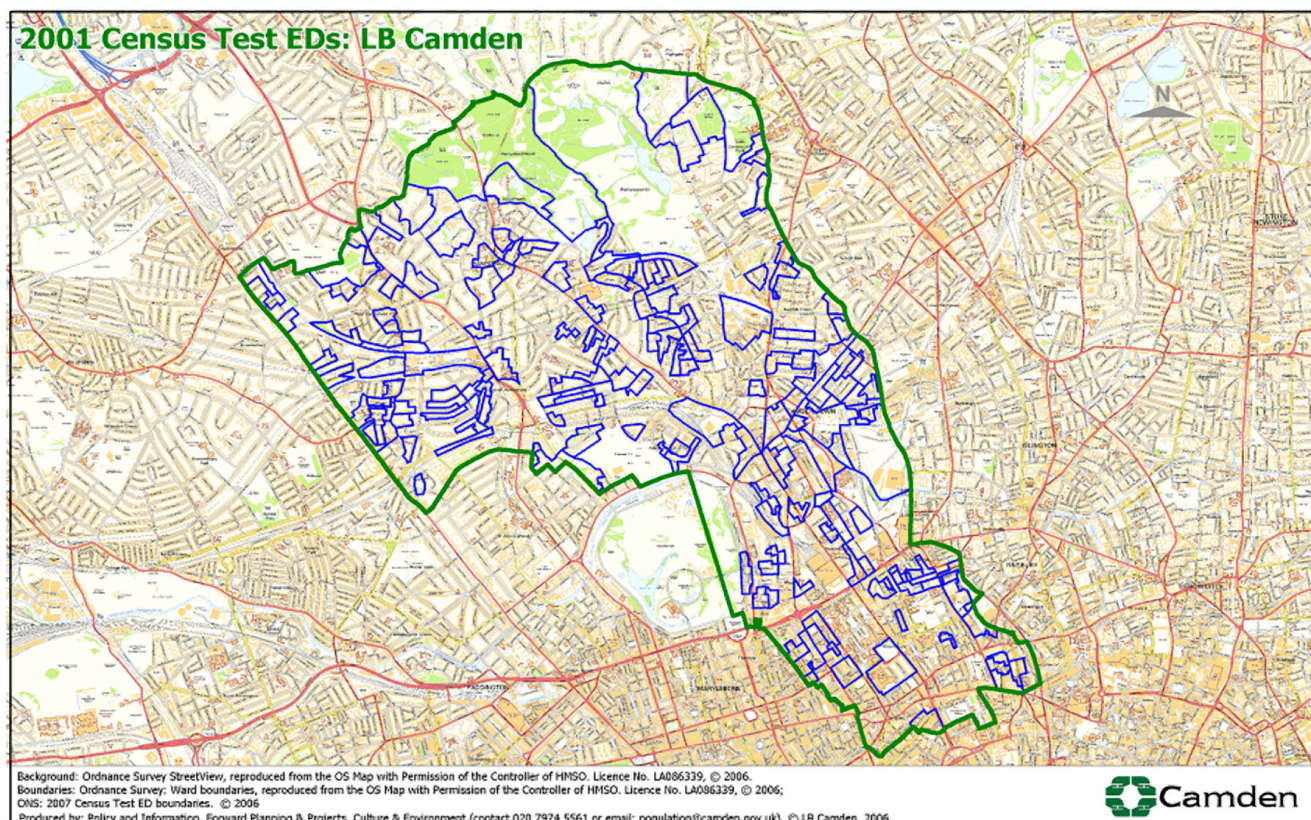
have to agree responsibilities as to which tier will be the active participant(s).

GIS/mapping. For some time the difficulties associated with mapping copyright have been getting in the way of practical efforts to allow central and local government to liaise effectively. As in the aftermath of the 2001 Census, the Census Test has been dogged with delays waiting for permission to use maps (for Test EDs and manager areas). The map boundaries are more important than ever with the use of GIS and geo-referenced data. If liaison is going to be effective in 2010/2011, we need to get over this hurdle as soon as possible.

Data sharing. This is not much of an issue for Camden, but could make the process unworkable for 2011 Census in local authorities who don't readily share data. There is not a consistent view of data sharing across local/central government, which tends to be interpreted differently by different legal teams.

Outsourcing of field force recruitment. So far, it appears as though the outsourcing of field staff recruitment has been successful (though no formal assessments have yet been made). This has worked well with a large pool of potential recruits for a small scale test, but the concern has to be how this would work in a full census. In Camden we would need four times the personnel, but would it be possible to keep up the quality while ramping up the

Figure 2: Enumeration Districts in Camden for 2007 Census Test



Based on Ordnance Survey Mapping © Crown Copyright. AM28/07

requirement for all local authority areas in England and Wales?

Publicity strategy for 2011. One of the main concerns about the census is the general public's lack knowledge of what it is and what it is used for. For people to participate willingly in the census they need to know that it is safe to do so, that there is a good reason for doing so and that they can get something out of it in the end. There is a need to start NOW for 2011 to beat general ignorance. This is a joint responsibility between ONS, central and local government. Australia, for example, has recently started a scheme to teach children about the census and we could use the opportunity to help foster a census programme in our schools. Bearing in mind current levels of international population mobility, perhaps we could also provide information to new international migrants or visiting workers... Overall it is vitally important to stress the confidentiality of the Census... that there is no record linking... and that it is a public duty!

Still To Do...

At the time of writing, the Census test has just moved into a 'follow-up' phase with no major hiccups during enumeration. Camden will continue to liaise with field staff until the process is concluded in late-June. Following that, a report will be submitted to ONS covering the whole of the Census Test, to review and assess how well the process has gone in Camden.

...and Finally

A good quality enumeration in 2011 will provide accurate statistics for local areas and give confidence when decisions need to be made. The census is the basis for the Mid-year Estimates of population and in turn, the Mid-year Estimates are the basis for Subnational Population Projections, which are then used to determine the local government funding formula (in conjunction with census/other data). It is hoped that local authority liaison before the 2011 Census will boost falling levels of response. By making a moderate commitment of time and effort now, local authorities will put themselves in the best position to achieve good census response and avoid the uncertainty and loss of funding suffered by some after the 2001 census results were revealed.

Further Information

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Children's Commissioning Support Resource in Wales

Andrew Stephens, Local Government Data Unit - Wales

Abstract

This article describes the development and current role of a web-based information system which offers assistance to local authorities in Wales who are responsible for commissioning services for 'looked after children'.

What is the Children's Commissioning Support Resource (CCSR)?

The CCSR has been developed as a joint venture between the Welsh Assembly Government, the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) and a number of other partners. It is effectively an information system to assist local authorities in Wales commission services effectively for 'looked after children'. These include children placed by all 22 Welsh local authorities:

- with foster carers;
- in residential homes; and
- in secure accommodation;

across Wales and other parts of the UK.

The CCSR has been established against a background of year-on-year increases in the number of children in the care of Welsh local authorities, and significant rises in the cost of providing that care. It is managed by a small team located within the WLGA. They provide both leadership and support in delivering improvements in the commissioning of children's services as well as managing the information system. A key element of the CCSR initiative is the establishment of a bilingual database that provides access to:

- information on the providers of children services;
- the location of services (care settings); and
- current vacancies available in the public, private and voluntary sector.

The database enables authorities to better match the needs of a child with the vacancies currently available. There is an implicit assumption that by using the CCSR,

councils will meet needs more effectively and use resources wisely.

What has been delivered to date?

The database has been set up using SQL Server 2000 and is accessed over the Internet via HTTPS. The Internet interface to the CCSR is written in *asp.net*. Obviously, entry to the system by the social service officers responsible for placing children is securely password protected. One of the key design requirements was the ease of use by these officers: this has made for ready acceptance and speedy take up by the users. The database is available to, and is being used by, local authorities across Wales. Initially much of this use centred on authorities searching for child placements in the independent sector. Increasingly, however, the database is being used to identify suitable 'in-house' local authority placements.

While we are still at a very early stage in terms of developing management information from the system, there is considerable excitement about what it can provide in terms of intelligence about both the local and national picture of placement provision. A programme of related projects is underway, which are being undertaken on a regional basis. These include exploring opportunities for collaborative working, such as the joint commissioning of services.

What is the Data Unit's role?

The Data Unit has taken a technical lead on the project. We sit on the CCSR project board and lead a technical group which oversees the database development. Our work has included liaising with stakeholders to establish requirements for the database and leading the tender process for the software.

The Data Unit will have an ongoing role with the CCSR, and will continue to host the database on our IT platform. We will provide second line support for users and manage ongoing communication with the software supplier, who continues to be responsible for elements of system maintenance.

There are several reasons why the Data Unit was chosen as a partner for this work:

- We have a well established working relationship with both the Assembly Government and the WLGA.
- We have a proven track record of delivering on similar projects.
- We are responsible for collecting and disseminating information on local authority social services activities including data on looked after children.

Lessons from the work

We are all aware that managing and delivering change is not easy. Doing so with, and across, a number of partnership organisations brings with it additional challenges. Those of us involved in leading this work would admit that we underestimated these challenges and the resources required to meet them. Effective communication and proactive support have been fundamental to the project's successful delivery to date.

Collaborative working has its challenges: communication, together with a common understanding of respective roles, has been vital. The Data Unit and WLGA have worked particularly well together on this initiative. Very early in the development we recognised the need to invest time in regular face-to-face communication. During periods of peak activity, the core project team has met formally on a weekly basis. As the Data Unit and the WLGA are only physically separated by a car park, other informal meetings have been possible as and when required, and there have been many of these! For much of the development, members of the third party software development team were co-located with the Data Unit's ICT team. This proved to be very effective.

From our perspective, working with partners on the CCSR initiative has been an enjoyable, rewarding and, at times, a very challenging experience. We believe we have made a significant contribution to the successes achieved to date. Equally, we have gained much from the experience. Lessons learned have already been reflected in our approach to subsequent projects.

What next for CCSR?

Initially the Assembly Government has given a commitment to fund the CCSR to March 2008. In the short term, activity is focused on consolidating the use of the database in authorities and pursuing the collaborative projects. We are also currently working with the software supplier to deliver a number of system enhancements later in the year.

Potential exists to expand the functionality of the database. A number of feasibility studies are planned to explore this. We are also maintaining dialogue with colleagues in local authorities and consortia across the border in other parts of the UK, to explore opportunities for further information sharing and joint working.

Further Information

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Understanding Population Dynamics through Secondary Data Analysis - UPTAP

John Stillwell, UPTAP Coordinator

Abstract

UPTAP, the 'Understanding Population Trends And Processes' initiative funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), has been running since October 2005 and is to expand this summer to include a new set of projects focused on ethnicity. This article identifies progress on the programme hitherto and identifies the potential opportunity for collaborative research through another round of UPTAP User Fellowships likely to be announced during the summer.

Purpose and progress

Two years ago, the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) decided to allocate £2 million to a new programme of research projects that would provide a better understanding of population trends and processes and the way in which they interact with economic and social processes. In total, 21 awards were made in the first round of UPTAP funding for projects starting and completing at different times between October 2005 and 2009. Substantive themes covered included:

- Demographic change - residential change
- Fertility - motherhood - childlessness
- Living arrangements - childcare
- Cohabitation - mobility
- Health - wellbeing - employment
- Education - leisure
- Identity - ethnicity - segregation
- Social and political values

One of the key underlying aims of the UPTAP programme is to build the capacity of young and mid-career researchers to undertake secondary data analysis, both of a qualitative and quantitative nature, but primarily the latter. The UPTAP initiative seeks to promote the use of large-scale data sets, several of which have received substantial ESRC investment in recent years. It is also part of the ESRC's strategy for addressing the major concern of improving the social science skills base in quantitative methods in response to the increasingly evident 'quantitative deficit'.

The initial round of UPTAP resulted in the commissioning of 4 Postdoctoral Fellowships, 6 Mid-career Fellowships,

1 'User' Fellowship, 7 small research grants, and 3 large grants, of which two involved linked PhD studentships. Since then, 6 of the initial 21 projects have come to an end of their funding period, another 3 User Fellowships have been awarded and one further project has been awarded to the Coordinator. The UPTAP researchers meet for a conference each year in March to hear papers about completed and new projects, to listen to invited speakers and to discuss progress and future activities.

Results of completed projects

Two of the projects that have formally come to an end are on the fertility-motherhood-childlessness theme. *Roona Simpson* (Centre for Research on Families and Relationships, University of Edinburgh) has compared data from two large cohort studies, the 1958 National Child Development Study and the 1970 British Cohort study, to show the extent of delayed childbearing and childlessness. The trends are dramatic with the average age of women first giving birth rising from 23 in 1970 to 27 in 2005 and the proportion of women remaining childless doubling from 1 in 10 women born in 1940 to nearly 1 in 5 of those born in 1959 (Figure 1).

Sarah Smith and Anita Ratcliffe (Centre for Market and Public Organisation, University of Bristol) together with *Mike Brewer* (Institute for Fiscal Studies) use data pooled from the Family Expenditure Survey and the Family Resources Survey to confirm that women with higher levels of education begin childbearing later and are more likely to remain childless, but increasing participation in higher education among successive cohorts of women cannot account for all of the decline in fertility – there have also been substantial changes in fertility among higher-educated women.

Two further completed projects have a European dimension, though on different themes. *Eric Kaufmann* (School of Politics and Sociology, Birkbeck College) has shown that a significant decline in religious attendance has taken place in western Europe in the late twentieth century and older people show no sign of returning to church as they age, although the decline in religious belief has been much less pronounced.

Harriet Young and Emily Grundy (London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine) have been concerned with the implications for health and well-being of the declining numbers of older people living with children and the increasing numbers living alone. Using data from the European Social Survey, the English Longitudinal Study of Ageing and the Longitudinal Study, they show a clear association between living alone and higher levels of loneliness, depression and unhappiness, demonstrating that living alone has been associated with poorer health than living with a spouse for women in northern European countries and for men in southern European countries.

Figure 1: Childbearing on Hold, from Roona Simpson's Project

- Uses British Cohort Studies for 1958 and 1970 to identify trends in childbearing and childlessness

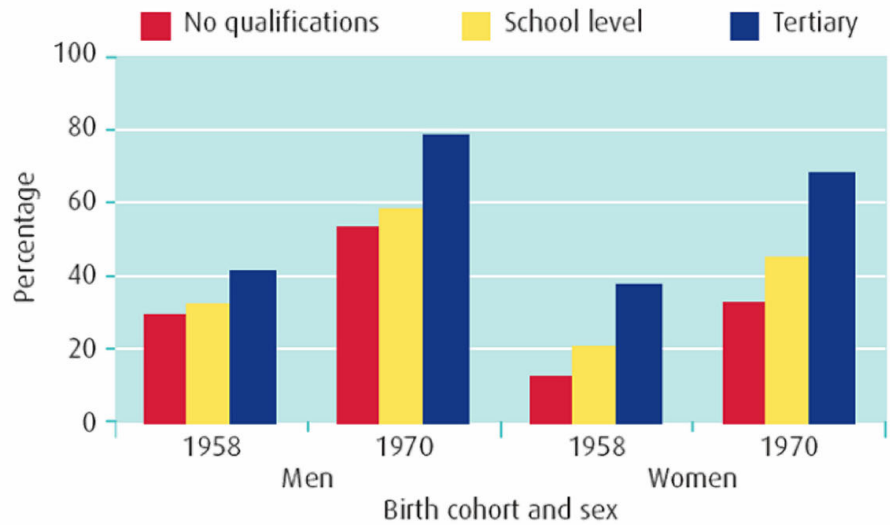


FIGURE 4. CHILDLESSNESS BY EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS OF THOSE IN THEIR EARLY 30s

Source: Author's analysis, 1958 and 1970 BCS

Time rather than space is important in the other two completed projects. *Shu-Li Cheng* (Centre for Research on Innovation and Competition, University of Manchester) has carried out an analysis of the time spent on leisure activities depending on educational qualifications using the UK Time Use Survey. She shows that those gaining qualifications above secondary level are likely to spend significantly more of their leisure time walking than those who gain no qualifications, and men are more likely to go walking than women.

Finally, the sixth project is an excellent example of how data from over 100 sources have been integrated to provide a time series running from 1972 to 2005 that allows some fascinating insights into minority ethnic disadvantage in the labour market. *Yaojun Li* (Institute of Social Change, University of Manchester) and *Anthony Heath* (Department of Sociology, University of Oxford) show that whilst the White British were generally found to be advantaged in terms of gaining access to the labour market and in avoidance of unemployment in the period covered, there were more differences among the minority ethnic groups than between them and the majority group in terms of employment, access to professional/managerial positions, or income from paid work.

Further details of the results of these projects and those ongoing can be found in a series of UPTAP Research Findings (Figure 2) or from papers and presentations by the authors that appear on the UPTAP web site.

New ethnicity projects

During the summer of 2006, the ESRC decided to award a further £1.5 million for a second round of UPTAP research projects with a specific focus on ethnicity, given the current importance of ethnic trends and problems for research across all social science disciplines as well as the policy relevance of immigration, identity and citizenship issues. The call for proposals closed at the end of January and the new awards are to be announced in the first week of July, most of which will commence on 1 October 2007.

New User Fellowships

One of the major objectives of the UPTAP initiative has been to communicate with, and disseminate the results of academic research to, non-academic practitioners and policy makers. This is being undertaken through the publication and distribution of Research Findings (as mentioned above) and by holding user workshops. In addition, the UPTAP initiative is breaking new ground by promoting collaborative research between academic and non-academic organisations through its 'User Fellowship' scheme that allows for early or mid-stage practitioners/users to work for a period of time in a centre of academic expertise.

In the last round of User Fellowships commissioned in December 2006, ESRC provided up to a maximum of £45,000 to cover the cost of the user's salary for up to 6

months full-time (or 12 months part-time) plus academic mentoring and some additional funds to cover consumables and travel. The User Fellowship scheme gives an opportunity for organisations to offer a staff member substantial skill upgrading in the area of secondary analysis, by a short-term secondment to the centre of expertise. It provides the academic hosting institution with an opportunity to develop links with non-academic institutions, as part of their user engagement strategies.

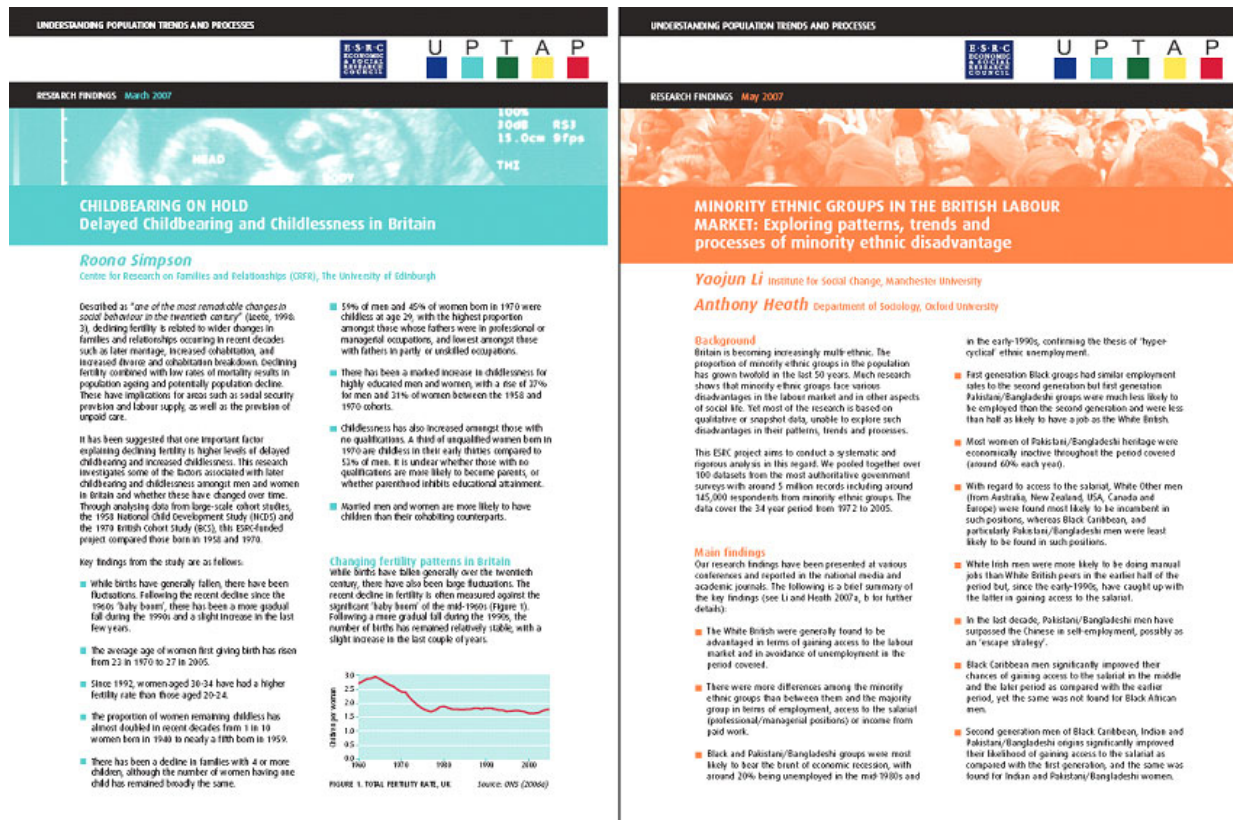
So far, four user fellows have been appointed, two from the Office of National Statistics, one from an organisation known as Audiences London and one from the Family Fund. Details of the projects are posted on the web site. Daniel Guinea-Martin from ONS who was awarded a User Fellowship in the first round of UPTAP funding and who is currently working on a project about trends in gender and ethnic occupational segregation in England and Wales, has outlined the benefits of his award:

“I have been working as a Research and User Support Officer at the Longitudinal Study Development Team (LSDT) of the Office for National Statistics (ONS) since early 2004. One of the lures of this post was the promise of being able to devote one day of the week to my own research by using the database that the LSDT manages and updates: the ONS Longitudinal Study. However, the everyday

demands of the job made this goal difficult to achieve. Besides, even though I had had extensive training in statistics and social research, at the LSDT I was struggling to simply keep up with the demands of managing the data. Large quantitative longitudinal data sets are very complex, and this made the prospect of any serious statistical modelling daunting.

In practical terms, the Fellowship in my case covers 25 per cent of my salary during one year (2006). This has guaranteed that I now have the necessary time to devote to research even though the main difficulty is to keep at bay pressures coming from my everyday job. But the effort is worthwhile, as the advantages of the initiative are starting to come up. The ONS LS will soon release linked Claimant Count Data for which the techniques I am learning, particularly Survival Analysis, are particularly suited. By presenting my work to colleagues at ONS I will be able to increase awareness at the office about how these data can be managed and analysed. Also, I am attending conferences, both academic and non-academic, such as the 2006 Cambridge Social Stratification Research Seminar and the 2006 Government Social Research Conference.

Figure 2: UPTAP Research Findings



And given that the topic of my research, occupational sex segregation, is high in the policy agenda, I hope that the final output of the project will be published not only in a good academic journal but that it will also have resonance in the wider media”.

UPTAP User Fellows are expected to spend all of the time funded by the fellowship at the centre of expertise, to play an active role in its research activities, and to disseminate their experience of secondary analysis widely within both the hosting institution and non-academic organisations. They are expected to have senior academic supervisors or mentors in the academic centre of expertise with which they are affiliated, whose role it will be to make the initial application, provide supervision and mentoring, organise additional training where appropriate and also to offer support in producing outputs/publications based on secondary analysis of the data sets concerned.

Conclusion

The UPTAP programme is an exciting initiative whose researchers from different disciplinary backgrounds are now delivering results based on the analysis of a wide range of census, survey and administrative data sets. A series of UPTAP Research Findings are being produced to convey the essential messages to a wide audience along with the organisation of a series of user workshops.

The ESRC is currently considering a further call for User Fellowships which I hope will be announced shortly, so please keep an eye on the UPTAP web site for details and guidance for applicants. Topics will not be confined to the theme of ethnicity; proposals that link ESRC supported large-scale data sets with administrative or government data sets will be particularly encouraged.

Further Information

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INSPIRE becomes European Law

Neil Sutherland, Ordnance Survey

Abstract

As the INSPIRE initiative passes a significant stage in its progress, this article provides a development update, summarises the current state of play, and outlines the future work programme and its possible impact on users of spatial data, including local authorities.

The INSPIRE Directive

After three years of negotiation between the European Parliament and the Council of Ministers, the INSPIRE Directive (2007/2/EC) entered into force in the European Union on 15th May 2007. INSPIRE stands for **IN**frastructure for **SP**atial **IN**fo**R**mation in the **E**uropean **C**ommunity. Its aims are to facilitate access to spatial information for environmental policy and to improve public access. INSPIRE obliges EU Member States to do several things, principally:

- ensure that metadata are created for specified themes;
- comply with implementing rules on technical interoperability and, where practicable, harmonisation of specified themes;
- establish a network of services for public discovery, viewing, download and transformation of spatial data sets within specified themes;
- adopt measures for the sharing of spatial data sets and services among public bodies and with EU institutions;
- monitor and report on implementation.

Implementing Rules

The Directive itself sets out only a framework, within which more specific ‘Implementing Rules’ must be created to fill in the details. These Rules will be adopted by a committee of the Member States and will have direct effect as European Commission Decisions, so getting them right will be pretty important. The Commission has had five drafting teams working on these Rules for the past year or so, and the fruits of their labours are just beginning to appear for review by organisations that have registered with the Commission as stakeholders; either as Legally Mandated Organisations (LMOs) or as Spatial Data

Interest Communities (SDICs). These stakeholders can be found on the INSPIRE web site.

Three annexes to the Directive list the 34 data themes to which the Implementing Rules will apply, ranging from co-ordinate referencing systems and geographical names to land use and the distribution of species. The process of defining these themes in more detail is already underway, and the Commission is looking to the SDICs and individual experts to provide candidate data specifications or help with defining specifications where nothing suitable exists.

What Comes Next?

The Directive must be transposed into Member State law within two years. Defra is taking the lead on this process in the UK and is currently working with other parts of government to ensure alignment between INSPIRE and other GI initiatives including the Digital National Framework (DNF). As well as the requirement to establish co-ordination mechanisms at Member State level, Member States are also required to nominate a national contact point for the Commission – watch out for announcements in this area now that the law is in place.

Public authorities in the UK need to be aware that any relevant spatial data set they hold is potentially covered by the Directive, although spatial data sets held ‘at the lowest level of government’ are covered only if ‘the Member State has laws or regulations requiring their collection or dissemination’.

Conclusion

The test of INSPIRE will be whether it makes a real difference to the ability to share and compare spatial information across both organisational boundaries and country borders, and at European level. This will require a concerted effort among many actors in 27 countries so it is, to use the jargon, non-trivial. But the creation of a European SDI is a goal worth striving for if we believe that the ability to analyse spatially referenced information is crucial to protecting our environment for both present and future generations.

Further Information

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The full texts of the Directive, and UK reactions and proposals, can be found on the relevant web sites:

INSPIRE: <http://inspire.jrc.it/>

Defra: <http://www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/gi/uk-eu-global/inspire.htm>

IGGI: <http://www.iggi.gov.uk/initiatives.php>

Successful Neighbourhood Renewal

Laura Hughes, IDOX plc Group

Abstract

Laura Hughes, from IDOX Information Service (part of the IDOX plc group), leads a team responsible for the content management of renewal.net – Community and Local Government’s online guide to what works in neighbourhood renewal. Here Laura explains about what renewal.net has to offer and why it has been recognised as making a ‘significant contribution’ to improving access to researched evidence on successful regeneration.

What Works?

Information on what works is one of the major keys to successful neighbourhood renewal: *renewal.net* is the one-stop shop for information on what works across the main neighbourhood renewal themes: housing and environment; education; crime; health; local economies; and worklessness (Figure 1).

Launched in October 2002, this dynamic, free-to-access website has been developed to fulfil one of the commitments of the Government’s National Strategy Action Plan for neighbourhood renewal. The Action Plan called for development of a knowledge management system which would be “a systematic and comprehensive guide to the information available on what works in tackling the various problems of deprived neighbourhoods. It will draw upon experience of what works, across England and beyond, and link into sources of evidence from other departments, outside bodies and regional, local and neighbourhood feedback.”

The site was developed specifically to help those involved in tackling the various problems of deprived neighbourhoods discover what has already been shown to have worked, allowing users to learn lessons from what has been tried and tested before. Local partnerships, practitioners and policy makers can access a wide range of information resources, share best practices and review successful initiatives and developments which have been undertaken in other parts of the country. Wherever possible, documents made available on the website are based on independently evaluated, evidence-based actions, offering a systematic, online guide to delivering more effective regeneration.

Figure 1: renewal.net Homepage

The information contained within the site is the most comprehensive, yet easily accessible, source of information ever brought together in this broad subject area. The *renewal.net* website makes this information available in many different formats. Policy documents and research reports from a wide variety of publishers are available to help set the context on particular regeneration issues. Specially commissioned overviews of the key issues and case studies help tease out the useful evidence on what has been proven to be successful, and also what has not been so successful, when neighbourhood renewal has been delivered in the past.

Links, Workshops and Forums

Links to useful websites help steer visitors to other sources of good practice in regeneration information. A comprehensive list of regeneration conferences, workshops and training courses is available, and managed forums allow neighbourhood renewal-related problems and solutions to be discussed creatively in an open and informal environment. Up to the minute news stories are continually added to the home page to help keep site users up to date. As the whole ethos of *renewal.net* is about sharing the lessons from existing regeneration practice, site users are also encouraged to submit

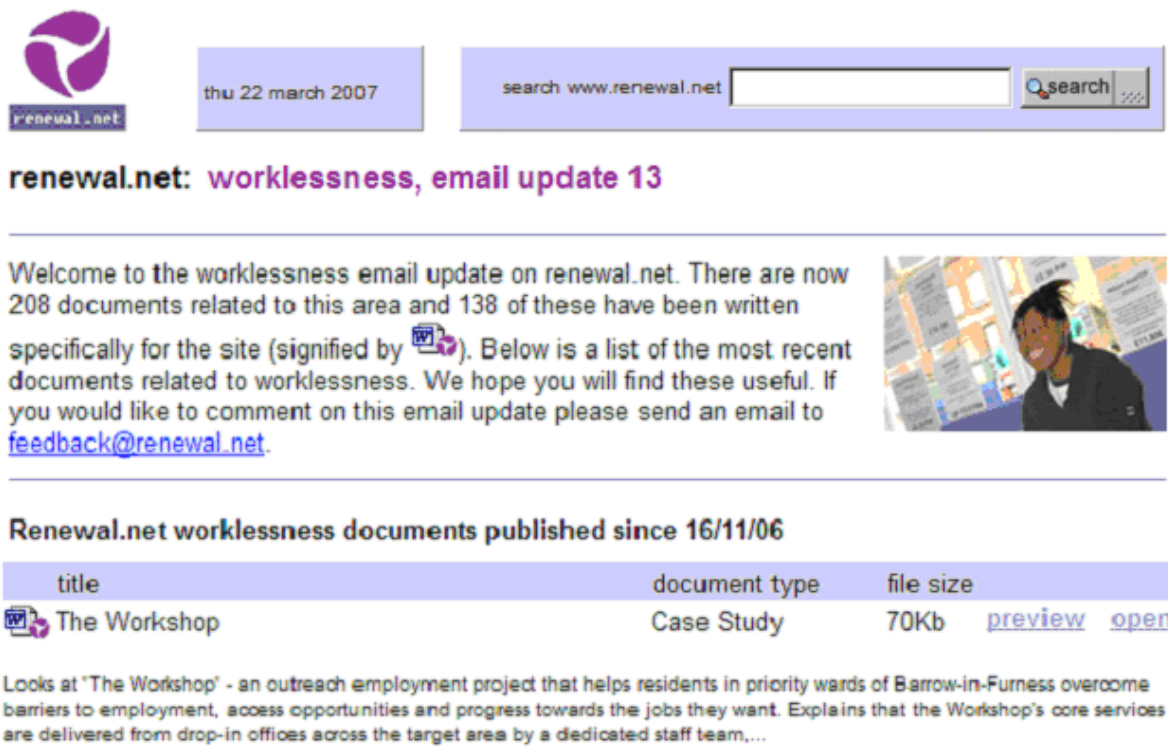
information about their own regeneration achievements for publication to the site, so that others can learn from their success. and be guided against ‘reinventing the wheel’.

Effective indexing, classification and ‘plain English’ abstracting of all information published on the site ensures that users can easily browse the various themes and their sub-categories to find information on a particular topic. The site also has a powerful search engine, accessible from the home page, so that a wide range of cross-cutting information sources can be found at the click of a few buttons. Information on *renewal.net* is updated daily and registered site users can keep up to date with the site’s most recently published specially commissioned content through fortnightly ‘Email Updates’ (Figure 2).

Online Toolkits

In response to user calls for more practical information on how to conduct renewal initiatives, a number of online ‘toolkits’ have been developed, such as ‘ORRION’ - the Online Race Resource for Improving Outcomes in Neighbourhoods (Figure 3). The ORRION toolkit contains a wealth of information resources specifically designed to support local partnerships, addressing race equality

Figure 2: Email Updates



issues as well as wider diversity issues. It provides practical assistance, information and guidance to help the delivery of improved outcomes in education, employment, housing, health, liveability and crime for black and minority ethnic (BME) communities in deprived areas. Other on-line Toolkits cover topics including drugs in the local community; sport and physical activity; Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs); defining, selecting, implementing and tracking the progress of renewal projects; and using mainstream service delivery as an integral part of the renewal process.

Figure 3: The ORRION Toolkit



Independent Management

To maintain the site's independence, a consortium of experts manages it on behalf of Communities and Local Government. PA Consulting project manage the site and have overall responsibility for website and system design, development and support; GFA Consulting commission, develop and edit specially commissioned content; and IDOX Information Service assume responsibility for day-to-day content and website management.

An independent evaluation of *renewal.net* found that a very large proportion of registered site users, 92%, made use of information gained from the site, with over 55% passing on information to others and 44% recommending to others that they access particular *renewal.net* content. Nearly three quarters of registered users consider that *renewal.net* helped them take a more evidence-based approach to their work and were confident that their use of the website would help them produce better neighbourhood renewal outcomes. Visit the online oracle for neighbourhood renewal, and see for yourself.

Further Information

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NEWS and EVENTS

EVENT

BURISA Conference 2007

Local v National Information Systems – Who Wins? Conference Report

Delegates at this year's BURISA Conference at the Royal Society in early May were rewarded with some sparkling presentations as well as a wine reception to round off the day. **Richard Alldritt** (*Statistics Commission*) commented on the gladiatorial implications of the conference title and agreed to keep the score during the day.

Paul Foley (*International Electronic Commerce Research Centre*) put the case for local information systems, particularly in view of the demands of the Local Government White Paper of 2006. A survey conducted by his organisation for Communities and Local Government (CLG) reported that only 69 out of 388 local authorities in England had appropriate information systems in place. To meet the White paper's aims, authorities will have to develop not only the information systems but also the appropriate information gathering. Systems take around 18 months to bring into being with an average cost of £96,000 plus annual maintenance of around £60,000: these will then be the base for evidence-based decision making. Some LA systems were showcased, including Gloucestershire's MAIDeN database described in BURISA 171.

Web: <http://www.communities.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1508580>

Sue Kaminska (*LB Harrow*) then explained how the Borough had combined both local and national information from a wide range of sources into Vitality Profiles. The system had paper outputs at present which were widely used by many agencies within the borough. The biggest problem encountered in producing indicators was the derivation of local denominators for several indicators.

John Maslen (*Geowise*) identified some key drivers leading to increased volumes of data being collected and increased obligations on public sector accountability, but there is less emphasis on sharing and dissemination. John emphasised the need to understand the audience for information, and their variation in knowledge and skills

ranging from data experts to informal users. Presentation is key to making information relevant, engaging (and fun – as evidenced by his sandcastles) but must be underpinned by solid foundations. This includes clarity of purposes for local information systems with resources, senior buy-in and stakeholder involvement. John proposed that this is best met by distributed and federated technical systems both across local systems and between national and local systems, and demonstrated Instant Atlas, a flexible and powerful interactive map-based analysis and presentation system.

Web: <http://www.instantatlas.com>

Alan Smith (*ONS*) demonstrated the atlas of indices of deprivation which was based on national data but was capable of being explored and visualised at a very local level. It provides valuable information for comparisons on the same basis. He also outlined the Digital National Framework (DNF) with its five strategic principles to provide a common referencing framework and industry standard for geographical information. This will enable the access and use of data more interactively than the current processes of downloading for re-use in local systems. Alan demonstrated the future with some examples of ONS experimental work using animation.

Web: <http://www.betterinfo.gov.uk>

Web: <http://www.dnf.org/Pages/home>

Andrew Hunt (*Durham Business School*) and **David Mell** (*North East Regional Information Partnership – NERIP*) described the North East Economic Model which is a regional input-output table set within a social accounting framework which gives a rich picture of the regional economy. With 111 sectors, some individual sector data is less reliable than others, but at broad sector level the model is much more robust, sufficiently so to consider extending it to sub-regional level. While specific forecasts are still not feasible, the model provides an excellent framework for examining potential scenarios by postulating specific changes, such as the impact of closure of a major RAF base in the region.

Web: <http://nerip.com>

Robert Radburn (*Leicestershire County Council - LCC*) and **Jason Dykes** (*giCentre, City University*) showed quite clearly in a stimulating demonstration that poorly presented information can be a barrier to understanding and hinders effective decision-making. Robert illustrated some recent graphic innovations at LCC using crime data, and some accessibility variations using a 'dashboard' display. These were essentially static analyses, mostly using Excel. Jason then described the emerging discipline of geovisualisation, using highly interactive graphics to explore complex data sets and produce 'human-centred geographical interfaces'. These could link Excel spreadsheets with Scalable Vector Graphics (SVG), or be

pursued using Keyhole Markup Language (KML) linking to sites such as Google™ Earth.

Web: <http://code.google.com/apis/kml/documentation/>

John Shepherd (*Birkbeck College*) queried whether rural statistics are ‘fit for purpose?’, then argued persuasively that, for the most part, rural statistics are increasingly ‘fit for purpose’. Concerns with rural disadvantage have created a demand for more pertinent and reliable evidence to inform policy for rural areas. Among other developments, the creation of a new definition of rural areas and an associated urban-rural classification have helped. While the classification is essentially a view of rurality from the 2001 Census, and has nothing to do with functions or uninhabited land, the resulting settlement pattern looks sensible. A further modelled classification on a 1 hectare grid has led to a number of studies at the Rural Evidence Research Centre (RERC) at Birkbeck College, including travel to work patterns in rural areas which brought a few surprises.

Web: <http://www.rerc.ac.uk>

Chris Roebuck (*Information Centre for Health and Social Care*) described the role of the Centre in the NHS national IT programme, acknowledging that it hadn’t had the best press to date! It’s a massive project and has massive potential to improve the way data are collected and shared. In particular, the Secondary Uses Service (SUS) project allows for the linkage of data from different sources for the analysis of healthcare trends, the effectiveness of treatments, benchmarking and clinical audit. SUS embraces anything not directly connected to patient treatment, and is key to shaping local services such as Practice Based Commissioning (PBC) and Payment by Results.

Web: <http://www.ic.nhs.uk>

John Stillwell (*University of Leeds*) concluded the formal proceedings with a presentation on Understanding Population Trends and Processes (UPTAP) which is an initiative funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) to build capacity in secondary data analysis, especially of large scale data sets. See John’s article on page 9 of this issue.

From the floor **Peter Capell** (*AGI*) provided some closing thoughts, stressing that ‘local’ can be powerful locally, but best practice required linking of local and national systems, and added that technological advances such as some of the visualisation methods highlighted during the day should increase the ability of data professionals to provide more easily understood support for decision makers. Richard Alldritt was thus able to declare an honourable draw, and meet his personal target of calling time without delaying the wine reception.

NEWS

Output Area Classification User Group

The OAC User Group (OACUG) was formed in late 2006 with to promote the use of the National Statistics Output Area Classification (OAC) and area classifications generally. Like BURISA, the User Group is affiliated to the Statistics User Forum (SUF) of the Royal Statistical Society (RSS). OAC is a National Statistic and the User Group has support and representation from ONS, but is independent from ONS.

The Group is focussed around the well established methods and outputs of area classification, but OAC is distinctive as it is in the public domain - a basis for ‘open geodemographics’ - encouraging interchanges between sectors on issues ranging from the underlying statistical methodology to interactive graphics for effective presentation. This open approach is possible as a result of relatively recent changes in the policy on access to government information.

OAC distills key results from the 2001 Census for the whole of the UK at a fine grain to indicate the character of local areas. It was created in a collaboration between the Office for National Statistics (ONS) and the University of Leeds using the same well established methods as the related classifications of local authorities and wards. Like those it is freely available from ONS and other sources for all to use, and complements commercially available classifications. Among the wide ranging applications for OAC are profiling of populations, structuring other data, and targeting of resources.

There has been no convenient source of guidance about area classification and geodemographics - the statistical concepts and interpretation; the strengths and limitations; or the main steps in application. There is also the question of choice between a classification which can be purchased in ready made packages or one like OAC which is in the public domain but usually requires more input from the user. The OAC User Group has been set up to offer help to those who use OAC or would like to use it. The aims of the Group are also to provide opportunities to share experience and build expertise, and to help advances to be made through new methods and applications.

The group operates through open meetings, a self help network, and a dedicated website, enabling it to represent the interests of the OAC user community; there is no charge for membership. Input is welcome from anyone using or considering using OAC. To join the group and for more information:

Email: Martin.Robson@lbhf.gov.uk

Web: <http://www.areaclassification.org.uk>

EVENT

Output Area Classification User Group Meeting Royal Statistical Society Tuesday 18th September 2007 Making OAC work

As part of a focus on applications for OAC, this half day meeting will provide an opportunity to share experiences of using OAC, at any stage from initial ideas to finished study. The event will be on Tuesday 18 September at 13.30 to around 16.15, with registration and coffee from 13.00, in the Council Chamber of the Royal Statistical Society, 12 Erroll Street, London EC1Y 6LX. The programme will have an opening presentation on the latest developments on OAC, with participants then joining small groups for information exchange, coming together in a concluding session to discuss priorities for action.

Intending participants are invited to provide a brief outline of their activity with OAC, also mentioning any topics which could be addressed in the User Group and would particularly help use of OAC. This information will help decide the themes and organisation for the day. There is no charge for the event, but places are limited, and early registration is strongly advised. To book a place please contact Martin Robson including a brief outline of your activity with OAC; reservations will be confirmed, with more details of the programme.

Email: martin.robson@lbhf.gov.uk

Web: <http://www.areaclassification.org.uk>

EVENT

Royal Statistical Society International Conference University of York 16th to 20th July 2007 Statistics and Public Policy-making: Hope vs. Reality

The 2007 conference aims to address a wide range of topical issues, taking a realistic view of how statistical science has had, is having, and might have more impact on the way government policy is set and monitored both in the UK and around the world. The choice of high profile speakers will enable delegates to listen to views from policy makers, statisticians, users, analysts and those who monitor the outcome of policy. Themes will include crime, education, trust in statistics, statistical legislation, and the way statistics is contributing to policy on epidemics, including avian flu, foot-and-mouth disease, and bovine TB. Healthcare will feature the deliberations of NICE and the quantitative basis for regulation.

A methodological strand will include synthesising evidence, assessing the value of information, and the role of randomised trials in policy-evaluation. Other issues will include why some areas of policy have such a weak quantitative basis; how the media interprets the information presented by policy-makers; and how statisticians and users of statistics can shed light on issues of public concern. Full details, registration forms and fees can be accessed from the RSS web site.

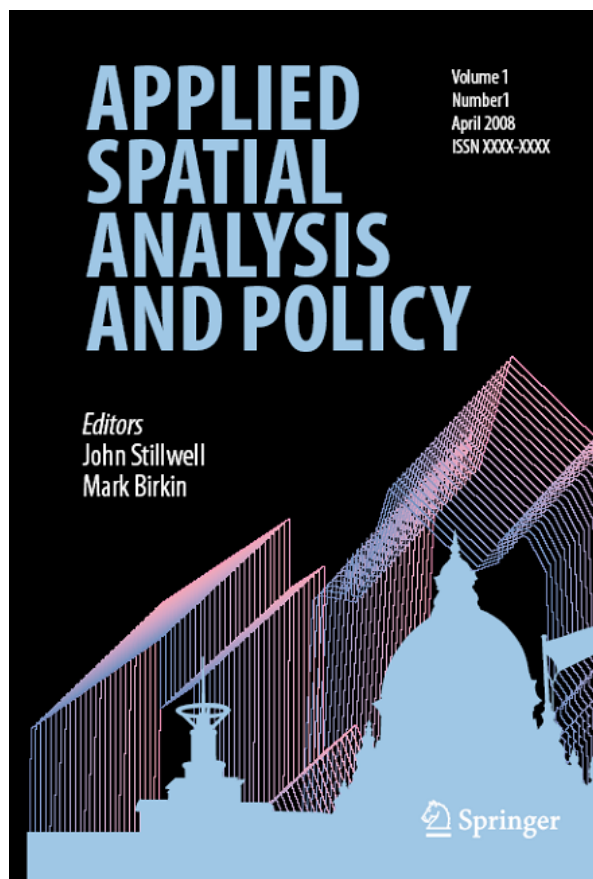
Web: <http://www.rss.org.uk/rss2007>

NEWS

Applied Spatial Analysis and Policy

This is a new, international, peer-reviewed journal with a specific focus on the practical application of analytical principles and findings at different spatial scales. ASAP concentrates on presenting the results of applications of GIS and quantitative modelling methods, including those commissioned or sponsored by public or private sector organizations. The first issue of ASAP is due for publication in April 2008 and contributed papers are welcome NOW. More information is available on the ASAP web site.

Web: <http://www.springer.com/west/home?SGWID=4-102-70-173734904-0>



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BURISA contributions and publication timetable

We welcome contributions in a variety of formats: “newsy” paragraphs; full-length articles (about 2,000 - 2,500 words); conference reports and calls for papers; project outlines and updates; recent publications; and letters responding to previous articles or highlighting issues of interest to our readership. Please send all contributions to the Editor.

for BURISA No 173 September 2007
for BURISA No 174 December 2007
for BURISA No 175 March 2008

copy deadline is 10th August 2007
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What is

BURISA?

BURISA is the British Urban and Regional Information Systems Association

BURISA is an informal, non profit-making, unincorporated association of practitioners whose common interest is the use and management of information and the development of information systems for services to the public. Each member is co-opted in a personal capacity and gives his or her time voluntarily (but generally with the sponsorship of employers) to serve the aims of the Association.

BURISA aims to promote better communication between people involved with information and information systems in local and central government; health services; utilities; and the academic and commercial worlds through its regular newsletter, annual conferences and occasional workshops.

BURISA interests span information systems for planning, policy making and service provision mainly, but not exclusively, in the following areas:

- Physical planning and development
- Housing
- Social services
- Economic development
- Education
- Transportation
- Health services
- Utilities
- Library services

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