

Foundations set for new access agreement

The UK Data Archive is delighted to announce a new working relationship with the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, based in Dublin.

Set up by the European Council in 1975, the Foundation provides information, advice and expertise – on living and working conditions, industrial relations and managing change in Europe – for key actors in the field of EU social policy on the basis of comparative information, research and analysis.

In looking to wider dissemination and longer-term preservation of the data it collects, the Foundation contacted the UK Data Archive as a member of the Council of European Social Science Data Archives (CESSDA). The UKDA was pleased to embark on negotiations to aid the Foundation in its policy to make its datasets and accompanying documentation available for third-party use. Datasets are made available as soon as the Foundation has done its own general analysis of a dataset.

The first data collection received was the European Quality of Life Survey (EQLS). This survey, carried out in 2003 and covering 28 countries, provides data and analysis on issues such as employment, education, housing, family life, health and life satisfaction and perceived quality of society. A second survey in the series will take place in 2007.

Later in 2006, the harmonised editions of the European Working Conditions Surveys will be deposited. These surveys aim to provide an overview of the state of working conditions in the EU as well as indicating the nature and content of changes affecting the workforce and quality of work.

The Foundation intends to deposit also the European-wide datasets on: employee participation at workplace level; working time preferences; and working time and work-life balance policies in establishments. The data collections will be available to all registered users for not-for-profit purposes. Commercial orders require depositor permission.

John Hurley of the Foundation gave a presentation on the access, usage and impact of their datasets at the ESDS International data conference in March 2006.

www.esds.ac.uk/international/access/eurofound.asp
www.esds.ac.uk/news/eventdetail.asp?ID=1502 ●



European Foundation
for the Improvement of
Living and Working Conditions

ESDS International enhances OECD data portfolio

Following a number of user requests, ESDS International is pleased to announce the addition of an OECD International Trade by Commodities Statistics (ITCS) database to its portfolio. Also, as a result of additional ESRC data acquisition funding the OECD's Structural Analysis (STAN) and National Accounts databases will be made available over the summer.

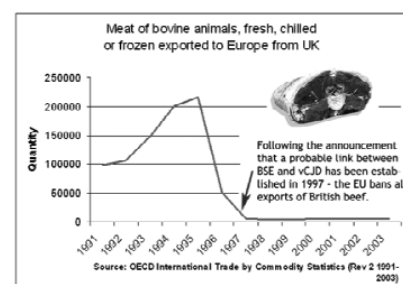
What is new? The ITCS database contains annual time series data from 1961 onwards for OECD member countries (plus China, Hong Kong and Chinese Taipei), on the quantity and value of foreign trade by commodity. Detailed information by commodity gives researchers a new important tool in analysing trade flows and trade composition.

The STAN database contains annual times series data on production, employment, investment and trade for OECD countries. An important feature is that the dataset covers the whole private sector, including non-manufacturing categories and services. Use STAN to analyse productivity, competitiveness, structural change, and employment trends within and between countries.

The National Accounts database presents detailed data on annual national accounts for OECD countries from 1970 onwards. Recently expanded to include financial and general government accounts, researchers can now investigate financial flows between governments, businesses and the households.

Contact ESDS International with any problems finding and accessing the data or with any feedback on the service. ●

Something to beef about? EU/UK bovine trade in the 1990s.



Social Science Week workshops

ESDS held two events in London as part of the ESRC's Social Science Week. The workshops attracted participants from all over the country, primarily from the academic and library sectors.

The first meeting looked at exploring the potential of international comparative micro data sources, with Professor Peter Elias, ESRC's Strategic Adviser on Data Resources, chairing the day. The morning session focused on introducing a selection of the most popular cross-national international social surveys, while the afternoon was devoted to case studies of re-use of these data. Professor Roger Jowell, Dominique Joye and Meinhard Moschner covered the European Social Survey (ESS), International Social Survey Programme (ISSP) and Eurobarometer (EB) surveys respectively. Martin Bauer, John Hurley and Richard Rose presented their work on re-using Eurobarometer and European Foundation datasets. A number of methodological issues arise in the reanalysis of comparative datasets, such as country context and individualist and ecological fallacies. The workshop provoked lively discussion including the use of comparable questions over time and ways of creating time series data from existing sources.

ESRC's plans for international data include specific initiatives for the acquisition and availability of international micro data and undertaking a stocktaking exercise of the ESDS International data holdings and delivery. Professor Peter Elias emphasised the importance ESRC attach to the sentiment of making publicly-funded data destined for publicly-funded research free at the point of use. This was well received by everyone in the audience. ESDS are actively seeking to acquire a number of key cross-national data sources.

The second event was a one-day conference focusing on data sharing. The morning session took participants on a tour of data sharing initiatives, calling upon the experiences of two leading data archives; the Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR) based in Michigan USA and UKDA to provide a national and international flavour. This was followed by three of the UK Research Council describing their data sharing policies and strategies for the future. Four lively speakers went on to present achievements in data sharing across different disciplines, ranging from European online access to social surveys data; massive data sharing in biomolecular science, using the British Antarctic Survey to make global predictions, and the open source AstroGrid project for astrophysicists.

The conference highlighted a number of commonalities in data sharing across disciplines, including supporting good data management and data acquisition and access procedures, with a view to developing policies for 'new' data types and recognising a need for further encouragement and incentives.

www.esds.ac.uk/news/eventdetail.asp?ID=1502

www.esds.ac.uk/news/eventdetail.asp?ID=1503



UKDA learning materials in Jorum

UKDA has recently submitted its X4L Survey Data in Teaching (SDiT) learning materials to the Jorum service. Jorum is a free online repository service for teaching and support staff in UK further and higher education institutions, helping to build a community for the sharing, re-use and repurposing of learning and teaching materials.

The Jorum repository offers a searchable online library of learning and teaching resources for use by academic and support staff in the UK. The system contains information about resources, i.e. metadata, and in most cases the resources themselves. Users can search or browse resources using specific educational classification systems and vocabularies and then preview and export them for use within their institution.



The SDiT materials were developed in 2003-04 as part of the Exchange for Learning Programme, and use the study of crime in society to show how existing data sources can be utilised. The outputs from the project are a variety of free teaching and learning resources relating to social science and statistics based on data from the British Crime Survey. The materials use learning strategies that encourage the teaching of research methods within a substantive context, saving teachers considerable time and effort and also offering ideas for utilising data sources in their own teaching.

www.jorum.ac.uk
x4l.data-archive.ac.uk

Coming soon: new design for ESDS web site

The ESDS web site is being redesigned, following extensive usability testing, to make it easier to navigate, more accessible and more visually attractive. New features include: data catalogue search and browse facilities; designated web advice for specific users; and online step-by-step guides.



Inside the data factory

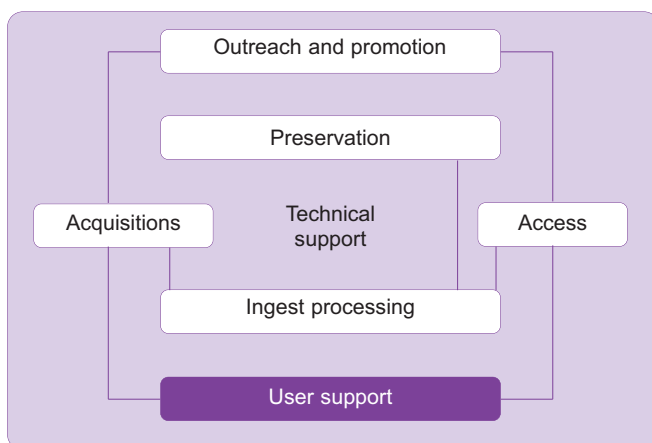
User support

ESDS is dedicated to supporting users of social and economic datasets for secondary analysis for research and teaching, from the novice researcher to the experienced data analyst, providing:

- help desks - for advice on finding data and searching the online catalogue; accessing data; registering; downloading and ordering data; using data; help with the most popular data handling and analysis software; ESDS Nesstar Catalogue; and where to find publications and ready-made figures
- frequently asked questions web pages - including questions about finding and accessing data, data formats and how to cite data
- advice on resources for teaching and learning
- online guides – including introductions to various ESDS services; topic-based user guides on the most popular themes; 'How-to guides'; and annotated themed training/teaching datasets
- a variety of training events, workshops and courses for users at varying levels of expertise

- JISCmail lists informing users of forthcoming events, new data releases and new developments
- site representatives contact details for locally-obtainable general advice and information
- downloadable tools and utilities

ESDS provides dedicated web pages for each of the ESDS specialist data services (ESDS Government, ESDS International, ESDS Longitudinal, and ESDS Qualidata), accessible from every UKDA and ESDS web page via a drop down link to services. These include specialist help desks, information on finding, accessing and using specific data series, access to teaching datasets, additional online resources, and enhanced data and documentation. ●



Goodbye to Lucy

ESDS is very sad to announce the departure of one of its key senior management team. Lucy Bell, formerly Head of Information Development, Systems and Preservation, has left to spend more time raising her young family. Arriving at the Archive in 2001 as Census Registration Service Coordinator, Lucy's first major achievement was the negotiation of the licensing and data access arrangements for the Census Dissemination Units. Diplomatic negotiation is one of Lucy's most admired skills, and her calm and compassionate nature and quick intelligence make her an excellent consensus-builder. Upon her promotion to Associate Director, Lucy brought these team-building skills to the technical section. She leaves behind a tighter, better organised, and more efficient, if much sadder, ESDS. We wish her all the best for the future. ●



Metadata harvesting

An Open Archives Initiative Protocol for Metadata Harvesting (OAI-PMH) compliant version of the Data Catalogue is now available. There is at present no user-friendly interface, just the standard six OAI verbs: Identify, GetRecord, ListIdentifiers, ListMetadataFormats, ListRecords and ListSets.

Parameters required for some of these verbs, such as 'Set' and 'MetadataPrefix' can be found using other verbs e.g. ListSets, ListMetadataFormats. The three main sets are ESDS, HDS and CENSUS, which should be entered in capital letters. The three metadata formats supported are OAI_DC, MARC and DDI. Please note the identifier is always the full string (e.g. oai:esds.ac.uk:ESDS/ESDSA/sn1234.xml).

The service is mainly there for organisations to harvest records from the Data Catalogue through the ListRecords verb.

oai.esds.ac.uk ●

Capturing context for qualitative data

On 3 May ESDS Qualidata held a workshop as part of the QUADS Demonstrator scheme to address the issue of defining and capturing data context.

Defining how to provide context for raw data to make it more 'usable' is a complex and sometimes contentious topic that has been the focus of some heated debates within the qualitative data community. ESDS Qualidata has spent 10 years working in the area of sharing qualitative data, and has done much to establish informal ways of documenting raw data, such as interview texts and field notes. In addition to written materials arising out of the project, interviews with depositors have proved to be one of the most effective ways of capturing context. Contextual needs for 'raw data' depend on the particular intended usage: description; comparative research, restudy or follow-up study; augmenting new data collection; re-analysis or secondary analysis; verification; research design and methodological advancement; or teaching and learning.

Situating data in its context requires both micro and macro level features to be considered including: how the research question was framed, the research application process, project progress, fieldwork situations, analyses processes and output/publication activities. For example, when undertaking a replication or restudy, detailed information on sampling procedures, fieldwork approaches and question guides is essential.

The day fostered an opportunity for QUADS projects to share experiences from work in progress. The workshop gave some useful input into consensus on mandatory elements for providing necessary context. A guide to best practice with advice on capturing context as it relates to different kinds of secondary analysis and data re-use scenarios will be collated by ESDS Qualidata.

quads.esds.ac.uk ●

Race for Life

The UKDA has entered a team in this year's Race for Life at the University of Essex, raising funds for Cancer Research.

This is the thirteenth year of the Race for Life but the first for the UKDA team and what a team! Fighting their way to the start line on 16 July will be Melanie Wright, Hilary Beedham, Pam Miller, Julie Missen and Sue Cadogan with two honorary UKDA team members, Lauren Miller and Gail Buckley.

A training plan has been formalised and is about to be actioned (now the rain has stopped), and we all have new training shoes.

We're not expecting to blaze a trail around the campus course because we care about the environment and our new shoes but we are

committed to taking part in the event, completing the 5km and to raising vast amounts of money for the cause. If you would like to sponsor us, please visit the web site.

www.raceforlifesponsorsome.org/UKDA7 ●



AHDS History News

Recent releases

- Selected Wills of West Northamptonshire, 1500-1700 (SN 5328)
- Advance Contracts for the Sale of Wool, c. 1200-1330 (SN 5325)
- Pinner Census, 1901 (SN 5323)
- Views of Hosts: Reporting the Alien Commodity Trade, 1440-1445 (SN 5297)
- Property Rights in Seventeenth Century France (SN 5224)
- Colonial Possession: Personal Property and Social Identity in British India, 1780-1848 (SN 5254)

- Cornwall Online Census Project, 1841 (SN 5221)
- Railway Timetables on Selected Important and Minor Routes, 1850, 1870, 1887 and 1910 (SN 5234)
- Database of Australasian Government Loans Offered by Public Sale in London, 1857-1914 (SN 5222)
- Catalogue of the Published Papers of the National Association for the Promotion of Social Science, 1857-1886 (SN 5209)
- Agricultural Census Parish Summaries, 1877 and 1931 (SN 3980)

Further information:
ahds.ac.uk/history/collections/index.htm.

AHDS History email alert service:
www.jiscmail.ac.uk/lists/ahds-history.html ●

Forthcoming Events

5 June 2006: National Child Development Study (NCDS) and 1970 British Cohort Study (BCS70): a workshop for potential users, Cardiff University

26 June 2006: 2008 NCDS and BCS70 consultative conference, London

26 June 2006: An introduction to UK Microdata - focus on ethnicity, University of Surrey

28-30 June 2006: Second International Conference on e-Social Science, Manchester

5 July 2006: Health Survey's User Meeting, Royal Statistical Society, London

6-7 July 2006: Envisioning future challenges in networked information, York

8 July 2006 - 18 August 2006: 39th Essex Summer School in Social Science Data Analysis and Collection, University of Essex

12-14 July 2006: Methodology of Longitudinal Surveys (MOLS 2006), University of Essex

17-20 July 2006: ESRC Research Methods Festival, St Catherine's College, Oxford

17-21 July 2006: The British Household Panel Study: Data Confrontation Workshop, University of Essex

12-14 September 2006: International Conference on Child Cohort Studies, Oxford

14-16 September 2006: British Sociological Association Medical Sociology Group Annual Conference 2006, Edinburgh

Further details of events and training courses can be found on the ESDS web site.

Editorial group enquiries
Email: publicity@esds.ac.uk
Tel: +44 (0)1206 872319/873159
Fax: +44 (0)1206 872003

General ESDS enquiries
Email: help@esds.ac.uk
Tel: +44 (0)1206 872143
Fax: +44 (0)1206 872003

Acquisitions
Email: acquisitions@esds.ac.uk
Tel: +44 (0)1206 872572/872974
Fax: +44 (0)1206 872003

ESDS Government
Email: govsurveys@esds.ac.uk
Tel: +44 (0)161 275 1980
Fax: +44 (0)161 275 4722

ESDS International
Email: international@esds.ac.uk
Tel: +44 (0)161 275 6109
Fax: +44 (0)161 275 6071

ESDS Longitudinal
Email: longitudinal@esds.ac.uk
Tel: +44 (0)1206 872143
Fax: +44 (0)1206 872003

ESDS Qualidata
Email: qualidata@esds.ac.uk
Tel: +44 (0)1206 873058
Fax: +44 (0)1206 872003

AHDS History
Email: info@history.ahds.ac.uk
Tel: +44 (0)1206 872326
Fax: +44 (0)1206 872003

Economic and Social Data Service
UK Data Archive
University of Essex
Wivenhoe Park
Colchester
Essex CO4 3SQ, UK