



Economic and Social Data Service

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Economic and Social Data Service
Annual Report 2004-2005

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Introduction

The focus of last year's Annual Report was on the creation of a new national data dissemination service for the UK Higher Education (HE) and Further Education (FE) sectors. The emphasis was on the establishment of the tools that underpin the Economic and Social Data Service (ESDS), which was established in January 2003 as part of a joint vision shared between the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) and the Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC). The main story for the period covered by this report – August 2004 to July 2005 – is a rapid maturing of the service. Although the ESDS could still be considered to be quite young, it has, out of necessity, grown up very quickly. The increase in demand for the services that it offers has been quite dramatic. As summarised in the Highlights section of the report which follows this introduction, performance across the distributed service is up on all fronts: more data collections acquired and processed; more users registered; more datasets delivered; more online data browsing and tabulation sessions; and more user queries received and answered. Another important element of this maturing process has been the support of data use and training through the development and production of more online guides and tutorials, and the hosting of data-related workshops, research conferences and training sessions. The success of these, in particular, actively demonstrate that providing a data service is about more than just providing access to quality research and learning data resources, but also about supporting and promoting the use of such materials.

As part of the maturing process, over the reporting period ESDS has also strived, where possible, to join up and link to other related ESRC and JISC investments. Examples of this can be seen in the close working with the Question Bank (QB) team at Surrey, involvement in the new e-social science initiative and, perhaps most visually from a user perspective, developing a common transferable registration interface across ESDS and the Census Programme. Equally, ESDS has continued to work closely with other national organisations, in particular the Office for National Statistics (ONS) and The National Archives (TNA), to improve access and preservation arrangements to important data resources.

To support high quality research, teaching, and learning in the social sciences by acquiring, developing and managing social and economic data and related digital resources; and by promoting, disseminating and supporting the use of these resources as effectively as possible.

ESDS is also critically aware that it increasingly operates in a global data environment. Thus over the past year it has worked to improve access to social science data collections held in other countries, as well as facilitating access arrangements to UK data for foreign researchers. Important technical developments are well underway to significantly enhance resource discovery of data housed overseas, and these will be rolled out over the coming year.

Lastly, this year witnessed the start of the first formal review of ESDS. The ESRC and JISC initiated a joint mid-term review of the service in May 2005. This continued until December, when the Review Panel, chaired by Dr Jeremy Harbison, reported its findings to the ESRC's Research and Resources Board. Although this crosses over into the next reporting period, we are glad to announce that the Review Panel unreservedly recommended the continuation of ESDS and have advocated renewed funding for the service until 2012. In so doing, it also praised the ESDS for its achievements to date, both in establishing and maturing a national service in a relatively short time span. The findings of the Review Panel serve as an endorsement of our efforts to turn our mission statement into reality.

Professor K. Schürer, AcSS
Director, ESDS

Highlights

One of the key highlights of the reporting year 2004-05 has to be the continued pattern of increased use of and demand for the ESDS services. Growth was experienced across all areas of ESDS. This trend was particularly marked in the case of ESDS International which saw a doubling of users compared to the previous year, and a tripling of the number of data access sessions, recording a total number across all international macro datasets of some 58,000. Equally, the number of ESDS Government and ESDS Longitudinal datasets distributed also rose sharply. However, the greatest increase in use in proportional terms was recorded by ESDS Qualidata which witnessed more than a three-fold increase in the number of datasets disseminated.

This across-the-board rise in the use of the ESDS collection in part reflects the continued development of the data portfolio. In all, 177 new datasets or collections were acquired from a range of data providers. Highlights this year have included the long-awaited Eurostat New Cronos database, containing high quality macro-economic and social statistics time series data from 1960 onwards for the 25 European Union (EU) member states, organised according to a number of statistical themes, such as, economy and finance, industry, agriculture and fisheries, environment and energy. ESDS International's portfolio of macro datasets was completed in November 2004 with the release of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) Government Finance Statistics, although additional funding from the ESRC in relation to the work of the cross-council UK Energy Research Centre (UKERC) and the development of the Towards a Sustainable Energy Economy (TSEC) programme made possible the procurement under licence of the International Energy Agency (IEA) databases on energy production, trade, stocks, transformation, consumption, prices and taxes and greenhouse gas emissions. These datasets were released in June 2005. In the same month ESDS Longitudinal released the first wave of the English Longitudinal Study of Ageing (ELSA), producing alongside the detailed and complex main file a specialist teaching dataset with fewer variables and a simpler data structure, as well as a sampler file available via the Nesstar data browser. The year also saw the release of the Families, Social Mobility and Ageing, an Intergenerational Approach, 1900-1988 study by ESDS Qualidata. This enhanced data collection allows online searching, browsing and download of some 170 detailed interviews averaging over 50 pages each. In conjunction with the release of these data, a thematic guide on social class and social change was also produced.

In addition to the acquisition of new data, a particularly important development during the reporting period has been agreement of new access arrangements for detailed micro data. Building on long-term discussion with ONS about the possibilities of providing access to more detailed, potentially disclosive micro data, this year a landmark agreement was reached with the ONS MicroData Release Panel. Brokered jointly by ESDS Management and ESDS Government this agreement, which requires users to sign a special licence defining the access terms and conditions, will allow users access to highly detailed data never before available to the UK research community. The first dataset released under these new arrangements was the Annual Population Survey, 2004, and it is expected that this collection will be followed by a number of others in the future.

In part, the successful brokering of this new set of access arrangements with ONS was influenced by the fact that from January 2005 the UK Data Archive (UKDA), which hosts the management of ESDS and disseminates and preserves most of the ESDS data collection, was designated a legal place of deposit under the terms of the Public Records Acts. This followed a detailed site inspection by The National Archives (TNA) to ensure that the UKDA conformed to various British Standards and had an appropriate preservation policy in place. The inspection was passed with flying colours, the inspection team noting in their report that "arrangements for archival presentation and access are of a very high order, and will no doubt stand as a benchmark for other similar services in the future".

ESDS has benefited from a number of external awards in the reporting year. While these do not form part of the core ESDS service, per se, such additional awards made to the host institutions serve to augment ESDS, adding value and benefit to the ESDS user community. The UKDA was successful in gaining two awards from the new ESRC Qualitative Data Archiving and Dissemination Scheme (QUADS), both of which will directly benefit ESDS Qualidata. The scheme has been funded to encourage the broader acceptance and take up of data sharing and re-use and ESDS Qualidata will co-ordinate the five projects funded under the scheme. The QUADS Co-ordination service will provide a web site, organise promotional activities and host meetings to show the project demonstrators being developed. The second award, Smart Qualitative Data: Methods and Community Tools for Data Mark-Up (SQUAD), was gained in conjunction with the Human Communication Research Centre, School of Informatics at the University of Edinburgh, and will explore methodological and technical solutions for exposing digital qualitative data to make them fully shareable and



exploitable. UKDA also won an award to provide dedicated data management support for the the cross-council Rural Economy and Land Use Programme (RELU). Equally, Manchester Information and Associated Services (MIMAS) and Cathie Marsh Centre for Census and Survey Research (CCSR) collaborated on a successful bid to the ESRC Research Development Initiative for funding to develop teaching and learning materials around linking macro and micro international data sources.

In completing this review of the year's highlights, it is important to remember that ESDS does a lot more than just making data available to the UK social science research and teaching community. It also supports the use of data through a range of activities such as workshops, conferences, and published guides. In line with the overall increase in data use, the number of queries handled by the various ESDS help desks rose from just over 2,000 to just short of 3,000. The ESDS Government's Annual Research Conference was held in October 2004 at the Institute of Mechanical Engineers, London, on the topic of 'Coronary Heart Disease: evidence from survey data'. This proved to be extremely timely as it just preceded the Government's announcement of new measures to promote healthy lifestyles. The ESDS Government-sponsored user group meetings on the Labour Force Surveys and the General Household Surveys have continued to provide a valuable way of ensuring interaction between users of these datasets and ONS, and were well attended by members of various government departments as well as by academics. Another example of the way in which users are supported has been the release by both ESDS Government and ESDS International of a searchable publications database including articles citing datasets included in the respective data portfolios. Likewise, each specialist ESDS service has continued to produce value-added support materials such as thematic guides, an example is the guide produced by ESDS International which provides advice on finding both macro and micro international data sources on educational outcomes, information about the cross-country comparability of these data and also additional sources of education data.

Finally, it is appropriate to end by saying something about the web site which underpins so much of ESDS, its activities, products and outputs. A major highlight this year has been the launch of the redesigned UKDA web site. While this site is broader than the ESDS site itself, acting as an umbrella for a range of services hosted by the UKDA, the site is central to ESDS in that it holds the ESDS central catalogue. The launch of the new site has brought with it a host of further functions to benefit the user: focused web searches, allowing users to search within an ESDS service web site; focused catalogue searches, allowing users to restrict their search to datasets from each service; and a browse function which allows users to move through the catalogue by year, title and study number.

All in all, 2004-05 has proved to be another successful and busy year for ESDS.



Management

ESDS Management

supporting high quality research, teaching, and learning in the social sciences by acquiring, developing and managing social and economic data and related digital resources; and by promoting, disseminating, and supporting the use of these resources as effectively as possible

Co-ordination, reporting and strategic planning

One of the important, yet largely hidden, tasks of ESDS Management is to ensure effective and efficient communication between the separate units of the distributed service. This continues to take a variety of forms: face-to-face meetings, emails, internal 'group' lists, video-conference sessions and use of a secure server site which can be accessed by all ESDS staff regardless of location. Linked to this central co-ordination function ESDS Management has also continued to produce and revise a number of internal guideline documents on issues such as preservation, data processing and cataloguing procedures, as well as style guides for web pages and printed publicity materials.

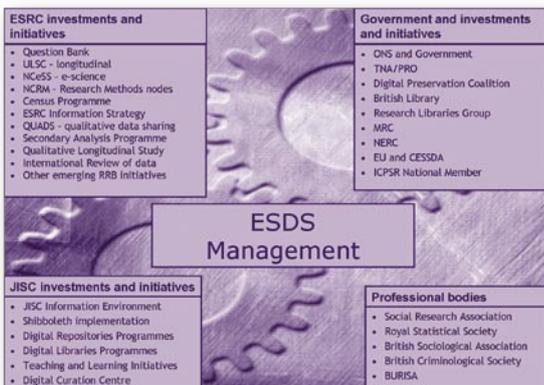
ESDS Management also provides the central reporting function for the service - collating periodic milestones, Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), submitting quarterly reports to ESRC/JISC and Service Level Definition (SLD) statistics to the JISC Monitoring Unit (MU), producing documentation for ESRC Troika meetings, and servicing the ESDS Advisory Committee. Likewise this year ESDS Management has responded to a number of requests from the ESRC for performance information on various aspects of the service relating to other planned ESRC investments. In particular, a heavy duty for ESDS in this period has been the co-ordination and production of the report on the service for the ESRC/JISC Mid-Term Review. Although this was a major undertaking, the report was subsequently well-received and passed by the Review Panel.

It is a central task of ESDS Management to ensure smooth strategic planning for the service as a whole, and in this regard the reporting period has been a busy one in terms of meeting and interacting with a large number of strategic partners in order to build synergies and information transfers wherever possible. This has included discussions and cross-working with a large number of initiatives and organisations, including ONS, the Centre for Applied Social Surveys (CASS) Question Bank (QB), the National Centre for e-Social Science (NCeSS), the National Centre for Research Methods (NCRM), the ESRC National Data Strategy, The National Archives (TNA), the Medical Research Council (MRC) data archiving and data dissemination initiative, the Digital Curation Centre (DCC), the Arts and Humanities Data Service (AHDS) and the Natural Environment Research Council (NERC) data centres.

At an international level, ESDS has continued to take a lead in a number of initiatives. For example, the UKDA, on behalf of ESDS, has been instrumental in leading a number of developments on the Data Documentation Initiative (DDI), the international standard which underpins cross-national finding aids, integrated catalogues and online data browsing software. Likewise the Director of ESDS has represented the ESRC and the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) as the UK representative on the Working Group on Research Infrastructures in Social Sciences and Humanities, part of the European Strategy Forum for Research Infrastructure (ESFRI-RISSH), and during the year was elected President of the Council for European Social Science Data Archives (CESSDA).

Promotion and user support

Over the year a total of approximately 150 events have been organised or contributed to. These have taken the form of general awareness raising about ESDS, workshops focusing on specific themes or datasets, or training on methodology relating to the use of ESDS-held data. Examples of these events are listed in the Diary section of this report. Two well-attended events were held as part of ESRC Social Science Week in June 2005 – a one-day conference focusing on social inequality highlighting the value of empirical evidence based on ESDS-supported data and the other on the Millennium Cohort Study (MCS) organised in association with the Centre for Longitudinal Studies (CLS).



This year has also seen the development and launch of another tool for supporting users - a series of two-page guides. These provide introductory and hands-on information to a range of the services offered in an easy to follow step-by-step manner. These include information on using Nesstar, finding and accessing data, and navigating the ESDS web site. More focused guides have also been produced by each of the specialist services about specific data collections.

The ESDS newsletter *UK Databytes* remains an important vehicle for communicating with users and stakeholders. Over the year four issues of the newsletter were produced, with a distribution of some 3,000. This year also saw the completion of an ongoing project to mount electronic PDF versions of all the UKDA Bulletins, dating back to 1975. Thirty years of the UK Data Archive newsletters can now be searched online. Entering a search term of 'director' reveals former directors of the Archive including Ivor Crewe, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Essex and Sir Howard Newby, Chief Executive of the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE).

ESDS Management has continued to provide a first point of contact through its central front line help desk. The help desk deals with a wide range of user queries, both pre- and post-use, and is linked to the help desks of the four specialist ESDS services, with a query-tracking system to ensure that any referrals to the service-specific help desks are monitored accordingly. Overall the central help desk has dealt with 2,074 queries this year, an average of around 8 queries per working day. In addition it has referred 52 queries to the specialist help desks.

Acquisitions

Most of the new acquisitions for the ESDS data portfolio are managed through ESDS Management. The year has continued to see regular meetings with ONS, the Scottish Executive and a number of other government departments and agencies to discuss data supply and quality. Similarly, advice and support has been given to a large number of ESRC award holders producing data as part of their research. In total, 365 acquisitions and new editions have been handled over the course of the year.

Of particular importance during this year has been the establishment of a system of special conditions and access arrangements allowing academic access to survey micro data previously undisclosed due to concerns over confidentiality. This possibility has arisen due to extensive discussion and negotiation with ONS involving both ESDS Management and ESDS Government. The first data release under this new set of arrangements was the Annual Population Survey, 2004. More are expected to follow over the course of next year.

Lastly, this period has also seen the launch of a new and much improved version of online, interactive data deposit forms. These are available as a downloadable, executable program, allowing depositors to complete the form in multiple sittings. These new deposit forms will not only ease the task for ESRC award holders and other data depositors in submitting data for deposit, but should also bring efficiency gains in terms of improved workflows with ESDS.

Promoting data in learning and teaching

ESDS is well aware of the value of encouraging students to use real-life data early in their research careers. ESDS endorsed the Survey Data in Teaching (SDiT) project funded under the JISC Exchange for Learning (X4L), hosted by the UKDA, which successfully distributed resource packs and accompanying CDs to over 700 universities and colleges.



Access

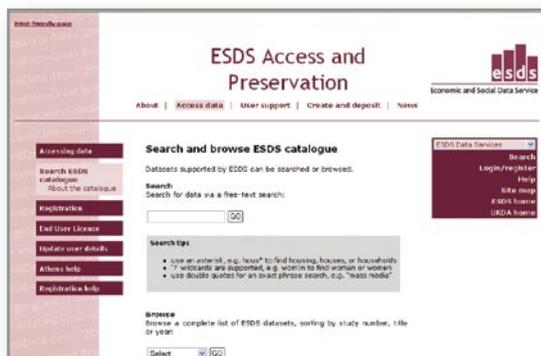
ESDS Access and Preservation

focusing on data acquisition, processing, preservation and dissemination

Internal systems

An important element of the work of ESDS Access and Preservation is to undertake the core processing of all the newly-acquired data collections (except macro international data ingested by ESDS International) including the generation of associated catalogue records and supporting metadata.

In this regard a significant amount of the work of the section takes place 'behind the scenes'. This is especially true of the development work to improve internal systems for the processing or throughput of data and metadata. During this year, for example, the catalogue's subject categories were comprehensively updated to cater for the expanding topic range in the ESDS collection, as well as making it possible to map to the subject category classifications used within other European archives. The creation of citation, disclaimer, and study description metadata were enhanced so that metadata files are now automatically updated whenever changes are made. All electronic documentation, including that for the title page, is now mounted on the web and linked to every catalogue record. This not only helps cataloguers but also provides users with all the information they need at the touch of a button.



This year has also seen improvements to the catalogue's functionality through the complete re-design of the UKDA web site. The launch of the new site has brought with it a host of further functions to benefit the user: focused web searches, allowing users to search within an ESDS service web site; focused catalogue searches, permitting users to restrict their search to datasets from each service; and a browse function which enables users to move through the catalogue by year, title and study number. Some 80 'virtual', qualitative records, relating to studies deposited outside the UKDA, have also been made available as part of an ongoing project to transfer key records from the earlier Qualidata resource discovery hub to the UKDA online catalogue. Conversely, users may also find information relating to ESDS from a variety of other, external sources: its catalogue records are now available via ESRC Society Today and, following the release of the UKDA Z39.50 link, from the geo-spatial resource discovery tool, *Go-Geo!*

Access to data

ESDS Access and Preservation processes orders and disseminates all data for all specialist functions aside from international macro data. ESDS is dedicated to providing easy online access to as many of its data holdings as resources allow. A number of data delivery and dissemination interfaces are made available depending on the type of data and user demand (Beyond 20/20, Nesstar, and Download), all of which are accessible from ESDS web pages. Data usage increased dramatically again this year, as ever more studies are provided for instant download or for online browsing via Nesstar.



www.esds.ac.uk/aandp

Preservation

ESDS Access and Preservation provides a data preservation facility across the whole of ESDS. Ongoing quality control has taken place throughout the year in order to ensure that the structure of all processed datasets is correct. Scripts have been written, tested and implemented which analyse the inclusion of header information and accept or reject files accordingly. Logs of preservation media are also maintained as part of routine workflows of the preservation system staff. Following the purchase of the new preservation server, ESDS has additionally, this year, reviewed and updated its entire server configuration, applying solutions such as migrating ESDS web services to a network load-balanced service in order to improve resilience.

Data management

This year has seen more attention devoted to providing expert written guidance on data management. ESDS has benefited from the dedicated work undertaken in this area by the RELU Data Support Service (DSS). The RELU DSS, based at UKDA, supports data creators in the large-scale cross-council ESRC, Natural Environment Research Council (NERC), and Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC) supported research programme. A booklet on data management covering topics from metadata to back-up, version control and security of data has been drafted and will be formally launched in 2006.



CASE STUDY

The months following the release of the 2003 Home Office Citizenship Survey in March 2005 (the second survey in that series) have witnessed the continuation of an impressive pattern of usage for what is now one of the most popular survey series in the ESDS core collection.

The number of downloads and orders for the 2003 survey alone is already approaching three figures but it is the range of both use and users - in addition to the sheer number of accesses - that is particularly remarkable.

In 2004-05, data from the two Citizenship Surveys have been used in university classrooms, for postgraduate research, by local and central government officials, by commercial market researchers, for academic research and by not-for-profit charities and think-tanks. During this time, research using the surveys has focused on estimating quality of life measures, studies of ethnic minorities, civic participation/social capital, the role of councillors, understanding poverty/social exclusion, auditing the behaviour and lifestyles of the disabled and the ageing, attitudes towards government, the role of volunteering in society and lone-parent employment. These research projects have been undertaken across a range of disciplines including geography, politics, sociology and economics. The data have also been used on more than one occasion for teaching survey research methods in university departments. Indeed, given the popularity and versatility of the survey datasets, one should not be surprised that while the vast majority of users are UK-based, the survey datasets have been downloaded by users as far afield as Italy, Canada, the United States and Taiwan.

Government

ESDS Government

facilitating more effective use of large-scale government surveys

Awareness raising and training

The large-scale government surveys provide a key resource for UK social science. ESDS Government promotes and facilitates increased and more effective use of surveys such as the General Household Survey (GHS), the Labour Force Survey (LFS) and the Health Survey for England (HSE). ESDS Government has an annual theme around which resources are developed and workshops organised.

Health surveys

In 2004 the annual theme was health and this informed a number of resource activities. These comprised: developing a teaching dataset from the Health Survey for England; an online thematic guide to research on health using the large-scale government surveys and related datasets; an annual research conference on the more specific theme of coronary heart disease (CHD); and workshops which focused on the health surveys. These events provided very valuable interaction between the data producers and data users.

User groups

Interaction between data producers and users is a particular focus of the user group meetings, which are annual events held in each of three survey areas: the Health Surveys for England, Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland; the General Household Survey; and the Labour Force Survey and Annual Population Survey.

These meetings provide a forum where data producers explain planned changes or developments to surveys and receive feedback from users, and users give short presentations based on their research, often flagging up particular issues with a data source. The importance of these meetings was evidenced by the GHS User Group where ONS explained their plans to change the GHS to a four-year longitudinal design and use it to provide data for the European Union Survey of Income and Living Conditions. A discussion over the implications of this for research has been actively pursued with ONS and a set of papers can be found on the ESDS GHS web page: www.esds.ac.uk/government/ghs/.

The 2004 Labour Force Survey User Group was also the first public occasion on which researchers heard about plans for the ONS Special Licence. The Special Licence has been developed by ONS in collaboration with ESDS Government and ESDS Management to provide protected access to survey micro data that is potentially disclosive. It is now being trialled with the Annual Population Survey which has a large enough sample size to provide reliable estimates for Unitary Authorities or Local Authority Districts. The Special Licence adds an additional layer

of safety to micro data by requiring additional conditions to the standard End User Licence - more tightly controlled conditions of use - and imposing heavier penalties for misuse.

Geographic coverage

ESDS Government aims to extend across the UK with workshops, seminars and other meetings. The map below identifies the various locations that ESDS Government has covered since 2003.

A guide to Scottish data sources was completed this year and was launched at a very successful meeting on the research value of the Scottish Government Surveys. A similar guide for Northern Ireland is currently being developed and gratitude is expressed to both the Scottish Executive and Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA), respectively for their help with the guides.



Help desk

An often unsung feature of all the ESDS services are the help desks. Replying to queries often involves collaboration with ESDS Management and ONS. This year 242 queries were received.

Web resources

Since January 2003 the resources on the web have steadily been built up. ESDS Government has a policy that all knowledge-producing activities should generate some material on the web site. Thus the Frequently Asked Questions are continually added to and answers to users' queries that may be of benefit to other people are also now placed on the web.

Thematic guides

Each year ESDS Government produces a topic-based thematic guide, such as Employment and Labour Market, or Health. Over the reporting year the service has collaborated



with ONS over a guide to Social Capital. All the guides are designed for the web and thus have hyperlinks to related resources and documents. Equally, all have teaching datasets associated with them.

Statistical guides

The ability to use a standard statistical package is fundamental to using the government datasets and therefore ESDS Government has produced a detailed, step-by-step guide to SPSS and a guide to Stata. Both these guides have been heavily used, with 6,000 downloads recorded for the Stata guide and 2,500 for SPSS.

In addition to the ability to use statistical packages, users also need to understand when and how to use the weights that are produced for the key surveys. This year a guide to weighting, written by Alisdair Crockett of ESDS, has been produced and has subsequently been greatly used. There is a continuing need to provide further guidance on methods of dealing with missing data and the role of weights.

Variables that are consistent over time

One of the strengths of the government surveys is their ability to provide time trends. The Family Expenditure Survey, for example, began in 1968 and the GHS in 1971. However, one of the difficulties of exploiting the temporal dimension in the surveys is the changes in question wording and coding categories over time. This has emerged as an enormous area where much work is needed. Given the resources available, ESDS Government has adopted a strategic approach. Firstly, users have been consulted over the questions/topics where the need for consistent variables is greatest. Secondly, where users had already developed syntax to achieve consistency over time, permission has been sought to make this available for others. Thirdly, web pages have been developed that show comparability of variables over time and provide related syntax to generate consistent variables.

A publications database

During the reporting year a searchable database of publications based on the government surveys has taken details from the ISI Web of Knowledge for all the surveys supported by ESDS Government. Over time this will be extended with other data sources, such as JSTOR. The software for the database has been shared with other parts of ESDS.

Database of how government surveys are being used

This database records who is using the government surveys and what their research topic is. As such, it provides a useful information tool for those wishing to make contact with other users working in cognate areas and also for data producers who wish to see how their surveys are being used.

CASE STUDY

The ESDS Government 2004 Research Conference provided insights into understanding coronary heart disease (CHD) and related risk factors based on evidence from survey data. These included:

Mel Bartley, Department of Epidemiology and Public Health, University College London: Trends in heart disease risk factors 1984-1993

- examining differences in cardiovascular disease (CVD) risk factors over time: mean Body Mass Index (BMI) among men increased over time but there was no class gradient;
- the proportion of current smoking was greater for lower socio-economic groups than for higher socio-economic groups in both 1984 and 1993.

Seeromanie Harding, MRC Social and Public Health Sciences Unit, University of Glasgow: Ethnic patterns in cardiovascular disease

- results from the ONS Longitudinal study show that cardiovascular mortality among South Asians increased with increasing duration of residence in the UK, implying that the UK environment contributes to high rates of CVD rates in the South Asian group and that we could expect a rise among UK-born South Asians.



Madhavi Bajekal (left) from ONS talks with Sonia Saxena, Department of Primary Care and Social Medicine, Imperial College London.

Sonia Saxena, Department of Primary Care and Social Medicine, Imperial College London (co-authors Gareth Ambler, Tim J Cole, Azeem Majeed): Ethnic differences in obesity in British children

- more girls than boys were overweight and marked differences were seen between ethnic groups;
- Afro-Caribbean girls were more likely to be overweight and Pakistani girls were more likely to be obese than girls in the general population;
- Indian and Pakistani boys were more likely to be overweight than boys in the general population;
- there were no significant differences in the prevalence of obese and overweight children from different social classes.

Martin Jarvis, Department of Epidemiology and Public Health, University College London: Nicotine and smoking

- lighter smokers take in more nicotine per cigarette than heavier smokers;
- Scottish smokers have higher nicotine intakes than English smokers;
- considering socio-economic status, smokers in the most deprived category take in on average one-third more nicotine than other smokers.

International

ESDS International

providing access and support for a range of data sources

Burgeoning international data user community

Since the ESDS was established in 2003, an astonishing growth has been seen in the use of the international macro datasets produced by inter-governmental organisations such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), International Energy Agency (IEA) and United Nations. In the period this report covers, the international macro datasets were accessed on the data delivery software Beyond 20/20 58,575 times by a total of 4,007 unique users from 132 different institutions – this represents a trebling in the number of sessions and a doubling of unique users since last year's report. The total service usage figure since the start of the service was 5,447 unique users from 152 different institutions. These figures indicate a continued and growing demand for these types of macro international data across the whole of the community.

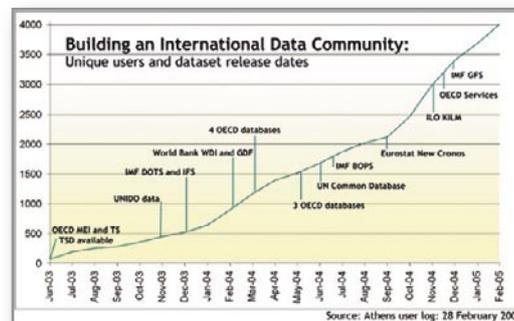
Enhancement of the data portfolio

This year, ESDS International has further developed its data portfolio, with the addition of 13 new macro datasets and a number of new international micro data collections. ESDS International also continues to provide access to international micro data from sister archives overseas.

At the beginning of 2005 a data redistribution agreement with the IEA was announced to provide UK academics with free access to their high quality datasets on energy production, trade, stocks, transformation, consumption, prices and taxes and greenhouse gas emissions. In addition the following datasets having been released during this reporting period:

- Eurostat New Cronos
- IEA Coal Information
- IEA CO2 Emissions from Fuel Combustion
- IEA Electricity Information
- IEA Energy Prices and Taxes
- IEA Energy Technology Research and Development Database
- IEA Natural Gas Information
- IEA Oil Information
- IEA Renewables Information
- IEA World Energy Statistics and Balances
- ILO Key Indicators of the Labour Market
- IMF Government Finance Statistics
- OECD Services Statistics

In addition to the datasets released this year, the National Statistics Time Series Databank, a collection of 40 major data publications containing over 40,000 time series relating to economics, trade, employment and industry in the UK was brought into line with all the other datasets in the portfolio. The existing SearchNS interface to this data was replaced with Beyond 20/20 so that all macro datasets within the portfolio are now delivered via a common interface.



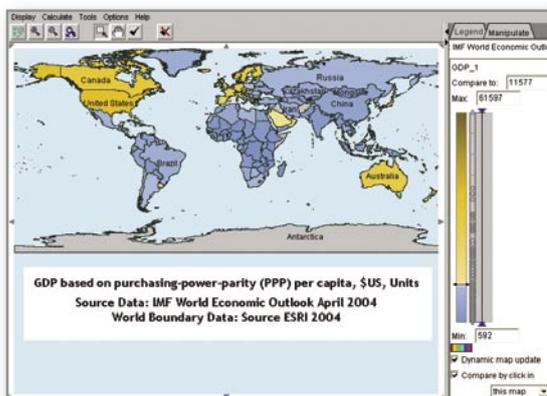
Beyond 20/20 application

A key accomplishment of ESDS International in November 2004 was the successful update of the data delivery software Beyond 20/20 Web Data Server to version 7. This was a major new release of the software requiring a new hardware/software configuration and a number of technical problems were overcome in order to implement the new architecture. Throughout, the updated service continued uninterrupted as users were seamlessly redirected to a development environment until the transition was completed.



CommonGIS application

This year the existing CommonGIS web-based data exploration interface was updated to include a set of European Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) World Factbook 2005 socio-economic data and a new interface to the IMF's World Economic Outlook (WEO) 2004 data using Environmental Systems Research Institute (ESRI) World boundary data. Since its release the WEO interface received an average of 666 page hits a month.



User support

The service has continued to produce supporting documentation each time a new macro dataset is released. This documentation includes a dataset-specific Beyond 20/20 worksheet and comprehensive dataset guide with dataset description and subject overview, links to appropriate supporting information, details of spatial and temporal coverage as well as information on periodicity and frequency of update.

In keeping with the service's aim to provide value-added support materials, the service has produced a thematic guide on educational outcomes. The guide is intended to provide advice on finding both macro and micro international data sources on educational outcome, information about the cross-country comparability of this data and also some additional sources of education data. The service has also produced a guide to accessing international micro data.

In addition to user guides, the service continues to maintain and create comprehensive metadata catalogue records for each new and updated dataset release. This reporting period has seen the addition of a new search facility which allows users to carry out a free-text search across micro and macro international datasets: www.esds.ac.uk/international/access/datasearch.asp.

This increased level of activity has in turn led to an increased response on the internal help desk. The number of calls submitted to the help desk has also risen from an average of 16 per month from 1 August 2003 – 31 July 2004, to 23 in this annual reporting period.

Lastly, ESDS International continued its outreach and training efforts, presenting papers at the IASSIST May 2005 conference and the joint United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)/ OECD Work Session on Statistical Dissemination and Communication in February 2005 and giving 12 international data courses.

CASE STUDY

In September 2000, the United Nations Millennium Summit agreed eight Millennium Development Goals. Nearly 190 countries have subsequently signed up to them. The goals range from halving global poverty and hunger to protecting the environment, improving health and sanitation and tackling illiteracy and discrimination against women.

For each of the goals, a target is defined using very specific indicators. For example, for the first goal - eradicate extreme poverty and hunger - the target is to halve the proportion of people whose income is less than one dollar a day by 2015, and the indicators being used are:

- proportion of population below \$1 per day;
- poverty gap ratio [incidence x depth of poverty];
- share of poorest quintile in national consumption.

The indicators chosen by the UN to measure the progress of the goals can be found in the databases available through ESDS International. For example, the three indicators for the first goal are available as time series in the World Bank World Development Indicators. The World Bank's Global Development Finance and the UN Common Database also contain the Millennium Development Goal indicators on health, education, equality, the environment and the flows of debt and aid.

Longitudinal

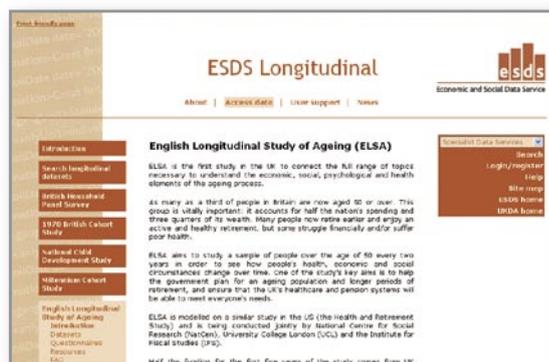
ESDS Longitudinal

supporting the use of key UK longitudinal data collections

New data resources

The year's major accession was the wave 1 data for the English Longitudinal Study of Ageing (ELSA), adding a new study to those already supported as core longitudinal resources. ELSA, a study of ageing and quality of life among older people, explores the dynamic relationships between health, social participation and economic position as people plan for, move into and progress through retirement.

In July, the National Child Development Study: Sweeps 5-6 Partnership Histories, 1974-2000 (NCDS) was also released. ESDS Longitudinal also acquired the thirteenth wave of the British Household Panel Survey (BHPS), which was made available in April.



The reporting year has seen a significant boost in online content. Each of the five core longitudinal studies now has a dedicated suite of pages that cover the datasets, questionnaires, associated resources on the web and a user FAQ, with pages supporting the ELSA collection being launched in conjunction with the publication of that dataset in March 2005.

ESDS Longitudinal web pages also now provide information on other longitudinal data held by ESDS that does not fall under the BHPS, birth cohort or ELSA studies. A substantial longitudinal data resources page has also been added. This resource contains links to organisations involved in the collection and analysis of longitudinal data, survey results and teaching resources.

Nesstar samplers

Making major studies available online via the ESDS Nesstar catalogue has been an important element of the wider drive to increase the visibility of, and access to, the ESDS Longitudinal data collection. The two BHPS sampler files made available last year via Nesstar have been heavily used in 2004-05.

In June 2005, ESDS Longitudinal released a further sampler file: the English Longitudinal Study of Ageing (ELSA); Wave 1, 2002-2003 : Teaching Dataset (SN 5172). Like the earlier BHPS samplers, the study has been made available via both Nesstar and the UKDA catalogue. The ELSA sampler dataset contains information obtained from individual interviews and self-completion questionnaires from all 12,100 ELSA participants. The file contains less than a tenth of the number of variables available on the main ELSA file and is designed for use as a teaching aid and also as a sampler for new and potential users of the main data.

Awareness raising and training

In conjunction with key stakeholders, ESDS Longitudinal has continued to organise, promote and provide data awareness and training events for the range of core longitudinal studies. Several workshops for potential users of the three birth cohort studies – NCDS, the 1970 British Cohort Study (BCS70) and the Millennium Cohort Study (MCS) – have been held in London and Manchester. These workshops have catered for researchers from a variety of backgrounds and have covered survey methodology, content and access issues over the course of a morning before introducing potential users to the data in a hands-on computer session in the afternoon. In July 2005, an introductory seminar for potential ELSA users was held at the Royal Statistical Society.

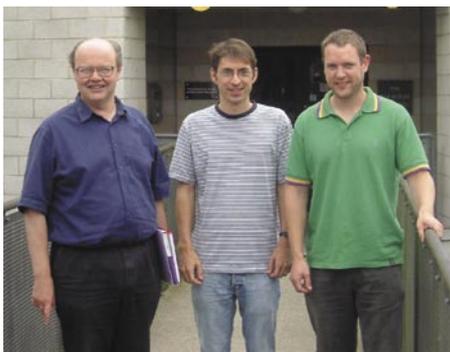


Over the course of the year, ESDS Longitudinal staff have also contributed to a number of other promotions: a poster and publicity presence at the NCDS/BCS70 and BHPS annual user group meetings and also at the biennial BHPS research conference in July. This year, for the first time, the Essex Summer School in Social Science Data Analysis and Collection ran a data confrontation course on the NCDS/BCS70; a session of this course being presented by ESDS Longitudinal staff. This intensive kind of data confrontation training is both appealing to and highly appreciated by new users. It is hoped that in the future similar events could be extended to cover the MCS and ELSA.

In addition to these contributions, ESDS Longitudinal also promotes other events and training resources for researchers interested in longitudinal data and analysis via its web pages and mailing list.

Grid-enabling data

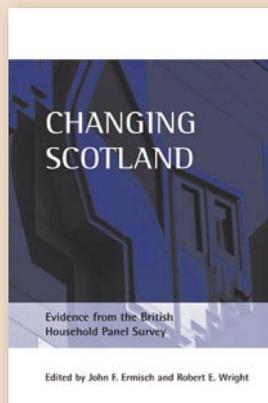
ESDS Longitudinal staff have been involved in discussions with NCESS about grid-enabling popular datasets. BHPS is one that routinely comes up in discussion because of its large sample, breadth of UK coverage, and years' worth of comparable data – making it ideal for scaling up to population estimates and linking to other data sources.



Nick Buck, Alasdair Crockett, Jack Kneeshaw

CASE STUDY

Changing Scotland: Evidence from the British Household Panel Survey edited by John Ermisch and Robert Wright



A new book, using evidence from the BHPS, examines lifestyles, social mobility, household formation, health and health behaviour, incomes and employment patterns in Scotland and compares these findings to the rest of Great Britain. The comparative studies in the edited volume make it possible to address the question of whether Scots behave differently despite similar policy regimes in Scotland and the rest of Great Britain, or the same despite some pre-existing differences in policy.

Notable among the findings is that the distribution of income in Scotland is relatively unequal by the standards of most developed countries, and that workers in Scotland stay longer in jobs than in England. Scottish employees are also more likely to be covered by collective bargaining and are more likely to be employed in the public sector than their English counterparts.

Changing Scotland uses data from the Scottish extension of the BHPS, which, along with a Welsh extension, was launched in 2000 to facilitate analysis of the two nations compared to England in order to assess the effects of the substantial public policy changes that were expected to follow political devolution.

Qualidata

ESDS Qualidata

providing enhanced access and support for a range of multimedia qualitative data sources

Data enhancements

Data enhancement activities involve two different strategies: digitising some of the older and most valuable qualitative collections that often still reside only in paper format and augmenting data collections with additional contextual materials such as user guides to enable more informed re-use.

Enhancing data thus represents one of the key activities for the day-to-day work of ESDS Qualidata. This year saw the completion of processing an important large-scale dataset – Paul Thompson’s study of Families, Social Mobility and Ageing, an Intergenerational Approach, 1900-1988 (100 Families). A total of 170 interview transcripts have been deposited, some over 130 pages long. Each transcript was edited into a standardised layout, then carefully proofed, corrected and prepared for eXtensible Markup Language (XML) markup, including speaker tags which were absent in the originals. The data have been made available for download as Word/RTF files and published in ESDS Qualidata Online.

In addition, the reporting year has seen significant progress on the development of various user guides. For example, a guide on Social Class and Social Change was prepared for the ESDS conference on social inequalities. This guide provides highlights of data held by ESDS within this theme.

Online access to qualitative data

This year a greater range of data has become available via ESDS Qualidata Online, focusing on social class and social change datasets. Over the course of a three month period more than two hundred interviews from four classic sociology datasets were loaded into the online data searching and browsing system.



Research awards

The UKDA won two new research awards this year, both of which complement the ongoing work of ESDS Qualidata. Successful bids were made to co-ordinate both the ESRC Qualitative Archiving and Data Sharing Scheme (QUADS) and one of its related projects, Smart Qualitative Data: Methods and Community Tools for Data Mark-Up (SQUAD). ESDS staff, together with project partners in Edinburgh, are investigating natural language processing tools for systematically preparing (using XML markup) qualitative data for exposure to the web. A set of XML elements (QualiDTD) for describing and marking up the content of qualitative data has been distributed in which the Document Type Definition (DTD) utilises two existing markup standards - the Data Documentation Initiative (DDI) and Text Encoding Initiative (TEI). ESDS Qualidata has also been liaising with the Oxford Text Archive, NCRM, and NCeSS qualitative data nodes, as well as colleagues in sister European data archives.

Resource discovery

The ESDS Qualidata catalogue records conversion project included work on the transfer of key catalogue records from the earlier Qualidata resource discovery hub to the UKDA online catalogue. Many datasets were acquired, processed and catalogued by Qualidata (1995-2000) before transfer to a place of deposit in the UK. Some 77 records were released in this past year giving rise to a spate of enquiries about these key UK sociology data collections still held as paper resources. Digitisation of all or part of the collections will be considered where demand becomes significant.

The other major resource development this year has been the revamping of the ESDS consent and confidentiality pages which have been completely restructured and updated. Examples of different consent forms relating to different research scenarios are now provided together with commentary on how to use them. This information offers more tailored advice to data creators who are grappling with the thorny problems of negotiating informed consent.



www.esds.ac.uk/qualidata



Publicity and outreach

ESDS Qualidata has worked hard this year at extending its ongoing mission to develop a wide-scale culture of secondary analysis of qualitative data materials. ESDS Qualidata staff have been busy out on the road encouraging re-use, and this year staff gave presentations at a number of academic workshops covering research ethics, re-use of data, and creating high quality data both in the UK and internationally. ESDS Qualidata organised and chaired two sessions on the Secondary Analysis of Qualitative Data. Speakers from Germany, the Netherlands, the UK and Canada spoke on the merits and problems of re-visiting qualitative data by offering case studies of analysis of existing data sources. Themes covered included the presentation and organisation of data, anonymity, approaches to re-analysis, and teaching with qualitative data sources.

ESDS Qualidata staff continue to publish on various aspects of archiving, accessing and re-using qualitative data. This year saw a number of significant publications, including a special issue of the *Forum Qualitative Research (FQS)* online journal on the theme of Secondary Analysis of Qualitative Data, co-edited by ESDS Qualidata staff.

Teaching and learning

Creating materials for learning about qualitative research data and methods is seen as a highly productive way of encouraging new users. A teaching dataset has been prepared that focuses on health, and more specifically on beliefs and attitudes to health and medical care, inter-generational relationships, and social history. The enhanced user guide for this particular study is an excellent teaching resource in itself, as it includes extracts from an interview with the author about the experience of conducting this research and a brief Scots dialect glossary. This pre-prepared dataset is now being used systematically in Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis (CAQDAS) Networking Project workshops.

CASE STUDY

'The Last Refuge' Revisited project aims to replicate Peter Townsend's major study of residential care for older people in England and Wales. His findings and recommendations were published in his book *The Last Refuge* (1962) and the material has been archived at ESDS Qualidata.

At the present time there is much concern about the management of residential care homes and what is happening to them. This concern focuses on short-term questions related to current policy. *'The Last Refuge' Revisited* project is concerned with the longer term: what kinds of homes continue to provide a service from one decade to another? What events precipitate closure? What adjustments help to sustain continuity?

The research involves two discrete but related projects. The first is a tracing study of the large number of homes which are no longer registered as care homes. The second is a follow-up study of 20 of the homes that are currently registered as care homes.

The project is being conducted by a research team replicating the methods used by Peter Townsend. The research team is using the material archived at ESDS Qualidata to inform their work. Interviews were conducted with 65 local authority chief or deputy chief welfare officers and 173 homes were visited. Interviews were undertaken with matrons, wardens and proprietors, as well as residents. In many cases, detailed notes were also made about the condition of the buildings and the facilities that were offered. Additional material included diaries kept by residents and professionals and Townsend's accounts of two institutions where he stayed and worked.

The value of the original research materials has been enriched by the direct participation of Peter Townsend in the re-study. He is an active adviser to the project and continues to be involved, for example, by making available newly-found materials such as his personal field notebooks from the 1950s.



Sources

www.open.ac.uk/hsc/lastrefuge/home.htm

www.data-archive.ac.uk/findingdata/snDescription.asp?sn=4750

Diary of the year 2004-2005

August 04

ESDS International holds an introductory workshop and a course on Analysis of Time Series using Stata, Manchester

ESDS Government runs workshop on Using Government Surveys for Research, St Andrews

ESDS Qualidata gives presentations at the RC33 Sixth International Conference on Social Science Methodology, Amsterdam

September 04

ESDS Government gives poster session at the Work, Employment and Society conference, Manchester

ESDS presents at the All Hands e-Science meeting, Nottingham

ESDS presents at the Statistics: Investment in the Future, International Statistical Conference, Prague

ESDS presents at New Ethical Challenges in Socio-Legal Research, London

ESDS staff attend the CESSDA Expert Seminar on data processing, Switzerland

October 04

UKDA staff exchange with ICPSR, Michigan, USA

ESDS Director presents at EC-sponsored meeting on Research Infrastructures for Social Sciences, Brussels

ESDS staff participate in the DDI Structural Reform Group meeting, ICPSR, Michigan, USA

ESDS Longitudinal runs workshop on NCDS and BCS70, Manchester

ESDS Government holds annual Research Conference - Understanding Coronary Heart Disease: evidence from survey data, London

November 04

ESDS Director invited as expert commentator to the launch of the Digital Curation Centre, Edinburgh

HM the Queen visits the University of Essex as part of the 40th anniversary celebrations and meets with ESDS staff

ESDS Government organises LFS User Group Meeting, London

December 04

ESDS staff attend Online Information conference at Olympia and SRA Annual Conference, London

Lori Newsom, Head of Publications from the IMF and David Blake from Databeuro visit **ESDS International**

ESDS Longitudinal presents session at the NCDS/BCS70 User Group Meeting, London

ESDS Qualidata staff attend seminar at the Finnish Data Archive, University of Tampere, Finland

ESDS Director represents ESDS on British Academy e-Resources Working Group

January 05

ESDS presents at the Ethics and Consent Issues meeting, Belfast

ESDS Longitudinal attends BHPS User Group Meeting, Essex

ESDS runs workshop on Social Science Data Archives: creating, depositing and using data, Loughborough

February 05

ESDS Access and Preservation invited by Wellcome Trust and the Medical Research Council to sit on the ALSPAC Review panel, conducting a site visit in Bristol

ESDS Government organises the GHS User Group Meeting, London

ESDS International presents a paper at the joint UNECE/OECD Work Session on Statistical Dissemination and Communication, Henley-on-Thames

ESDS Longitudinal organises Statistical Disclosure Control, University of Essex

ESDS Qualidata visits Liz Spencer for CAQDAS software consultation, Colchester

ESDS presents at the Microdata Release Panel, ONS, London

March 05

ESDS gives presentations at Leeds University Business School

ESDS Management provides expert contribution at the Statistics User Forum Executive Committee at the Royal Statistical Society, London

ESDS Government gives an expert contribution at the first meeting of the UK Datasets Forum, London

ESDS Qualidata gives an expert contribution at the Atlas-ti meeting, Berlin

ESDS Management provides expert contribution at the Digital Preservation Working Group at TNA, London

ESDS International runs introductory workshop on International Databanks, Manchester

ESDS holds workshop on Social Science Data Archives: creating, depositing and using data, Swansea

April 05

ESDS Management provides expert contribution at a meeting with ONS to discuss ONS Special Licence, London

ESDS hosts Social Science Data Archives workshop: creating, depositing and using data, Reading

ESDS Government holds microdata workshop: an introduction to the Samples of Anonymised Records (SARs) and ESDS Government Surveys, Plymouth

ESDS International holds introductory workshop on ESDS International Databanks, Edinburgh

ESDS Management presents and provides expert contribution at ESFRI, Bergen

May 05

ESDS International attends the OECD Forum, Paris

ESDS Government attends the UK National Strategy Committee meeting, London

ESDS Qualidata presents at the ESRC Identities Programme/ NCRM - Methodology workshop, Milton Keynes

ESDS Government attends a Round Table meeting with survey staff at ONS, London

ESDS International presents at the FORVUS event: Mapping the Future Online with Beyond 20/20 Seminar, London

ESDS International gives presentation to Nereus, the European data librarian group, London

ESDS chaired sessions and presented papers at IASSIST/IFDO 2005, Edinburgh

June 05

ESDS Qualidata runs workshop on data creation at the ICPSR Summer programme, Michigan, USA

ESDS Government assists with organisation of the ESRC Survey Link Scheme Workshop: briefing on the HSE, Manchester

ESDS runs workshop at Social Science Online - Internet for Sociology, Oxford

ESDS organises the Social Inequality: Using Evidence from Data workshop, London

ESDS presents a paper at the First International Conference on e-Social Science, Manchester

ESDS hosts introductory workshop on the MCS, London

ESDS Management organises the Madiera Conference, University of Essex

ESDS Longitudinal holds poster session at BHPS 2005/ EPUNet 2005 conferences, Colchester

July 05

ESDS Management attends the The Avon Longitudinal Study of Parents and Children Ethics Committee meeting in Bristol

ESDS Longitudinal organises introductory workshop to ELSA, London

ESDS Longitudinal presents at the NCDS/BCS70 Data Confrontation course, Essex Data Analysis Summer School, Colchester

ESDS Qualidata provides contribution to National Science Foundation Cybertools 2005 review panel, Washington, USA

Statistics

Introduction

This section produces a statistical summary of activity across all sections of ESDS. Figures are also produced where appropriate for the previous reporting year and in certain cases for the five-year period from 1999-00 to 2004-05 in order to facilitate comparisons and change over time. The internal booking systems of ESDS allow the creation of countless different statistics on a range of themes and at various levels of detail. Thus what is produced in this section of the report is no more than a digest aimed at the illustration of general patterns and overall trend. For those requiring more detailed statistical information on the working of ESDS, the service provides quarterly statistical returns in the form of a Service Level Definition (SLD) to the JISC Monitoring Unit (MU). These are all available from www.esds.ac.uk/news/jiscmu.asp.

Data acquired and processed

All data for ESDS, with the exception of the international macro data series, are acquired, processed and mounted on the Download service for online access by ESDS Access and Preservation at the UKDA. Due to the special licensing arrangements relating to international macro data series these are acquired directly by ESDS International at MIMAS, then processed and loaded onto the Beyond 20/20 data delivery server.

This year a total of 365 new datasets, updates and new editions were acquired, processed and made available online via either Download or Beyond 20/20, (Table 1). The rise from last year is mostly due to an increase in the scope of international macro data and updates, many updated monthly. Excluding the 13 international macro datasets,

Table 1 Datasets acquired and processed for online delivery

Service	2003-04			2004-05		
	New datasets	Updates and new editions	Total	New datasets	Updates and new editions	Total
Core	52	9	61	66	15	81
Government	34	104	138	39	72	111
International	15	42	57	40	89	129
Longitudinal	1	2	3	8	5	13
Qualidata	11	1	12	24	7	31
Total	113	158	271	177	188	365

In addition to the 365 datasets shown in Table 1, ESDS Access and Preservation acquired a total of 804 datasets from sister archives overseas and supplied these to users without formal acquisition, processing and cataloguing. In addition to the acquisition and processing of data reported in Table 1, ESDS Access and Preservation also undertake enhanced processing of data for publication in the Nesstar system for online browsing and data exploration. Overall 70 datasets were prepared for publication in Nesstar, compared to a total of 54 the previous year.

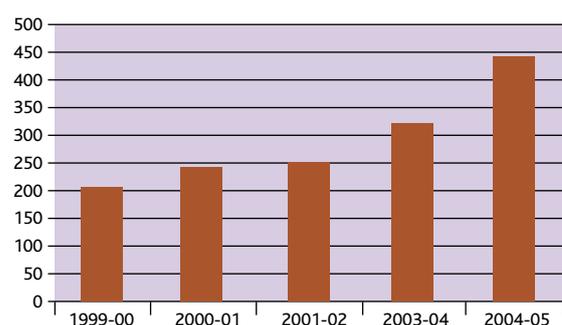
Table 2 Datasets processed for delivery via Nesstar

Service	2003-04			2004-05		
	New datasets	Updates and new editions	Total	New datasets	Updates and new editions	Total
Core	3	1	4	7	0	7
Government	26	18	44	33	26	59
International	1	1	2	1	1	2
Longitudinal	4	0	4	1	1	2
Total	34	20	54	42	28	70

Taking the basic processing and value-added Nesstar processing together, the volume of throughput, in terms of the number of datasets acquired and processed has increased by over a third (33.8 per cent) since 2003-04.

the figure for data acquired and processed is broadly similar to that for the previous year, but with an important difference. This year there were significantly more new datasets than new editions (164 new datasets compared with 113 last year). This is important not only because of the range of new data brought to the ESDS portfolio but also because in terms of resources the processing of new datasets is generally more resource intensive. Thus the balance of acquisitions for 2004-05 presents the maximum level of throughput, without a change in items of additional resources or further efficiency gains in the internal process procedures or a diminution of service. It should also be noted that one fifth of the data acquired and processed are core datasets - that is datasets that do not fall under the remit of the four specialist services.

Figure 1 Datasets processed



Datasets delivered

Usage of ESDS in terms of the delivery of datasets to end users is summarised in Tables 3 and 4, showing the number of data collections delivered to users by the various methods of data access offered by ESDS for each of the separate services. Table 3 shows datasets delivered to users by access method. Table 4 shows the number of accesses to the international macro data portfolio using Beyond 20/20.

Table 3 shows that overall the number of datasets delivered to users rose by 29.1 per cent, from 17,779 to 22,952. But this increase has to be interpreted with some caution. It can be seen that a large proportion of this rise was accounted for by an increase in datasets falling into the 'via/access' category. In the previous year this category related to data that were accessed by users via third parties, mainly local data libraries at Edinburgh, Oxford and the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE). In the current year, however, this category has been expanded to include all datasets that have been passed on to other researchers within the same team. This measure gives a more accurate picture of total use, but means that in comparison the figure for the previous year represents an undercount of total use. The table also shows that FTP and portable media are both on the decline as forms of dissemination, no doubt reflecting the fact that other methods provide easier and quicker routes to accessing the data. Even factoring in the impact of the change in the 'via/access' category, all of the component

Table 3 Datasets delivered to users by access method

2003-04	Download	FTP	Via/access	Portable media	Nesstar	Total
ESDS Core	2,537	527	178	179	593	4,014
ESDS Government	8,680	132	1,762	160	350	11,084
ESDS International*	7	558	143	119	4	831
ESDS Longitudinal	1,529	23	133	25	84	1,794
ESDS Qualidata**	22	0	13	21		56
Total	12,775	1240	2,229	504	1,031	17,779

2004-05	Download	FTP	Via/access	Portable media	Nesstar	Total
ESDS Core	2,791	228	1,290	27	48	4,384
ESDS Government	8,359	137	6,006	96	282	14,880
ESDS International*	52	588	681	77	2	1,400
ESDS Longitudinal	1,601	31	348	38	31	2,049
ESDS Qualidata**	188	6	45	0		239
Total	12,991	990	8,370	238	363	22,952

* international micro datasets only, macro data series counted separately (see Table 4)

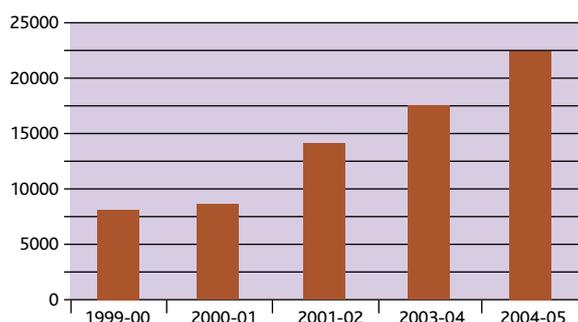
** Nesstar does not include qualitative data

Table 4 ESDS International datasets accessed via Beyond 20/20

ESDS International – macro datasets	Total number of sessions (i.e. every access)	Unique users	Number of institutions
2003-04	15,082	1,732	122
2004-05	58,575	4,007	132

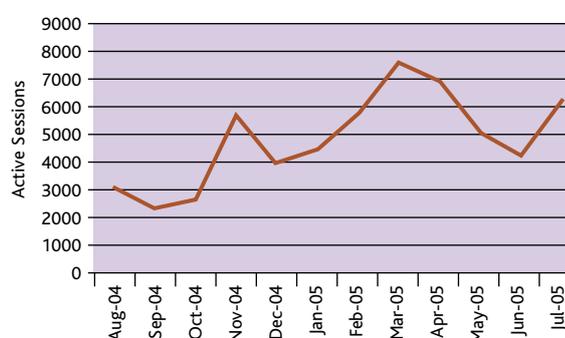
ESDS services witnessed a rise in the number of datasets disseminated: ESDS Government by just under a third, ESDS International micro data by some 68.5 per cent, while ESDS Qualidata saw a greater than three-fold increase. ESDS Government data remained the most frequently requested, accounting for 54.3 per cent of total usage.

Figure 2 Datasets delivered, 1999 to 2005



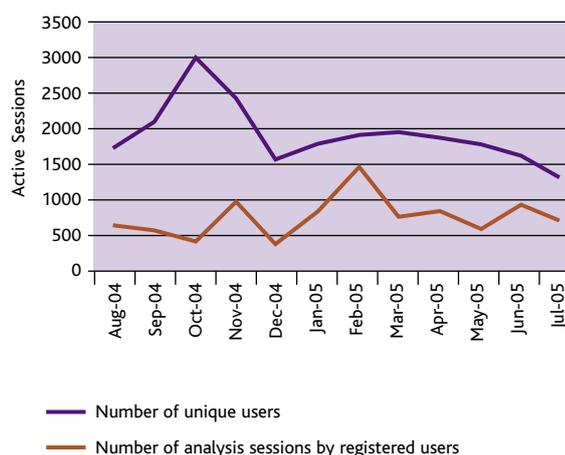
As has been noted already, the discussion of data dissemination thus far excludes both the international macro data series disseminated by MIMAS for ESDS International via the Beyond 20/20 system and the various micro data collections mounted in the Nesstar system. Beyond 20/20 is used for online data browsing, exploration and data download of the macro databanks. Nesstar is used for online data browsing and tabulation of micro data collections (actual download of data from the system to PC is included in Table 3). These online systems primarily record usage not by the number of datasets delivered (or downloaded) but instead by user sessions. Table 4 shows that the reporting year witnessed a sharp rise in the level of use for the international macro data series, with the number of sessions increasing more than three-fold, rising from 15,082 to 58,575. The number of active users also more than doubled to reach 4,007, and this was coupled with an increase in the number of institutions from which users came, illustrating that demand for international macro data is spread widely across the HE/FE sectors. Details of the overall pattern of Beyond 20/20 usage over the reporting period are provided in Figure 3. Usage levels are increasing over time with peaks of usage recorded in November, March and also July.

Figure 3 ESDS International usage figures



A variety of micro datasets, primarily the major survey series, are made available for online data exploration via the Nesstar tools (see Table 2). Details of the overall pattern of Nesstar activity over the reporting period are provided in Figure 4. The number of users accessing Nesstar lay in the range of 1,500 to 2,000 per month, with a peak of some 3,000 in October corresponding with the release of various new Government surveys in Nesstar. A smaller but significant number of users further authenticate themselves to conduct analyses, such as cross-tabulations within the Nesstar system, with February showing a peak of around 1500 analysis sessions following on from a number of ESDS hands-on training events.

Figure 4 Nesstar usage figures



Finally, the number of students recorded this year who used data held by ESDS in the classroom in formal teaching circumstances amounted to some 8,197. The number is likely to be significantly under-estimated because of the non-response from teachers on providing numbers.

Table 5 Students recorded in classroom usage for 2004-2005

ESDS Core	1,934
ESDS Government	3,285
ESDS International	1,328
ESDS Longitudinal	1,272
ESDS Qualidata	378
Total	8,197

User queries

The majority of user queries are dealt with by ESDS Management with the specialist ESDS services handling specific requests for advice. Overall, the volume of queries increased by some 45 per cent on last year's figure, from a total of 2,095 to 2,902, reflecting an increased interest in ESDS services and activities.

Registrations

Table 7 shows that over the course of the reporting year ESDS saw 17,838 new registrations, a three-fold increase

on the number of users registered in the previous year. This raised the overall number of registered users for ESDS to 29,992, a dramatic increase from the year before.

Web site usage

The ESDS web site is clearly a vital tool in communicating with users. Together with the UKDA web site, which houses the combined data catalogue, it provides access not only to datasets for download, but to a huge range of information – about data, using data and creating datasets, as well as valuable guidance to ESRC and British Academy award holders. Machine-readable versions of user guides and associated reports and documentation for all the data collections held by ESDS are freely available for download from the web site without prior registration, usually as PDF or Word documents, and over the course of the reporting year some 1.7 million such documents were directly downloaded. Measuring web site hits can be misleading since many calls to the web server will be to associated image files and much use of the web site will come from ESDS staff who use the web site as an internal tool. Taking both these facts into consideration and recalculating the figures accordingly, over the past year a total of 11,368,535 hits were made to the ESDS/UKDA web sites, excluding the sessions on the Nesstar and Beyond 20/20 online data browsing systems which are reported separately. Again, ignoring the online data browsing tools, a total of 1,348,502 separate visitors were recorded over the year, an average of 3,695 visitors per

Table 6 User queries received by ESDS by service responsible for answering

Services	2003-04			2004-05		
	Queries	Referrals	Totals	Queries	Referrals	Totals
ESDS Management	1,231	0	1,231	2,074	0	2,074
ESDS Government	262	74	336	202	40	242
ESDS International	270	10	280	345	12	357
ESDS Longitudinal	86	0	86	81	0	81
ESDS Qualidata	162	0	162	148	0	148
Total	2,011	84	2,095	2,850	52	2,902

Table 7 New registrations and registered users

	2003-04	2004-05
New registrations*	5,649	17,838
Total registered users*	13,991	29,992

*includes users registered for ESDS via the Census Registration Service

day. As shown in Table 8, unsurprisingly, users from the UK registered the most hits on the web site, representing some 50 per cent of the overall total. However, curiously, the USA provided more visitors. Over thirty countries recorded a total of 20,000 web hits or over, mostly from within Europe, but with significant and increased usage from Asia.

Turning, lastly, to the ways in which the ESDS/UKDA web sites are used, the most used section of the web sites was

'Finding Data'. The most frequently used search terms are listed in Table 9. These indicate a broad range of interests and suggest that the web sites are being used not just for gaining access to data but also to receive information on data- and survey-related topics. A key message coming out from table 9 is the extent of interest in finding out information about key international datasets as well as national datasets.

Table 8 Web site usage by country of origin

Country	Number of hits	Number of visitors	Percentage of hits	Percentage of visitors
United Kingdom	5,664,862	337,524	49.8	25.0
United States	2,603,355	709,800	22.9	52.6
China	219,403	7,724	1.9	0.6
Canada	165,389	18,515	1.5	1.4
Germany	160,713	18,094	1.4	1.3
Netherlands	133,526	13,499	1.2	1.0
Australia	114,199	15,370	1.0	1.1
France	93,903	8,573	0.8	0.6
Italy	86,201	6,861	0.8	0.5
Japan	75,257	9,512	0.7	0.7

Table 9 Search terms

Search term	Number	Search term	Number
international financial statistics	2,798	child development	632
direction of trade statistics	1,976	eurostat new cronos	587
1851 census	1,825	family expenditure survey	471
eurobarometer	1,825	1931 census	405
british crime survey	1,308	world development indicators	405
general household survey	1,239	charges	394
qualitative data	1,149	world values survey	376
british social attitudes survey	968	global development finance	365
isic codes	956	1861 census	341
balance of payment	744	government surveys	340
labour force survey	741	cia world factbook	302
british elections	738	interviewing children	293
british household panel survey	705		

Feedback

"Just a quick note to thank you for your help today - it is very much appreciated. We have received downloads of the data already - a great service."

"I appreciate all your support, thanks a lot!!! I (now) see what you have explained to me."

"Pleasure to talk to you on the phone and thanks very much for your help! Really appreciate your help on this." (Prime Minister's Strategy Unit)

"Thank you very much for your outstanding customer service! Excellent. Thank you very much for the usual excellent attention."

"Thank you, thank you! I really needed access to your databases. You have helped me immensely."

"Many thanks for letting me know so soon. I only ordered it today! Very much appreciated."

"In response to your email I can confirm that I included a citation to some data in my recently published book.... the data was extremely useful to the argument and I was very grateful for the existence of the data archive!"

"Thank you very much for all your help, it is greatly appreciated."

"Thank you very much for the message below. With your help I managed to download the file successfully."

"Thank you for registering me and for this great service to the academic community!"

"Thank you very much for your immediate reply. The login information you sent me works fine!! Thank you!"

"I regard the ease of access to, and manipulation of, government datasets as being a step change improvement in the ability to use these important sources of data on contemporary society. The most exciting innovation that I have come across for a long time."

"Was looking for better support to help with the use of Government data. ESDS Government now fills this gap."

"I am a frequent user of ESDS, which I find an excellent service."

"Well organised materials, extremely well thought out exercises and a timely re-acquaintance with SPSS. Thanks." (Workshop participant)

"Computing sessions were both well-designed and well-documented. Handouts for computing sessions were excellent." (Workshop participant)

"(I have been) inspired to seek more information, this will help with my studies and research." (Workshop participant)

"Extremely useful – never knew how much data was out there and freely available." (Workshop participant)

"Excellent event – really well organised. Thank you. This was hugely helpful and informative." (Workshop participant)

"I just searched through the SOSIG and I am amazed at what you have put together. You have a collection that is unmatched among the datasets available that I have found online."

Advisory Committee

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Office for National Statistics

Karen Dunnell (from January 2005)

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Addendum

The following two members of the Advisory Committee were inadvertently omitted from the Economic and Social Data Service Annual Report 2004-2005:

Peter Elias
University of Warwick

Martin Weale
National Institute of Economic and Social Research

We apologise to the members for this oversight.