

Outputs, Access and Licensing

Some views from the business sector

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2001 Census Debriefing Seminar
10th April 2006

Introduction

- ACD – 7 member companies – experience back to 1971 Census
- CGG – Advisory Committee of MRS, 20 individual members
- Primary source - “A User’s View of the 2001 Census” submitted to ONS (Feb 2005)
- Presentation focus – highlights on outputs, access and licensing
- See seminar paper for more details

Uses and Applications of Census Data

Some examples...

- Census Distributors
 - > Resell census data, adding value in various ways
 - > Create new data products e.g. geodemographic classifications
 - > Provide analytical services
- Business Sector Applications
 - > Retail – site location, store performance, merchandise ranging, local marketing
 - > Direct Marketing – customer recruitment, cross-selling, database enhancement
 - > Media – newspapers, cable TV, door-to-door distribution, posters
 - > Market research – survey design, sampling, control, analysis

Continuous, intensive use supporting significant investment decisions

Main Headlines

- ONS original aim for 2001 – to deliver ‘a quality Census’
- Taken as a whole – 2001 Census was a quality product!
- ‘Plus’ points:
 - > Census Access
 - > 100% coding
 - > One-Number Census
 - > Output Areas based on postcodes
 - > Social Grade outputs
 - > Consultative approach (generally)
- ‘Minus’ Points
 - > Serious delays in delivery of small area data + reissues
 - > Handling of ‘bulk delivery’ data
 - > Late introduction of additional disclosure control
 - > Problems with OS agreement on Output Area boundaries
 - > Delays on commissioned tables

Access & Licensing

- Census Access - major innovation
 - > Replaced previous royalty charges
- Data dissemination mainly via value-added resellers (VARs)
- Special Distribution Licence for VARs agreed with ONS
- Approved Suppliers scheme for Census value-added products

OA Boundaries – Ordnance Survey Licence to re-supply

- OA boundaries based on some OS data, e.g. road centre-lines
- ONS agreed lump sum payment to OS to cover end-users
 - > However, agreement excluded re-supply of OA boundaries by VARs
 - > Other sectors and commercial end-users do not pay OS for use of boundaries
 - > VARs would have to pay royalties to OS when re-supplying OA boundaries (whether charged for or not)
- Protracted discussion between OS and ACD
 - > ACD suggested one-off payment in lieu of royalties
 - > OS requested payment of royalties for each OA dataset provided to end-user, plus minimum annual royalty – even though VARs proposed to provide OA boundaries to clients at no charge
- Still no agreement for commercial re-supply of OA boundaries after three years – ACD still trying to resolve, with MRS CGG support
- Situation must be avoided when we come to 2011 Census

Social Grade Output

- Social Grade is industry standard social classification
 - > 'common currency' in advertising, marketing, market research
- Differs from NS-SEC in various ways, e.g.
 - > Hierarchical system (A, B, C1, C2, D, E)
 - > Classifies working and non-working people
- CGG made case for applying Social Grade approximation to 2001 Census output database and generating results tables
 - > Many thanks to Census Offices for agreement and effort
 - > Algorithm generally worked well and produced useful results
 - > However, issues with outputs for 65-74 and 75+ age groups
 - > Results have been reworked - commissioned tables
- Despite issues, Social Grade approximation on Census is most useful – please include again for 2011, let's work together more smoothly !

Other user-defined classifications

- Great scope for applying further user-defined classifications to Census database
- e.g. household classification for predicting consumer demand
 - > Build on SAR data
 - > Test using market research sources
 - > Apply to Census database
 - > Generate classification profiles for OAs
- ONS area classifications were useful but late !
 - > Should repeat for 2011, but include in main schedule of outputs

Outputs – bulk delivery & error management

- Bulk delivery requirement identified relatively late on
- Insufficient planning led to problems, e.g.
 - > with csv outputs by Government Office Regions
 - > with outputs for Scotland
 - > Managing supplies of many disks – over 110 sent to some VARs !
- Early error management problems due to many errors in first release of CAS data
 - > Better error tracking and management systems were needed
 - > Remember for 2011 !

Commissioned Tables

- User expectations set at Census road-shows for 'fast, inexpensive' commissioned tables
- Reality has been different – due to additional disclosure control checks, long backlog of requests built up
 - > Typical delivery timescale one year to eighteen months
- More efficient & automated system required
- Commissioned tables eventually delivered have been fine – provided that results are still of value !

Conclusions and look forward

- While general quality of 2001 Census has been good, some improvements possible:
 - > Speedier publication of results
 - > Degree of disclosure control really required
 - > Bulk delivery output issues – involve experienced users and start planning early
 - > Re-use of OA boundaries – plan as part of 2011 dissemination
- Should take innovations made in 2001 forward for 2011
 - > Census Access
 - > One-Number Census – improve timescale, examine flaws in city areas
 - > Output Areas based on postcodes
 - > Design 2011 outputs based on understanding of 2001 results
 - > 100% coding – extend to older age groups
 - > Social Grade output
- And innovate further, e.g.
 - > User-defined classifications
 - > Faster commissioned table system
 - > Make counts consistent from table to table



Thank you !

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