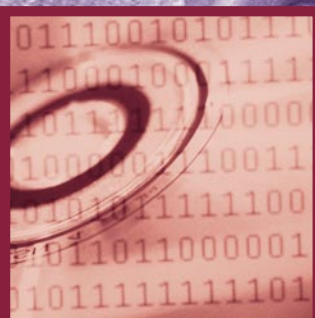




Economic and Social Data Service



# Economic and Social Data Service

## Annual Report 2005-2006



# Economic and Social Data Service Annual Report 2005-2006

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# Introduction

It is sometimes easy to overlook the fact that ESDS was only established in January 2003. Since that time the service has not only grown but also matured. This Annual Report is, I believe, testimony to this maturing process, a process which was also quite rightly recognised by the Mid-term Review of the service which was undertaken jointly by the ESRC and JISC during the autumn of 2005, and which resulted in uniform praise, and a recommendation for a continuation of funding. The service has not only grown in this three and a half year period, reaching levels of user engagement which by far outstrip the levels envisioned when the service was initially planned by the ESRC/JISC, but has also changed. For example, the data collection available to users – already extensive – has been broadened; new data dissemination systems have been put in place; greater emphasis has been placed on the production of user support materials; and the ESDS web pages have already been redesigned. All of these changes build on the collective experience of operating the service and on user feedback. The revamping of the ESDS web site in particular was informed by comments collected via the Mid-term Review's user survey, and has resulted in a much more user-driven design catering for users of different levels of sophistication and familiarity with ESDS.

The maturing of ESDS is also reflected in terms of its general place within the social science research and learning community. The services offered by ESDS closely link to the ESRC's central missions: promoting and supporting high-quality research and training; advancing knowledge to aid UK competitiveness, the effectiveness of public services and policy, and the quality of life; and promoting understanding of

the social sciences. These missions support three core strategic areas: capacity building; research excellence; and engagement. Equally, ESDS activities both integrate and support a number of the JISC's strategic objectives, particularly within the themes of e-Learning, e-Research, e-Resources, access management, third stream knowledge transfer and the information environment. ESDS is now a central part of the UK's social science research and learning infrastructure, as developed and supported by the ESRC and JISC. As such, it would be hard to see what the social science research and learning landscape would look like and how it would operate if ESDS were not to exist. Its standing is measured not just by what it contributes to this community directly – through data discovery, delivery and support – but also indirectly. Examples include the contribution made by ESDS to the development of the National Data Strategy as well as the membership of ESDS senior staff on numerous committees, steering groups and advisory boards, including bodies and centres such as the National Centre for e-Social Science, the British Library, The National Archives, the National Centre for Research Methods, National Statistics Centre for Demography Advisory Board, the Royal Statistical Society, the Research Information Network and the European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructure. The list goes on.

In short, ESDS has rapidly become an important and integral part of the UK's social science community, and also has significant input into international as well as national agendas.

**Professor K. Schürer, AcSS**  
Director, ESDS

# Background

The **Economic and Social Data Service (ESDS)** is a national data service that came into operation in January 2003. ESDS provides access and support for an extensive range of key economic and social data, both quantitative and qualitative, spanning many disciplines and themes.

ESDS is a distributed service, based on a collaboration among four key centres of expertise: UK Data Archive (UKDA), Institute for Social and Economic Research (ISER), both based at the University of Essex; Manchester Information and Associated Services (MIMAS) and Cathie Marsh Centre for Census and Survey Research (CCSR), both located at the University of Manchester.

ESDS comprises six distinct yet inter-related functions:

**ESDS Management** – The overall direction and management for ESDS is the responsibility of the UKDA. Through this function, the UKDA provides consistency and standards across the service. It performs a broad strategic role, relating to a variety of stakeholders concerned with the supply, funding and use of social science data, and seeks to create a coherent publicity, promotion and outreach strategy for the whole service.

**ESDS Access and Preservation** – Also hosted by the UKDA, this function represents the core of the ESDS, focusing on the central activities of data acquisition, processing, preservation and dissemination, providing access to most of the data held by ESDS through a variety of web-based systems. The function also handles registration of users centrally across ESDS.

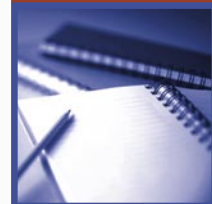
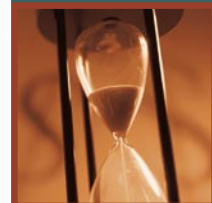
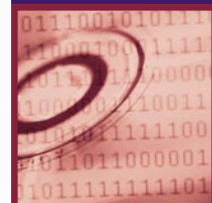
**ESDS Government** – The service, led by CCSR with support from the UKDA, promotes and facilitates increased and more effective use of large-scale government surveys in research, learning and teaching. This includes methodological guides, short courses and support for key statistical packages. The service also works closely with data producers and users to maximise the synergy between these groups.

**ESDS International** – This function provides access to, and support for, a range of international datasets – both macro and micro sources. The central aims of the function are to promote and facilitate increased and more effective use of international datasets in research, learning and teaching across a range of disciplines. The function is run jointly by MIMAS and the UKDA.

**ESDS Longitudinal** – The work of ESDS Longitudinal is undertaken jointly by the UKDA and the UK Longitudinal Studies Centre (ULSC) based at ISER. The function supports a range of longitudinal data collections by: creating data enhancements; providing user support and training; and promoting the increased use of longitudinal data.

**ESDS Qualidata** – This specialist function provides access to, and support for, a range of qualitative datasets, and is hosted by the UKDA. The function is responsible for generating a number of data enhancements, and for providing information and training resources that focus on strategies for re-analysing qualitative data.

Further details on the activities of these individual functions can be found on the ESDS web site at [www.esds.ac.uk](http://www.esds.ac.uk). This report covers all six functions, and for brevity includes a combined set of performance statistics.



# Highlights

The year's key highlight was the successful outcome of the Mid-term Review resulting in continued funding for the period 2007-2012. The Mid-term Review Panel's site visit in September involved contributions from staff at all levels, and the panel particularly commended the depth of dedication and skill exhibited by staff throughout the service.

Having spent over three years creating a service explicitly designed with the larger goals of the ESRC and JISC in mind, it was extremely gratifying to receive such unambiguous confirmation that ESDS is indeed a world-class data resource. It is absolutely clear, from the comments of the Mid-term Review Panel to the results of their user survey, that ESDS is now a lynchpin supporting and enabling the high quality - basic, strategic and applied - research and related training in the social sciences. This is at the core of the ESRC's and JISC's strategic mission statements.

Another key highlight which affected the whole of ESDS was the launching of the fully redesigned ESDS web site. As an entirely web-based, distributed service, the web pages are in a real sense the embodiment of the whole service – they are the public face of ESDS. Staff from across the ESDS central and specialist services worked together over several months to create a most professional web presence. So the accomplishment is not just in the web pages themselves (which have received uniformly excellent feedback from users) but in the process of their development, which tried and proved the effectiveness of the distributed nature of the service.

Accompanying the new web pages were a number of back office tool developments, which improved the service's efficiency in processing, publishing and preserving data. These efficiency gains are reflected in record-breaking levels of dataset acquisition and dissemination, as well as user registration and user query support.

ESDS continued its high profile as a centre of expertise, receiving visitors and invitations for visits from a dozen countries. As the Feedback section shows, ESDS is viewed as a world leader in social science data services, and is clearly the envy of many researchers worldwide.

ESDS Government's theme this year was social capital, and it collaborated closely with the Office for National Statistics (ONS) to develop a thematic guide to survey sources on social capital. A joint workshop was held at ONS in London to launch the guide. ESDS Government also worked with

the Home Office to establish the first British Crime Survey User Meeting, which will be held in December 2006 and has had an important role in consultation over the development of ONS's new flagship Integrated Household Survey, representing academic interests in the study. It also reached out regionally, with workshops in Edinburgh and Belfast focused on datasets relevant to those countries.

ESDS International saw another year of major growth in usage. The largest single group of macro data users are postgraduates and the fastest growing group are undergraduates. Key achievements this year include the successful negotiation of UK-wide academic data redistribution agreements with the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) for a number of new macro datasets requested by users, and the acquisition of the Eurofound European Quality of Life Survey micro data resource. Access statistics show that ESDS International support materials are used extensively by users at home and abroad, with over three million hits in the reporting year.

ESDS Longitudinal has produced a new user resource, a Database of Comparable Indicators, that allows users of the core longitudinal studies to look up a selection of variables from each study that match, or are equivalent to, the ONS Primary Set of Harmonised Concepts and Questions. It has continued expanding its portfolio of longitudinal data, with new surveys and new waves of existing surveys. It continues to collaborate broadly, and was commissioned to conduct a data audit of some key longitudinal resources funded by the Medical Research Council (MRC).

ESDS Qualidata had another busy year, winning three additional grants to develop its online data enhancements. It saw a record year of usage by both researchers and students, and continued its high pace of user support, promotion and outreach activities. It expanded its user support by developing thematic guides to its data holdings, making the collections easier to browse and more accessible. It acquired a number of important studies, including the Health and Social Consequences of the Foot and Mouth Disease Epidemic in North Cumbria, 2001-2003. The study is significant because unlike other inquiries which focused on policy issues, this research produced evidence about the human health and social consequences of the epidemic. The study is also important because consent for archiving was gained for highly sensitive material.



# 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

The central co-ordinating role of ESDS Management was much to the fore in this year of the Mid-term Review and grant renewal negotiations. This year more than ever it has been critical that ESDS is a seamless whole greater than the sum of its parts, and the evident success of this (judged by the glowing praise from the Mid-term Review Panel, as well as their user survey) was in no small measure due to endless behind-the-scenes communication. More formal mechanisms were set up to ensure web developments go forward with input from all services. The technical developments working group has ensured good practice is diffused and wheels are not reinvented. Senior team meetings ensured that strategic positions in budget and contract negotiations were harmonised. Day-to-day communication among user support staff at the various services ensured a high quality seamless user service. An energising forward-looking cross-service Away Day was held in February.

Strategic external links also developed, matured, and expanded in this reporting period, helped in no small measure by the dual hats senior ESDS staff hold: Angela Dale as head of both ESDS Government and the ESRC Research Methods Programme; Nick Buck as head of both ESDS Longitudinal and director of the UK Longitudinal Studies Centre; Keith Cole as both head of ESDS International and Deputy Executive Director of the National Centre for e-Social Science (NCeSS); and Professor Schürer as both ESDS Director and President of the Council of European Social Science Data Archives (CESSDA). Senior staff involvement in the MRC data sharing and preservation initiative, the joint Natural Environment Research Council (NERC) and ESRC Rural Economy and Land Use programme, the Arts and Humanities Data Service (AHDS), the UK Data Forum, the Data Documentation Initiative (DDI) Alliance and the ESRC Qualitative Archiving and Data Sharing Scheme (QUADS) among others has strengthened links across research councils and disciplines.

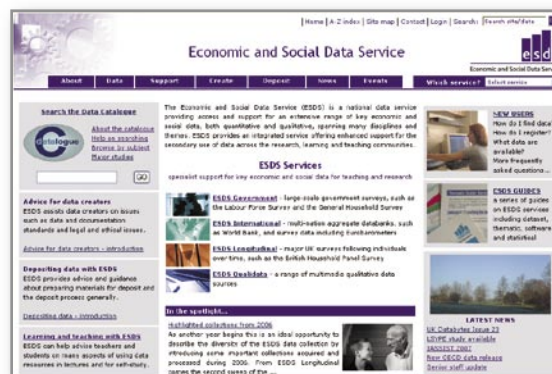
### New web site

Aside from the Mid-term Review, the most outwardly noticeable achievement of the year was the redesigned ESDS web site, the culmination of months of hard work and collaboration across the central and specialist services. The web site has been redesigned to make it easier to navigate, more accessible and visually more attractive, following extensive usability testing and user feedback. New features include:

- enhanced Data Catalogue search and browse facilities;
- searching, registering, ordering and download facilities are all now available from the ESDS web site;
- designated web advice for specific users, such as data creators and new users, via a drop-down list at the top right of each page;
- online step-by-step guides on using the ESDS web site, accessing data and documentation, creating and depositing data, and using ESDS data and documentation for learning and teaching;
- more accessible events web pages;
- hot links top menu bar on every page;
- comprehensive A-Z list of web pages;
- ESDS Access and Preservation information incorporated into the main ESDS pages;
- new online conference and event booking form.



www.esds.ac.uk



## Promotion and user support

ESDS participated in over 160 educational and promotional events last year. It was primary sponsor for 25 workshops and conferences, and contributed papers and panels to many others. Examples of these events are listed in the Diary section of this report. In addition, the reputation of ESDS as a centre of expertise in data sharing, preservation, and use resulted in over 80 visits (either at ESDS or invited appearances abroad) from countries as far as Russia, the United States, Australia, South Korea and Japan. High profile visitors included Sir Keith O'Nions, Director General of Research Councils UK and Ian Diamond, Chief Executive Officer of the ESRC.



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 helping users identify and access studies of interest, and supporting them in the use of the data acquired. The central help desk is linked to the help desks of the four specialist ESDS services, with a query-tracking system to ensure that queries are monitored accordingly. Overall the central help desk has dealt with 2,302 queries this year, an average of around nine queries per working day (an 11 per cent increase over last year).

## Acquisitions

Most new acquisitions for the ESDS data portfolio are managed through ESDS Management. This year saw the acquisition of 241 datasets, including some with new data types, such as audio data and web-based documentation. The roll out of the Special Licence initiated last year continued, with 14 previously unavailable sensitive studies now available under these more restrictive terms of access. Improvements in advice given to data creators and data depositors, including exemplars from actual projects, were part of the general web site update. Work continued with the ONS and The National Archives (TNA) to reach a formal concordat specifying the UKDA's rights and responsibilities as a designated legal Place of Deposit and the ESDS role as the primary academic outlet for ONS data. The ESDS support role for ESRC grant applicants and grant holders was strengthened by the development of combined record-keeping with the ESRC allowing joint monitoring of awards that result in data for deposit.





# Access

## ESDS Access and Preservation

*focusing on data acquisition, processing, preservation and dissemination*

ESDS Access and Preservation largely represents the unseen back office of the ESDS service, responsible for data and metadata ingest, preservation, and dissemination of all data with the exception of international macro data. It is also responsible for primary user support for all data not covered by one of the specialist services.

### Internal systems

Back-office systems continued to develop over the reporting year. In addition to the work involved in supporting search, help, registration and download functionality to the ESDS site and launching the new web pages with new attendant search and help functionality, a number of improvements were made to the internal systems which support data and metadata processing. Programs were written to transfer data directly from e-deposit forms into the data and metadata processing database. A new authority list maintenance system was developed to better maintain the controlled vocabularies in use in the catalogue. New guides for cataloguing, indexing and authority list maintenance were developed and updated training given. The automated data management tools used to standardise ingest processing across all types of data underwent further development in order to encompass new versions of statistical software and generate further outputs, for example eXtended Markup Language (XML) files. A new version of the Nesstar publisher software provided several improvements, including the introduction of automated real-time transfer to Nesstar of updates to the ESDS catalogue record. Work also continued on specifying a new intranet, to assist all internal workflow processes.



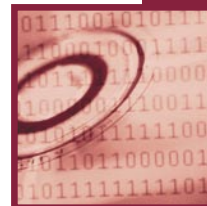
### Information development

The major information development for the reporting year was the advances made in the new ESDS web site, particularly the release of new improved catalogue and web site search functionality. In addition, there were a number of metadata improvements. An Open Archives Initiative (OAI) compliant version of the UKDA/ESDS catalogue was released which supports a variety of internationally accepted metadata standards. Work on controlled vocabularies continued, with subject categories being revised in line with new CESSDA classifications and mappings, making the ESDS catalogue fully compatible with our sister European archives.

### Access to data

ESDS Access and Preservation processes orders and disseminates data for all specialist functions aside from international macro data. In addition to another record growth in user and access numbers, the reporting year has seen an expansion of data accessed under Special Licence. The Special Licence system was developed initially with ONS, and is being rolled out to other deposits of sensitive or potentially disclosive data which would not otherwise be made available. Under the Special Licence, users agree to more stringent conditions of access and are offered explicit guidance on 'data housekeeping' good practice, in order to keep data safe. This system has been so successful that other data providers are looking to it as a model for protected dissemination of sensitive data.

Also implemented this year was the system of automated emails, reminding users of the terms and conditions of their use of ESDS data and of their obligation to provide information about research outputs resulting from their use of the data. This system has been expanded to remind teachers to record numbers of student usage in the classroom, with impressive effect (see Statistics section). Web-based user support materials continue to be developed, with new pages explicitly targeting the particular needs of both first-time and international users. Work continued on preparing for the implementation of Shibboleth authentication. This will potentially make access to data resources from a wide number of data service providers internationally far more straightforward.



[www.esds.ac.uk/aandp](http://www.esds.ac.uk/aandp)

Download access to older materials was also improved this year, as more and more legacy materials were reprocessed and placed on the download server. Efficiency gains continue: where data were ordered on portable media or requested via FTP or requested for download, 88 per cent of orders were delivered within five working days (compared to 62 per cent the previous year).

### Legacy data enhancement

With the support of additional ESRC funding, ESDS undertook a significant programme of legacy data enhancement, improving some older studies which had been under-utilised because of their less-than-user-friendly condition. Included in the programme were early sweeps of the Youth Cohort Studies for ESDS Longitudinal, the Northern Ireland Family Expenditure Survey for ESDS Government, and the British Opinion Polls and early British Election Studies (cross section and panel) for ESDS Access and Preservation. Also improved were the European State Finance Database, a joint holding between ESDS Access and Preservation and AHDS History. Metadata for ESDS International holdings were also improved, with catalogue enhancements undertaken for the Eurobarometer series and full country indexing for the ESDS International macro data series.

### Consent pages

A major overhaul of the ESDS pages on consent and confidentiality was completed during spring 2006. Links to key sources of professional and legal information have been updated along with the construction of several sample consent forms relating to different research scenarios and accompanying commentary on how to use them. Meetings have also taken place with the head of UK research ethics committees to work on overcoming the tension between interview data destruction clauses often insisted upon by local ethics committees versus data sharing directives promoted by the UK research councils.



### Guidance on data management

Lastly, as part of its supporting role for data producers, especially ESRC-funded researchers, the section has produced a booklet entitled *Guidance on Data Management*. This includes advice on: quality assurance of data collection and processing; data description; data security and version control; and physical storage. It is written as a generic guide in that it applies to all kinds of data dealt with by ESDS users, for example, spreadsheets, word processed documents, audio-visual materials and paper. ESDS is particularly grateful to the late Dr Alasdair Crockett for contributing to the success of this guide.

# Government

## ESDS Government

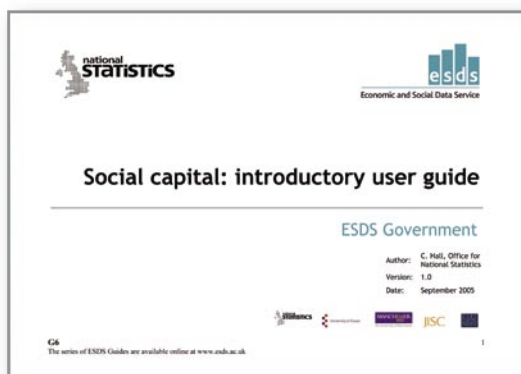
*facilitating more effective use of large-scale government surveys*

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).

### The surveys

ESDS Government's theme this year was social capital, and it collaborated closely with ONS to develop a thematic guide to survey sources on social capital. A joint workshop was held at ONS in London to launch the guide. ESDS Government has had an important role in consultation over the development of ONS's new flagship Integrated Household Survey, representing academic interests in the study. It also reached out regionally, with workshops in Edinburgh and Belfast focused on datasets relevant to those countries.

Vital Statistics are also included in the remit of ESDS Government and provide a unique set of information on demographic change in the population and small areas in particular. These data have in the past been under-exploited, in part because of the difficulties of accessing them. In consequence the data from 1981–2000 have been re-formatted and re-deposited in the Data Catalogue.



### Access

The Special Licence, developed by ONS in collaboration with ESDS Government and ESDS Management to provide protected access to survey micro data that are potentially disclosive, is now allowing researchers to access more detailed data than ever before. The Special Licence adds an extra 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. This is an example where ESDS and ONS have been able to work together to find a relatively simple way to meet the needs of both data producers and data users.

### User meetings

Interaction between data producers and users is a particular focus of the user 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. Also, after consultation with the Home Office, the first British Crime Survey user meeting has been planned.

These meetings provide a forum where data producers explain planned changes or developments to surveys and receive feedback from users. Also users give short presentations based on their research, often highlighting particular issues with a data source. The past year has been important for the development of the Integrated Household Survey, planned to begin in January 2008. The design involves the integration of four of ONS's household surveys into a single integrated survey. ESDS Government held a consultation meeting to represent academic interests in the study in January 2006 and will be holding another in 2007.

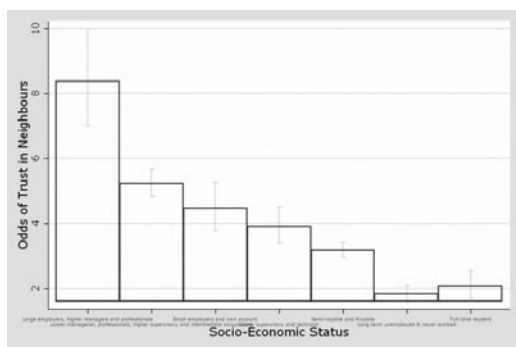
### Research conference

The annual research conference, this year held at the British Academy, is specifically aimed at disseminating research based on the government surveys to government policy-makers and analysts. This year's conference on social capital, chaired by Waqar Ahmed, was very popular and linked with ESDS Longitudinal to provide a series of succinct and well-targeted papers. Summaries of papers and overheads are all on the ESDS Government web site.



[www.esds.ac.uk/government](http://www.esds.ac.uk/government)

Figure 1 People of higher socio-economic status are more likely to trust their neighbours



## Working across the UK

Activities are planned to try to ensure coverage of the UK. In this respect the new ESRC regional training centres are a great help. ESDS Government's introductory workshops give a general introduction to the survey data available for secondary analysts and teachers and include a practical element to get users engaging with the data. During this period four workshops were held in Edinburgh, London, Belfast and Surrey. Workshops in Edinburgh and Belfast focused on datasets and research based on ESDS resources relevant to Scotland and Northern Ireland. These meetings proved to be of enormous importance in making links with key survey staff in these countries, as well as providing input to the production of specific guides to highlight the data available for Northern Ireland and Scotland.

## Linking with related services

To provide user support it is important to link not only with other parts of ESDS but also with other services relevant to the analysis of government survey data. To this end meetings were hosted for the Survey Link Scheme (SLS) and SLS were invited to take part in user group meetings.

The 2006 ESRC Research Methods Festival, organised by the Research Methods Programme, provided a further opportunity to make links with related services and also to reach out to groups which might not usually consider using survey data. ESDS had a stall throughout the three days and ESDS Government provided an introductory talk in a session with other related survey-based resources, including the Question Bank.

## Web resources and help desk

As user numbers increase the help desk becomes more heavily used and it is important that as much guidance as possible is placed on the web. This includes: thematic guides that help new users to find data sources relevant to their research topics; 'Getting Started' guides that identify the key features of a specific dataset; guides that provide help with using statistical analysis packages such as SPSS and Stata; and guides on topics such as weighting. These are continually expanded and updated and new resources are added.

## Keeping in touch with users

Interaction with users is always important and the twice-yearly newsletters provide updates on survey-related development. The JISC email list provides an opportunity for a two-way exchange of views and information. Information about the research that is being conducted with government datasets is of great value – both to the data depositors and also to other users or potential users. To meet this need an online database has been developed that lists who is using the government surveys and for what research topic.

## Contact and collaboration with data depositors

The last year has been one of extensive restructuring within the ONS, both in terms of the office itself and its planned outputs. Many of the survey teams have now moved to Newport and valuable meetings have been held with these teams in order to open up new areas of collaboration in this important period of change.



ESDS Government's administrator Gill Meadows at the Research Methods Festival

# International

## ESDS International

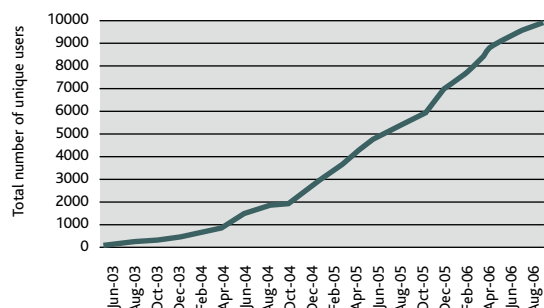
*providing access and support for a range of international macro and micro data sources*

This year saw a great deal of activity within the ESDS International teams. Not only was there continuing growth in the use of international datasets, but also two key user events helped promote the service.

### Building an international data community

Over the last year, there was continuing growth in the use of international macro datasets produced by international governmental organisations (IGO) such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. Between June 2003 and July 2006, ESDS International macro data has been accessed by over 9,700 unique users from 166 institutions running approximately 150,000 data access sessions. The current reporting year recorded a 30 per cent increase in usage from the previous year.

Figure 2 ESDS International: number of unique users of macro data



ESDS International also hosted its well-attended first annual conference aimed toward use of the macro databanks. With 80 attendees, nine speakers, and representatives from the OECD and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), the conference provided a forum for users and producers of international data to meet and share their ideas. Around half the speakers were academics and graduate students, the other half were speakers from the IGOs. Conference highlights included a thought-provoking presentation on monitoring the Millennium Development Goals and a provocative presentation by the OECD on data dissemination and public access.

A second key event looked at exploring the potential of international comparative micro data sources, with Professor Peter Elias, the ESRC's Strategic Adviser on Data Resources chairing the day. The day focused on introducing a selection of the most popular cross-national international

social surveys – European Social Survey, Eurobarometers, International Social Survey Programme, and European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound) – complemented by case studies of re-use of these data. Important methodological issues arising in the re-analysis of comparative datasets, such as country context and individualist and ecological fallacies, were highlighted. The workshop provoked lively discussion including the use of comparable questions over time and ways of creating time series data from existing sources.

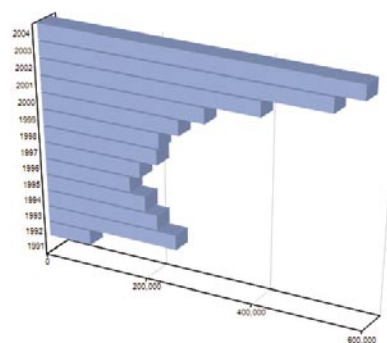


Toby Green OECD

### Data portfolio developments

One of the key achievements of ESDS International has been the successful negotiation of UK-wide academic data redistribution agreements with the OECD for a number of new datasets requested by users. The current ESDS International macro data portfolio comprises 31 datasets from nine data providers. In February 2006, the service added the OECD's International Trade by Commodity Statistics to its portfolio. These data are useful for analysing trade patterns between countries by industry. For example, they can be used to illustrate changes in exports of clothing and apparel from China to the UK over time.

Figure 3 Exports of clothing and apparel from China to the United Kingdom, 1992-2004



Source: OECD, International Trade by Commodity Statistics (ITCS), July 2006



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. This year, ESDS has been involved in advising on ESRC-funded data scoping studies undertaken in India, China, Brazil and South Africa. ESDS International actively seek to acquire a number of key cross-national micro data sources which this year included some important acquisitions: the European Quality of Life Survey (EQLS) data collected by the Eurofound; and the second round data of the European Social Survey, available via Nesstar.

In addition to providing and brokering access to data, ESDS International provides a number of value-added services to users. The largest single group of macro data users are postgraduates who account for almost 43 per cent of active users. Online support documentation contains important information for this cohort such as information on data collection, international comparability, and methodological issues for each dataset.

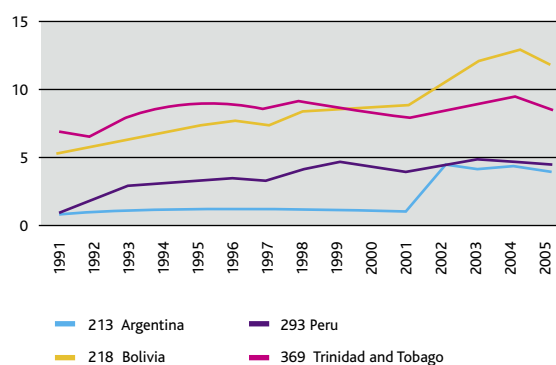
Supplemental online support materials are also aimed at helping even the most novice user. The fastest growing group of macro data users are undergraduates with an almost 55 per cent increase in number since the previous year. For each of the 31 macro datasets, there is a guide providing information on topics, countries covered, periodicity, and time range. Access statistics show that the support materials are used extensively by users at home and abroad, with over 3,000,000 hits in the reporting year.

In keeping with the service's aim to provide value-added support materials, the service has produced a thematic guide on monetary and financial statistics. The guide is intended to provide advice on finding both macro and micro international data sources for these topics.

### Beyond 20/20 application

A key technical accomplishment for ESDS International in July 2006 was the successful migration to a Network Load Balancing cluster to provide a more scalable and resilient service and an update of the data delivery software to version 7.3. Beyond 20/20 version 7.3 offers many new benefits to users such as: new charting functionality; improved Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (SENDA) compliancy: The Set Dimension Order screen, accessed from the Actions menu on report view pages and the item selection page, allowing users to customise dimensions without dragging and dropping; improved searching; and operability with the Macintosh OS. Concurrently, ESDS International updated the dataset specific step-by-step guides to reflect the new functionality of the data delivery software.

Figure 4. Charting the course of currency values in Latin America using Beyond 20/20



Source: International Monetary Fund (IMF), International Financial Statistics (IFS), July 2006

### ESDS International on the road

In terms of dissemination and outreach, ESDS International now has considerable experience in the provision of courses, training, and conferences for the users of international data. In May 2006, ESDS International were represented at the IASSIST conference at the University of Michigan. Other key events include presentations at Hebrew University in Jerusalem, London School of Economics, University of Edinburgh, Oxford University, and University of Manchester. Further, in July 2006, ESDS International presented to Nobel Prize laureate Joseph Stiglitz and his graduate class at the Brooks Poverty Institute in Manchester.

### User support

During the lifetime of the service, ESDS International has responded to over 1,000 user enquiries, 95 per cent of which come directly via the ESDS International help desk. Further, there has been a 44 per cent increase in help desk queries this year; however, the overall increase is far less than the number of new users registering with the service. These figures suggest that ESDS International's documentation library, software user guides, and thematic guides are successful in helping users find the information they need. In turn, these resources are strengthening tools available to the growing, online user community.

# Longitudinal

## ESDS Longitudinal

*supporting the use of key UK longitudinal data collections*

ESDS Longitudinal provides support for the use of a number of complex longitudinal data resources. It works very closely with longitudinal data resource creators, many of whom also have a user support brief, to enhance and deepen the available longitudinal support resources. It provides a value-added dissemination service, organises and participates in user training activities, creates teaching data samplers to encourage new users of longitudinal resources, and runs a user help desk. This year it has assisted the Medical Research Council in its assessment of future developments for its key longitudinal resources, and is negotiating access for users to additional sensitive longitudinal materials under Special Licence.



### Additions to the data portfolio

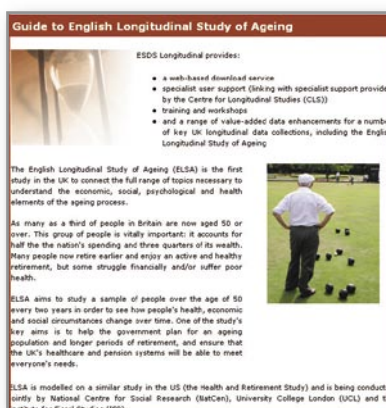
The reporting year has seen ESDS Longitudinal add a number of important datasets to its portfolio. In the case of two of the core studies – the English Longitudinal Study of Ageing (ELSA) and the Millennium Cohort Study (MCS) – second waves of data have been acquired allowing those studies to become truly longitudinal. The second sweep of the MCS focuses on the children at age three and information has been gathered on parenting activities, the child's health, child care arrangements, grandparents and friends, and a range of information on the parents' employment, income and education. The second wave of ELSA is similar in coverage to the first wave, incorporating a large number of repeat measures. The Wave 2 interview was also expanded to answer a variety of additional research questions and include a nurse visit in which biomedical samples were collected, anthropometric measures taken and physical performance recorded.

In addition to these key accessions, in August, the 1970 British Cohort Study: Sixteen-year Head Teacher Questionnaire, 1986 was released and, in May, a third British Household Panel Survey (BHPS) teaching/sampler dataset was made available via the Data Catalogue and via the Nesstar online web-based data browsing tool. The dataset is based around the theme of time use, leisure activity and membership of social organisations. Taken together, the three BHPS samplers were accessed 602 times over the 12 months – a remarkable take-up and clear evidence that there is a user demand for easy-to-navigate subsets of the main BHPS data.

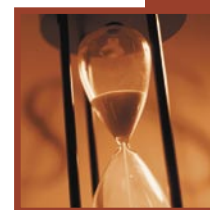
ESDS Longitudinal acquired the fourteenth wave of the main BHPS, made available in April, and negotiated with the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) regarding the deposit of a new longitudinal data resource, the Longitudinal Study of Young People in England (LSYPE).

### Online resources

The online resources available from the ESDS Longitudinal section of the ESDS web site have been maintained, updated and significantly enhanced by new material. Notably, ESDS Longitudinal has produced a new user resource – a database of comparable indicators – that allows users of the core longitudinal studies to look up a selection of variables from each study that match, or are equivalent to, the ONS Primary Set of Harmonised Concepts and Questions. The resource currently covers waves 1-13 of the BHPS, sweep 1 of the MCS and sweep 1 of ELSA and will be extended to cover further sweeps of the MCS and ELSA and equivalent information for the National Child Development Study (NCDS) and the 1970 British Cohort Study (BCS70).



[www.esds.ac.uk/longitudinal](http://www.esds.ac.uk/longitudinal)





### Awareness raising and training

As has been the case in previous years, ESDS Longitudinal has taken a lead role in the organisation, promotion and provision of data awareness and training events aimed at introducing users to the core longitudinal studies. A key focus this year has been on the promotion of the NCDS and BCS70 resources. One-day workshops for potential users of these studies have been held in London and Edinburgh. ESDS Longitudinal staff have contributed to a week-long NCDS/BCS70 data confrontation course at the Essex Summer School in Social Science Data Analysis and Collection and to a nationwide programme of workshops aimed at those teaching quantitative research methods using birth cohort data, both of which were run by the Centre for Longitudinal Studies (CLS).

### Collaboration with key stakeholders

ESDS Longitudinal continues to work closely with the depositors of the core longitudinal studies and has held meetings with colleagues at the CLS, the Institute for Social and Economic Research (ISER) and the National Centre for Social Research (NatCen) regarding the continued use and promotion of their datasets. This reporting year has also seen ESDS Longitudinal take a pro-active role in discussions about making other, non ESRC-funded longitudinal resources available to the ESDS user community.

It has already been noted that ESDS Longitudinal will be making the DfES-funded LSYPE available. Equally significantly, ESDS Longitudinal staff have been working with the MRC to investigate ways in which MRC-funded longitudinal data of interest to social scientists might be made more accessible. ESDS Longitudinal has taken a lead role in undertaking an MRC-commissioned data audit of two of that Council's major longitudinal investments: the National Study of Health and Development (NSHD, aka the 1946 Birth Cohort Study) and the Avon Longitudinal Study of Parents and Children (ALSPAC). This audit is in preparation for improved access to these resources for secondary analysts – indeed, at the time of writing, a proposal is with the ESRC for funding to produce an ALSPAC dataset of specific interest to social scientists for deposit at the UKDA - and ESDS Longitudinal will continue to engage with the MRC and those managing the data in order to facilitate a data sharing solution suitable to all interested parties.



ESDS mourns the loss of Dr Alasdair Crockett who died in September 2006. Dr Crockett was Data Standards Manager at the UKDA, working closely with ESDS Longitudinal and ESDS Access and Preservation in particular and was also Chief Research Officer at ISER. His interests and contributions to

social science were wide and varied. He was an expert in the long-term preservation and management of social research data, and authored nationally and internationally respected guides to good practice on the subject. As a researcher, he conducted research in fields ranging from history to geography, sociology and social statistics. Most recently he had been working on a sophisticated empirical analysis of the dynamics of religious change in seven advanced industrial nations with different levels of popular religiosity: Australia, Canada, Germany, Italy, New Zealand, the USA and the UK. Alasdair was a kind and gentle man, with a delightfully dry sense of humour. Well-liked by his colleagues nationally and internationally, he was quiet and modest, preferring to tackle the critical behind-the-scenes work than seek the limelight. He will be greatly missed, and the fields of social research, data management and digital preservation will be much impoverished by his passing..



# Qualidata

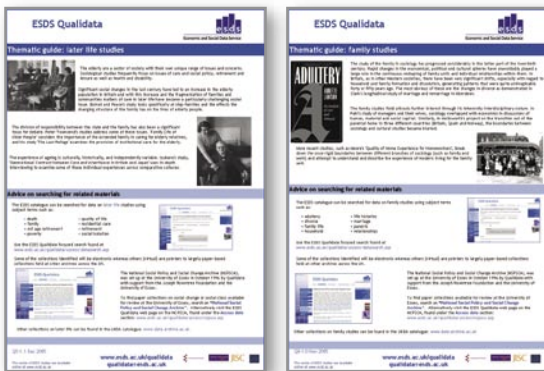
## ESDS Qualidata

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

### Advances in supporting users

#### Thematic guides

While users can search and browse over 5000 datasets, thematic approaches to finding data are always popular. ESDS Qualidata has launched seven new four-page thematic guides to qualitative data covering social class and social change, crime and social control, later life, health, gender, family, and institutions. These guides provide an overview of the subject, examples of key datasets, and links to UK centres of expertise in the respective areas.



#### Teaching resources and datasets

This year, two teaching/training resources were created showing potential users how to begin working with archived qualitative data. The first resource is a hands-on guide to using the Computer-Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS) Atlas-ti for confronting secondary analysis. A second teaching pack was produced to explore the role of contextual information in conducting secondary analysis of qualitative data. Data extracts and contextual materials were compiled from two collections, Mothers and Daughters and A Qualitative Study of Domestic Cooking and Cooking Skills in Late Twentieth Century England. Exercises explore the experience of analysing qualitative data with and without supporting contextual materials drawn from the user guides for these collections.

#### Consent pages

The ESDS Qualidata team contributed significantly to the overhaul of the ESDS pages on consent and confidentiality. Many of the thorniest issues arise in the course of gaining consent for qualitative research, and as such the exemplar consent forms cover a variety of scenarios that qualitative researchers might confront.

#### Significant collections processed

Space permits the highlighting of just three of many data collections released this last year. In the first, Health and Social Consequences of the Foot and Mouth Disease Epidemic in North Cumbria, 2001-2003, 54 panel members produced 3,200 weekly diaries of enormous intensity and diversity over an 18-month period. The study is significant because unlike other Foot and Mouth Disease inquiries which focused on policy issues, this research produced evidence about the human health and social consequences of the epidemic. The study is also important because consent for archiving was gained for highly sensitive material. In the second, 170 interviews for the study Families, Social Mobility and Ageing, an Intergenerational Approach, 1900-1988 were processed for both download and ESDS Qualidata Online. The final significant study is Resisting Subjugation: Law and Power amongst the Santal of India and Bangladesh, 2002-2004 representing the first successful processing of a collection including its proprietary files from a qualitative software package, Atlas.ti.

Another key accomplishment was that ESDS Qualidata gained additional support to digitise the entire Paul Thompson Edwardians text and audio collection. Over 440 interviews have been re-keyed from paper to XML and the original audio files held in the British Library have been converted from reel-to-reel to .wav and .mp3.

www.esds.ac.uk/qualidata





### Delivering multimedia qualitative data online

ESDS Qualidata welcomes opportunities for further technical development of its online browsing system, ESDS Qualidata Online. There are now 230 interviews in the system and data loading procedures have been streamlined. The two ESRC awards won in 2005-2006 by UKDA for qualitative data enhancement have enabled such technical work to proceed. The ESRC Qualitative Archiving and Data Sharing Scheme (QUADS) has advanced thinking and practice in the area of sharing data, in particular audio-visual data. The Smart Qualitative Data: Methods and Community Tools for Data Mark-Up (SQUAD) project has utilised and modified natural language processing tools for systematically preparing and anonymising qualitative data using XML standards and open source tools. A metadata schema for describing and marking up the content of qualitative data, applying the Text Encoding Initiative (TEI) has been finalised with help from the Oxford Text Archive. ESDS Qualidata Online has been working with a team in Australia to further its work on creating a standardised XML format and description for qualitative data.

### Collaboration in qualitative data sharing and archiving research

This year saw ESDS Qualidata staff invited to provide expertise in a range of external projects funded by both ESRC and JISC. Staff provided consultancy for some of the QUADS projects on themes including: metadata standards for multimedia data; data management and archiving practices for longitudinal qualitative studies and for ethically-sensitive data collection; online data display and longer-term sustainable archiving and representation of web sites that complement raw data. They also successfully collaborated with text miners in the UK to consider how information extraction tools may be useful for qualitative data.

### Publicity and outreach

ESDS Qualidata has continued to promote the re-use of data with staff giving presentations covering secondary analysis, methods, historical data (at the Mass Observation Archive at Sussex), social science computing, text mining and e-social science. ESDS Qualidata organised a workshop as part of the QUADS scheme on capturing context for qualitative data. ESDS Qualidata staff were invited abroad to deliver key note speeches at the 'Symposium on Secondary Analysis in Qualitative Research. Utopia and Perspectives' held in Grenoble in November and a workshop in Copenhagen on qualitative methods in May. ESDS Qualidata also continue to publish on various aspects of data sharing, archiving, accessing and re-using qualitative data.



# Case Studies

## Case Studies

### ESDS Access and Preservation

Workplace employment relations

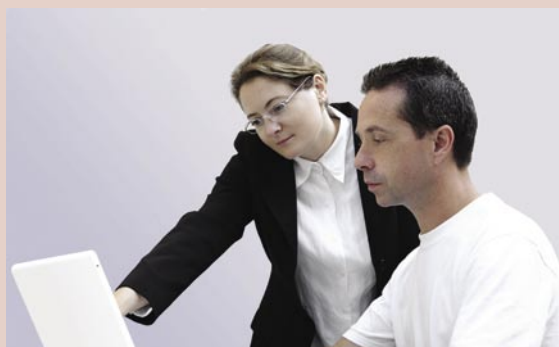


Employment relations may no longer attract the kind of front page headlines that they did in 'the bad old days' of the 1970s, but working practices and relationships between managers and employees still play a critical role in determining levels of pay, job satisfaction and productivity. Data deposited with ESDS in the past year have provided a wealth of new information on the nature of employment relations and how they have changed since the late 1990s. The 2004 Workplace Employment Relations Survey (WERS 2004) is the fifth in this survey series. Previous surveys were conducted in 1980, 1984, 1990 and 1998. The latest survey comprised interviews with around 3,000 workplace managers and almost 1,000 employee representatives, whilst over 20,000 employees completed questionnaires.

A primary analysis of the WERS 2004 data was conducted by John Forth, National Institute of Economic and Social and Research (NIESR) and Director, WERS 2004 Information and Advice Service. The analysis - *Inside the workplace*, Routledge, July 2006 - shows that employers have become more aware of the importance of a good work-life balance since the late 1990s, although it also highlights that employees would still like to see their employers doing more to help them in this area. Notably, higher proportions of employees were worrying about their work outside of working hours than in 1998.



John Forth



The decline in collective labour organisation between 1980 and 1998 continued, with employees being less likely to belong to trade unions, and workplaces being less likely to negotiate with unions over pay and conditions in 2004 than in 1998. However, the decline in employee representation was confined to small, private sector workplaces, and the incidence remained stable among larger private sector workplaces and in the public sector – a notable change from the trends observed in earlier periods. Union representatives were also found to be working more closely with management on changes in the workplace.

The survey also enabled a more comprehensive view of employment relations in smaller firms than had previously been possible. The results indicated that employees in small firms have higher levels of job quality, on average, than employees in larger organisations, with employees in small firms more likely to report a degree of influence over the way they do their work and feeling more secure in their jobs.

# Case Studies

## ESDS Government

Understanding social capital



The ESDS Government 2005 Research Conference provided insights into understanding social capital. Key findings included:

### Giulio Flore, ONS

- after controlling for individual and area characteristics, people living in more ethnically diverse areas were less likely to trust their neighbours than those living in less diverse areas.

### Eldin Fahmy, University of Bristol

- young people aged 16-29 were less likely to contact their local MP, or attend a local protest meeting or local voluntary group than those aged 30 and over;
- the older age-group was more likely to trust, speak to, or have done a favour for their neighbours;
- social class is less strongly predictive of political action (in terms of contacting an MP/writing a letter to a newspaper) for those aged between 16-29 than for the overall population.

### Yaojun Li, University of Birmingham

- bridging social capital (for example, good social networks) was likely to have a positive effect on individual income;
- conversely, bonding social capital, in terms of level of local neighbourhood attachment, was negatively related to wage growth.

### Nick Buck, ISER, University of Essex

- people living in areas of greater multiple deprivation exhibit lower social trust and speak to their neighbours less frequently than those living in more advantaged areas;
- networks of close friendships amongst people living in areas of high multiple deprivation are more confined to the immediate neighbourhood than for those in less deprived areas;
- those who moved to areas of greater deprivation were much less likely to feel involved in their communities, whilst those who move to better areas feel particularly involved.



# Case Studies

## ESDS International - macro data

Avoiding dangerous climate change by inducing technological progress



Cambridge economists Terry Barker and associates tackled the costs of carbon dioxide emissions using data acquired from ESDS International. They presented their findings\* at the Avoiding Dangerous Climate Change conference sponsored by the UK government. Their research made a significant contribution to the scientific and policy debate on what constitutes dangerous climate change and served as a basis of discussion for the 2005 G8 summit in Gleneagles.

Constructing a large-scale and sophisticated econometric model gathered from international governmental organisation (IGO) databanks, they find support for the argument that there are economic benefits to carbon emission stabilisation. Moreover, these benefits increase the higher the target concentration used. They model atmospheric concentration of carbon dioxide at 550 ppm, 500 ppm and 450 ppm. Emissions modelled to 2100 are used.

The model depends upon a wide range of data contained in the ESDS International portfolio: OECD's Structural Analysis (STAN), World Bank's World Development

Indicators (WDI), Eurostat, and International Energy Agency datasets. Constructing an empirical test of this magnitude, and using a multitude of datasets would be prohibitively expensive without the UK-wide academic redistribution agreements negotiated between the ESRC and the IGOs. It provides an example of how ESDS services deliver savings to the UK academic community as a whole.

\* published as 'Avoiding dangerous climate change by inducing technological progress: scenarios using a large-scale econometric model', chapter 38 in H.J. Schellnhuber, W. Cramer, N. Nakicenovic, T. Wigley and G. Yohe (eds.) Avoiding dangerous climate change, Cambridge University Press, 2005.



## ESDS International – micro data

Trans-national comparisons of income and well-being



Professor Richard Layard and Guy Mayraz, Centre for Economic Performance, London School of Economics investigated trans-national comparisons of income and well-being.

The relationship between income and well-being is a source of much interest, debate, and even political argument. It is important in economic theory and in the argument for redistribution.

Real data on these questions are now available in surveys such as the World Values Survey, the Eurobarometers, and the General Social Survey in the United States, which ask people how happy they are with their lives. Researchers were able to show that factors such as personal life are more important, but that income does matter.

Layard and Mayraz used the European Social Survey as well as the World Values Survey and the Eurobarometers to investigate these questions in greater detail. They were

able to find a clear log linear relationship between income and well-being within a country, making it possible for the first time to assess the welfare implications of income redistribution with any accuracy. Beyond this it was demonstrated that the log linear relationship extends to between country comparisons, providing another argument why economic development is important.

This important research was made possible by the availability of the survey data via ESDS.



Richard Layard



Guy Mayraz

# Case Studies

## Case Studies

### ESDS Longitudinal

Teaching potential of longitudinal data



During 2006, as part of the ESRC-funded Researcher Development Initiative (RDI), the Centre for Longitudinal Studies (CLS) held a series of two-day workshops aimed at those teaching quantitative research methods.

The workshops focused on the teaching potential of the three British birth cohort studies available via the ESDS and supported by ESDS Longitudinal - the 1958 National Child Development Study (NCDS), the 1970 British Cohort Study (BCS70) and the Millennium Cohort Study (MCS).

Workshop participants were introduced to the cohort datasets – subject coverage, sample design, response rates – before examining how these longitudinal data resources may be used in a teaching environment. Specifically, the workshops covered: using longitudinal data to teach simple bivariate analyses; using longitudinal data at the individual level to teach the analysis of change in the same underlying variable over time or age; analysing event history data



(introducing the problems generated by censoring); and the value of inter-cohort comparisons and the methodological problems associated with these comparisons.

The main emphasis of the workshops was to provide participants with practical, hands-on experience of the resources produced by the CLS, and for teachers and lecturers who might use the resources to outline their needs.

### ESDS Qualidata

Comparative social change in Japan and the UK



Associate Professor Naoko Takeda from the Department of Sociology, Musashi University in Tokyo, Japan, has studied social change in Japan including residents' regional movements, shifts in structures of employment and daily life, and spatial organisation. The manufacturing suburbs of Tokyo and the working class are the focus of her recent work. She is now extending her research by conducting an international comparative study with the UK. She is using several collections of Ray Pahl located in the National Social Policy and Social Change Archive: the Isle of Sheppey studies, the Metropolitan Villages Survey, and Three Hertfordshire Villages Survey. Her project will revisit the work of Ray Pahl and evaluate its contribution to the sociology of communities and families. Associate Professor Takeda is planning to take a sabbatical year in the UK in 2007-2008 to pursue this research.



Professor Naoko Takeda

# Diary of the year 2005-2006

## August 05

**ESDS Government** makes an expert contribution at the Survey Design Initiative Meeting, MRC, London

**ESDS Management** contributes to a consultation regarding the ESRC's 'Engagement with non-academic stakeholders'

**ESDS Qualidata** organises a session on the National Social Policy and Social Change Archive, Essex Summer School, Colchester

## September 05

**ESDS Management** presents at the Society of Archivists Conference, University of East Anglia, Norwich

**ESDS Government** organises a seminar to highlight the research value of Scotland government datasets and runs an introductory workshop on government micro data, Edinburgh

**ESDS Longitudinal** organises National Child Development Study (NCDS) and 1970 British Cohort Study (BCS70): a workshop for potential users, Edinburgh

**ESDS Management** presents at the Association for Survey Computing International Conference on Survey Research Methods: Maximising Data Value - Data Use and Re-Use, Buckinghamshire

**ESDS International** gives a talk to Nereus delegates, The Data Library for Economics Researchers, London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE), London

**ESDS Qualidata** presents at the Centre for Research and Socio-Cultural Change (CRESC) Methods Workshop: Re-using Qualitative Data, Qualitative Research Laboratory, Manchester

**ESDS Management** member serves as attendee and evaluator at the National Centre for Social Research - Greek Social Data Bank Node for Secondary Processing Workshop and Evaluation, Athens, Greece

**ESDS Government** contributes to the Social Research Association (SRA) expert workshop, Promoting Effective Training, London

## October 05

**ESDS International** presents at the Department for International Development (DFID)-ESRC Joint Scheme for research on international poverty reduction workshop, University of London

**ESDS Qualidata** presents at the Centre for Applied Research in Educational Technologies (CARET), Cambridge

**ESDS Government** organises an introductory workshop on a social capital theme, ONS, London

**ESDS Management** presents at the annual Organisational Representatives meeting of ICPSR, Ann Arbor, Michigan

## November 05

**ESDS Qualidata** gives a plenary speech and contributes to a panel at the Symposium on Qualitative Data Archiving, Grenoble, France

**ESDS Government** holds its annual research conference on a theme of social capital: evidence from large-scale surveys, British Academy, London

**ESDS International** holds its annual conference, Royal Statistical Society, London

**ESDS International** presents at the official launch of the Researcher Development Initiative (RDI) programme, Royal College of Physicians, London

**ESDS Qualidata** organises a workshop, Online Qualitative Data Resources: Best Practice in Metadata Creation and Web Standards, Centre Point, London

**ESDS Management** hosts visits by Russian Social Science Data Archive, Moscow State University, and Human Sciences Research Council, South Africa

## December 05

**ESDS Management** presents at the Third European Conference on Research Infrastructure, Nottingham

**ESDS International** presents at a workshop on Sustainable Development in the Curriculum, Manchester

**ESDS Government** gives a workshop, Introduction to Stata, Manchester

**ESDS Qualidata** is invited to visit the Bremen Life Course Institute, Germany

## January 06

**ESDS Government** runs courses on SPSS for social scientists and Introduction to Stata, Manchester

**ESDS Management** presents at the Rural Economy and Land Use Programme Conference: Enabling Knowledge Exchange, Manchester

**ESDS Qualidata** organises a workshop, Exploring the potential: examining archived data at Mass Observation and ESDS Qualidata, Brighton

**ESDS International** runs a half-day training course, LSE, London

**ESDS** runs a workshop, Exploring the Economic and Social Data Service, Swansea

**ESDS Government** organises a workshop, Surveys, social capital and social networks, Belfast

## February 06

**ESDS Longitudinal** organises National Child Development Study (NCDS) and 1970 British Cohort Study (BCS70): a workshop for potential users, Institute of Education, London

**ESDS Management** hosts visits from 'Research Group for the Construction of Korean Data Archive', Professor Shimizu Yoshifumi, Japan, Professor Deborah Mitchell, head of the Australian Social Science Data Archive, Australian National University, Sir Keith O'Nions, Department of Trade and Industry, and Professor Ian Diamond, ESRC

**ESDS International** presents to economics undergraduates, Loughborough

## March 06

**ESDS Government** contributes to the Scottish Household Survey User Day 2006, Edinburgh

**ESDS Management** attends the Statistics User Executive, Royal Statistical Society, London

**ESDS Management** contributes to a consultation undertaken by the National Centre for Research Methods (NCRM) on UK research methods strategy, London

**ESDS** participates in the annual JISC conference, Birmingham

**ESDS International** hosts a seminar, Exploring the potential: international comparative micro data sources, British Academy, London

## April 06

**ESDS Government** runs an SPSS for social scientists short course, Manchester

**ESDS Management** presents at the seminar, E-Publishing in the Humanities and Social Sciences, British Academy, London

**ESDS International** runs a workshop, Introduction to the ESDS International Databanks, Manchester

**ESDS** presents at the British Sociological Association (BSA) Annual Conference 2006 - Sociology, Social Order(s) and Disorder(s), Harrogate

**ESDS Government** presents at the Social Research Mini Methods Festival, Plymouth

## May 06

**ESDS Qualidata** organises a workshop on capturing context for qualitative data, Southbank, London

**ESDS Management** presents and participates in a panel discussion at the joint National Digital Information

Infrastructure and Preservation Program (NDIIP)/JISC Digital Preservation workshop, Washington DC, US

**ESDS Qualidata** member is an invited attendee at the launch of Mixed Media Grid (MiMeG) and workshop, Analysing video data for collaborative research, Bristol

**ESDS** hosts an Access Grid seminar

**ESDS** staff present, organise a workshop and serve as session chairs at IASSIST 2006, Ann Arbor, Michigan

## June 06

**ESDS Longitudinal** presents at the Postgraduate Research Training Programme, Institute of Health and Social Care, Anglia Ruskin University and at the Centre for Longitudinal Studies, Research Development Initiative Programme, City University, London

**ESDS Government** runs a workshop, An introduction to UK Microdata - focus on ethnicity, Bristol

**ESDS** staff present at the Second International Conference on e-Social Science, Manchester and at the MIMAS Open Forum 2006, Manchester

**ESDS Qualidata** presents at the Gender and Food Day Workshop, Warwick

**ESDS Government** meets with Florian Urmetzer from the Centre for Advanced Computing and Emerging Technologies (ACET) concerning the Collaboratory for Quantitative e-Social Science (CQeSS) survey

## July 06

**ESDS Management** serves on panel discussion and as session chair at the 18th International Conference on Scientific and Statistical Database Management (SSDBM 2006), Vienna

**ESDS International** presents to Nobel Prize laureate Joseph Stiglitz and his graduate class at the Brooks Poverty Institute, Manchester

**ESDS Management** presents at the Digital Curation Centre and Digital Preservation Coalition Joint Workshop, Policies for Long-term Curation and Preservation, Oxford

**ESDS Longitudinal** presents at the Methodology of Longitudinal Surveys conference (MOLS 2006), University of Essex

**ESDS** presents at the ESRC Research Methods Festival, Oxford

**ESDS Management** attends the ONS Statistics User Forum's Priorities - Meeting with the National Statistician to discuss strategic issues, ONS, London



# 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 2000-2001 to 2005-2006 in order to facilitate comparisons and change over time. For those requiring more detailed statistical information on the working of ESDS, the service provides quarterly statistical returns reporting against a Service Level Definition (SLD) to the JISC Monitoring Unit (MU). These are all available from [www.esds.ac.uk/news/jiscmu.asp](http://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.

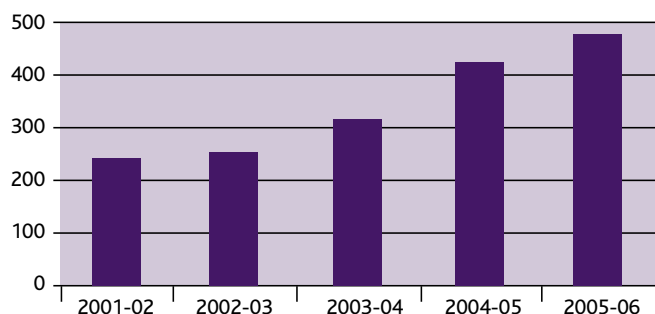
**Table 1 Data collections acquired and processed for online delivery\***

Service	2004-2005			2005-2006		
	New datasets	Updates and new editions	Total	New datasets	Updates and new editions	Total
<b>Core</b>	66	15	81	125	39	164
<b>Government</b>	39	72	111	63	24	87
<b>International</b>	40	89	129	19	126	145
<b>Longitudinal</b>	8	5	13	10	3	13
<b>Qualidata</b>	24	7	31	24	27	51
<b>Total</b>	177	188	365	241	219	460

\*includes data acquired and prepared for ESDS International macro Beyond 20/20 service

Acquisitions overall, combining figures for new data collections together with updates and new editions, rose by 20 per cent. The major rise was in acquiring and processing new data collections - a 36 per cent increase from 2004-2005. This is significant since it is these acquisitions which are the most resource intensive.

**Figure 5 Datasets processed\***



\* includes Nesstar preparation

**Table 2 Datasets further processed for value-added delivery via Nesstar**

Service	2004-2005			2005-2006		
	New datasets	Updates and new editions	Total	New datasets	Updates and new editions	Total
Core	7	0	7	17	1	18
Government	33	26	59	19	11	30
International	1	1	2	0	0	0
Longitudinal	1	1	2	2	1	3
Total	42	28	70	38	13	51

2004-2005 was a peak year for Nesstar publication, largely due to the major republication of ESDS Government surveys, stemming from the ONS's regrossing exercise for the Labour Force Surveys. This year, 2005-2006, Nesstar processing has reverted to a level which better reflects our SLD commitments.

**Table 3 Datasets delivered to users by access method**

2004-2005	Download	FTP	Via/access	Portable media	Nesstar download	Total
ESDS Core	6,697	228	1,290	27	48	8,290
ESDS Government	20,058	137	6,006	96	282	26,579
ESDS International*	125	588	681	77	2	1,473
ESDS Longitudinal	3,842	31	348	38	31	4,290
ESDS Qualidata**	451	6	45	0		502
Total	31,173	990	8,370	238	363	41,134

2005-2006	Download	FTP	Via/access	Portable media	Nesstar download	Total
ESDS Core	10,538	281	1,372	34	65	12,290
ESDS Government	22,203	124	4,437	18	525	27,307
ESDS International*	309	569	507	30	13	1,428
ESDS Longitudinal	6,630	27	410	11	51	7,129
ESDS Qualidata**	927	13	73	2		1,015
Total	40,607	1,014	6,799	95	654	49,169

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

\*\* Nesstar does not include qualitative data

## Datasets delivered

Usage of ESDS in terms of the delivery of datasets to end users is summarised in Table 3 and Table 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 nearly 20 per cent over last year, from 41,134 to 49,169. Previously annual reports only counted a single user-usage-dataset number combination, but it was felt that this was failing to capture an important change in how users are using the ESDS site. In fact, nearly half of all successful downloads are repeat downloads of files from the same datasets by the same individual. What this shows is that users are beginning to use ESDS almost as an 'offsite storage', a convenient place from which required data can be downloaded multiple times to different computers as convenience and working practice demand. This is perhaps an inevitable result of the improvements in the ease of data access under ESDS, which makes acquiring datasets via download a simple click of the mouse for registered users.

Overall, ESDS International micro data and ESDS Government displayed a fairly steady usage (4 per cent decrease and 3 per cent increase respectively). Usage of 'core' datasets (those data not supported by one of the specialist services) rose by 50 per cent and ESDS Longitudinal saw a 66 per cent increase. But by far the most impressive change was usage of ESDS Qualidata, which displayed a 100 per cent increase over the reporting year. This clearly shows that the long-term strategy of investment in training, outreach, and data enhancements to make data more accessible and easy to use is paying off.

Method of access changed relatively little proportionately, merely following the year-on-year trend for a shift from portable media to download (either via the download service or via the Nesstar service). As more and more legacy materials are prepared for download (139 studies this year), this trend will only increase.

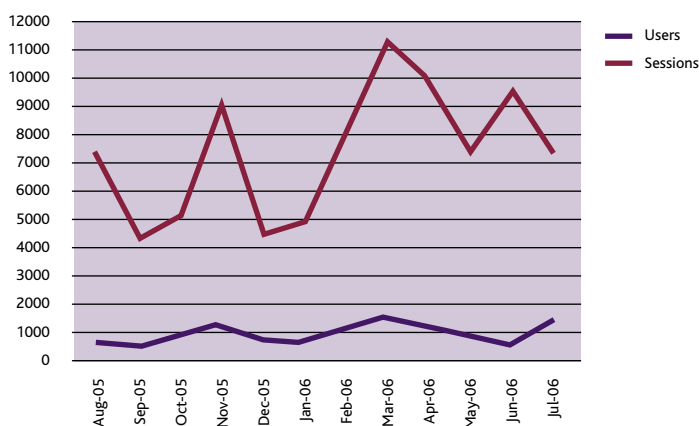
Turning to the value-added data dissemination, usage of online data browsing and analysis systems - Beyond 20/20 for ESDS International macro data, Nesstar for all value-added ESDS micro data and ESDS Qualidata Online for browsing interviews - has again increased. ESDS International macro data sessions increased by 25 per cent and unique users by 36 per cent over last year, representing continuing substantial growth in usage of the service. Over the past year users ran 73,220 Beyond 20/20 data analysis

and download sessions. The largest single group of ESDS International macro data users are postgraduates who account for some 43 per cent of active users. The fastest growing group of users are undergraduates with an increase of almost 55 per cent in number since the previous year. Nesstar saw a total of 19,578 visitors from 5,980 unique IP addresses, undertaking 6,888 analysis sessions over the course of the year. In addition, the ESDS Qualidata Online resource was visited by 20,230 separate users.

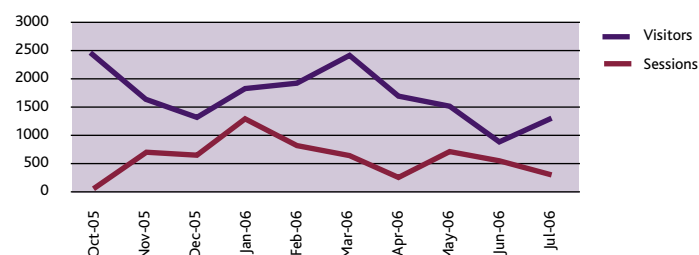
**Table 4: ESDS International macro datasets accessed via Beyond 20/20**

ESDS International – macro datasets	Total number of sessions (i.e. every access)	Unique users	Number of institutions
2003-2004	15,082	1,732	122
2004-2005	58,575	4,007	132
2005-2006	73,220	5,448	166

**Figure 6 ESDS International macro data usage**



**Figure 7 Nesstar usage figures**



Finally, in last year's annual report it was noted that student usage was significantly underestimated, due to a lack of systematic enforcement of users' responsibility to report classroom usage. This year a concerted effort was made to remind users of their need to report classroom usage accurately, and the resulting figures (Table 5) display just how drastically classroom usage has been underreported in the past. This student usage is in addition to the data dissemination figures reported in Table 3.

## User queries

The number of user queries increased over last year's figures by some 17 per cent overall, with ESDS Government and ESDS International seeing the highest proportionate increases. Whilst the increase in user engagement with ESDS is to be welcomed, it is important that resources are made available in order to contain the rate of increase without a degradation of user support.

## Registrations

New user registrations saw an increase of eight per cent over last year, a much less spectacular growth than previously. However, the number of total active users showed a 55 per

cent increase over last year, showing that proportionately more users are remaining active for more than one year.

## Web site usage

The web is clearly a major tool in the delivery of the various ESDS products and services. However, producing web statistics is not without its problems. In the case of the figures which follow, every effort has been taken to produce figures which reflect real use of the ESDS web site. Thus the overall statistics have been adjusted to take account of internal use at Essex and Manchester, so-called web-crawlers and page calls to image files (pictures, logos etc.). Once these adjustments have been made, the total number of page hits in the reporting year was 9,446,250, up 80 per cent on the comparable figure for the previous year (5,246,399). Likewise the number of visits to the site also rose dramatically, to a total of 1,973,426, a staggering increase of 170 per cent. As a consequence of the greater proportional rise in visitors over page hits, the average number of pages viewed per visit fell from c. 7 to 5. The overall trend in web use over the 24 month period August 2004 to July 2006 is given in Figure 8. Interestingly, this shows that the number of page hits rose quite dramatically following the launch of the new web site in June.

Table 5 Students recorded in classroom usage

Service	2004-2005	2005-2006
ESDS Core	1,934	11,357
ESDS Government	3,285	29,538
ESDS International	1,328	5,588
ESDS Longitudinal	1,272	3,320
ESDS Qualidata	378	6,297
Total	8,197	56,100

Table 7 New registrations and active registered users

	2003-2004	2004-2005	2005-2006
New registrations*	5,649	17,838	19,258
Total active registered users*	13,991	29,992	46,682

\*includes users registered for ESDS via the Census Registration Service

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

Services	2004-2005			2005-2006		
	Queries	Referrals	Totals	Queries	Referrals	Totals
ESDS Management	2,074	0	2,074	2,198	104	2,302
ESDS Government	202	40	242	382	22	404
ESDS International	345	12	357	497	19	516
ESDS Longitudinal	81	0	81	62	0	62
ESDS Qualidata	148	0	148	163	1	164
Total	2,850	52	2,902	3,302	146	3,448

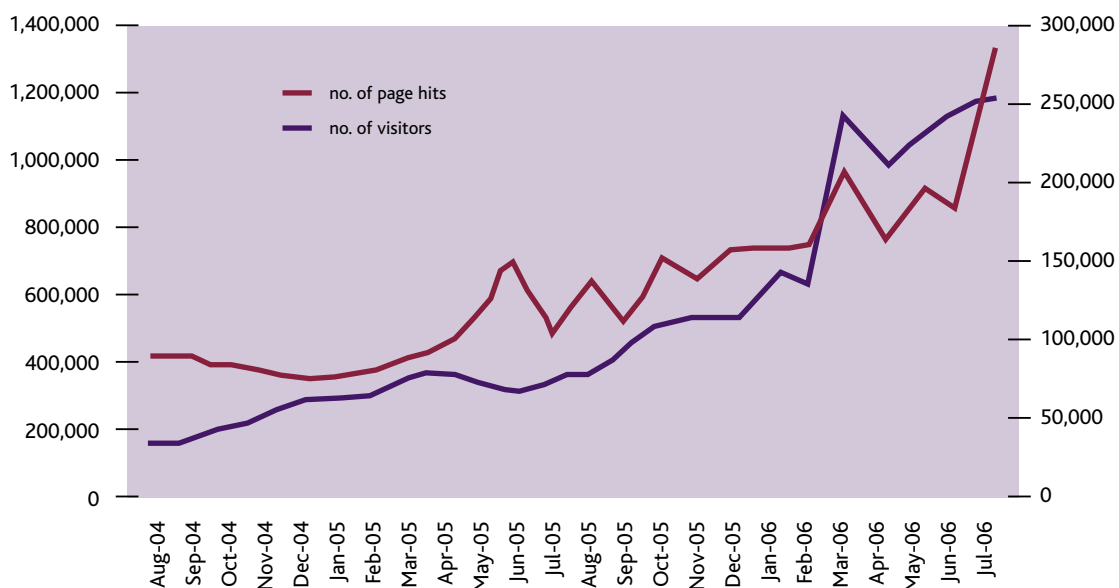
Turning to Table 8 which gives the total number of visits and page hits by country of origin, internationally the pattern of use remains very similar to the previous year: the United States continues to be the country supplying the most visitors, while Poland came into the 'top ten' and Sweden dropped out. In total 41 countries recorded 1,500 visits or more to the web site (compared to 18 the previous year), with 20 countries recording 3,000 or more visits. The ESDS and UKDA web sites are, of course, not only used to

discover and access data. They also provide access to vast quantities of user guides and questionnaires, all of which can be downloaded without the requirement to register, as well as, information about data management, data preparation and the general use of data. In total 807,797 PDF files were downloaded in the form of user guides and data support materials (and in addition to this a number of guides were also downloaded as .rtf or .html files).

Table 8 Web site usage by country of origin

Country	Number of page hits	Number of visitors
United States	6,816,540	1,592,545
United Kingdom	1,464,418	160,840
Germany	136,590	17,871
China	128,876	17,786
Canada	96,175	14,282
Poland	19,674	12,442
France	58,040	10,109
Australia	45,005	9,315
Japan	50,611	9,243
Netherlands	32,598	7,860

Figure 8 Web site use: August 2004 to July 2006



## Feedback

"An excellent in-depth [ESDS Government] workshop. All good speakers."

"I hadn't really taken the time to thank you for all your help and kindness to make available to me the EFS database quite promptly on last Thursday."

"Thank you very much for your help, now my registration process is complete and can carry on with my research. I really appreciate it."

"I must say, as feedback, that I am very impressed with the speed and helpfulness of the service, which in my case might also prove to be a decisive factor for the success of the project as I was forced to rely on partial data before, unaware of the Archive's services, really. So, big thanks."

"ESDS International is a wonderland of data."

"This is to thank you and others in your group for the great help in getting more years' data from DfT. I am now happily registered and hope to make good use of the files – despite their massive bytage."

"Thank you for organising [the workshop]. Found the event very useful."

"Many thanks for such a quick and informative response - I wish all enquiries were as good as this!"

"This is really a nice service for researchers. [My national] Statistical Office is really 'behind' in this respect."

"Oh you are wonderful. Again many thanks for spending time from your busy day on me."

"Blimey - that was quick. Many thanks to all concerned."

"I have spoken to the director and I've passed on the information you emailed me. He has asked me to thank you on his behalf for all the time and effort you have contributed to this query."

"If it wasn't for the ESDS International service I would have given up on OECD data long ago."

"Thank you very much for getting back so promptly on my query. I appreciate the list of additional sources of information on the environment - I shall look these up."

"Thank you so much for getting this sorted for me, it will be no problem for me to get this data into Stata to use. I really appreciate your speed and efficiency."

"A useful and enjoyable event."

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Kevin Schürer  
Louise Corti  
Melanie Wright

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

Email: [help@esds.ac.uk](mailto:help@esds.ac.uk)  
Tel: +44 (0)1206 872143  
Fax: +44 (0)1206 872003  
[www.esds.ac.uk](http://www.esds.ac.uk)

