

A word from the ESDS Chair and Director



Over the last year the staff of ESDS have put considerable thought into preparing for the service's mid-term review. Kevin Schürer submitted his director's report in March 2010. This report provided all the 'nuts and bolts' needed to fully understand ESDS, but more importantly it demonstrated how the service has facilitated key research over the last five years, some of which has fed directly into important social and economic policies.

The review panel is now preparing their recommendations to the ESRC and to JISC in respect of the continuation of ESDS after the current contract expires in September 2012. The Advisory Committee has played a crucial role throughout this process and it has been a privilege for me to work so closely on this with the committee and with Kevin's team. I look forward to continuing this work with his successor, Matthew Woollard, and I am confident that the review will give us a foundation to provide an even better service beyond 2012.



Audrey Brown
Chair, ESDS Advisory Committee



In August I received the privilege of succeeding Professor Kevin Schürer as Director of ESDS, a post he held from its inception in 2003 until the last day of this reporting year. This autumn we said a fond farewell to Kevin, who is taking a new post as Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research and Enterprise at the University of Leicester. I have taken over the reins from a distinguished colleague, who has led ESDS to its present position as one of the most respected data service providers in the world. I wish him every success in his new career.

I look forward to working with Audrey and the Advisory Committee over the coming year, and with my fellow ESDS colleagues from the University of Manchester. Together we must meet the challenge of continuing to deliver a world-class service in a period of financial uncertainty. That will require careful planning with an eye toward innovation. I look forward to the opportunity.

In this period of uncertainty, some things are, however, certain. First, the inception and foundation of a new European research infrastructure consortium will bring benefits to the data-using community, and the UK Data Archive – as the main host for ESDS – will contribute significantly. Second, the coming year will see other changes coming out from the recommendations of our mid-term review. We have a comprehensive plan of activities for 2010-2011.

As we move forward, we will continue to innovate across a number of activities, making high quality social science data easier to find, access and cite.



Matthew Woollard
Director, ESDS

Economic and Social Data Service

Annual Report August 2009 – July 2010

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Cover image: Institutions with 10 or more registered ESDS users, as of 31 July 2010.

ESDS aims and objectives

The overall aim of ESDS is to promote wider and more informed use of data for research and teaching in the social sciences and to ensure that these data continue to be available over time.

To achieve this aim ESDS will:

- > develop a clear, co-ordinated acquisitions strategy in conjunction with the ESRC and JISC;
- > develop and promote common standards and agreed strategies for data preparation, processing, documentation and preservation;
- > integrate data services through the development of a universal single point of access and simple registration procedures and common conditions of use;
- > enhance underlying data sources through the development of value-added services around key data collections and series;
- > promote increased use of data collections through both general and specialist user support activities;
- > develop interface and analysis tools appropriate to differing levels of expertise amongst end users;
- > respond to key technical developments in the broader information environment;
- > engage on a regular basis with a wide range of stakeholders, including data suppliers, data funders and end users.

This is ESDS

The Economic and Social Data Service (ESDS) is a distributed national data service established in 2003 by the ESRC and JISC to provide enhanced access and support for an extensive range of key economic and social data, both quantitative and qualitative, spanning many disciplines and themes.

ESDS is based on a successful partnership between the Universities of Essex and Manchester, and comprises six distinct yet inter-related services:

ESDS Government – Led during 2009-2010 by **Angela Dale** of the Cathie Marsh Centre for Census and Survey Research (CCSR), this service promotes and facilitates the use of large-scale government surveys in research, learning and teaching – providing methodological guides, short courses and support for key statistical packages. It is supported with input from the UK Data Archive in the areas of data acquisition, processing and dissemination.

ESDS International – This service is led by **Jackie Carter** at Mimas who is responsible for macrodata, with microdata support from the UK Data Archive. It supports and disseminates data from major intergovernmental organisations, plus a range of international survey datasets. The service promotes and facilitates use of international datasets in research, learning and teaching across a range of disciplines.

ESDS Longitudinal – Managed jointly by **Jack Kneeshaw** at the UK Data Archive and the Institute for Social and Economic Research (ISER) in Essex, the service promotes the use of longitudinal data and supports a range of longitudinal datasets by creating data enhancements and providing user support and training.

ESDS Qualidata – Led by **Louise Corti** at the UK Data Archive, ESDS Qualidata provides access to and support for a range of qualitative data collections. It generates a number of data enhancements and provides information and training resources for the re-analysis of qualitative data.

ESDS Access and Preservation – Also hosted by the UK Data Archive and led by **Melanie Wright**, this service represents the core of the ESDS, focusing on data acquisition, ingest processing, preservation and dissemination. It provides access to most of the data held by ESDS through a variety of web-based systems and also handles registration of users across ESDS.

ESDS Management – The overall management of ESDS is the responsibility of the UK Data Archive, led during 2009-2010 by Kevin Schürer. This service provides consistency and standards across the other services and performs a broad strategic role in relation to the supply, funding and use of social science data. It also provides a coherent marketing and outreach strategy for the whole of ESDS.



This report covers all six services and includes a combined set of performance statistics.

Executive summary

This has been another busy year for the ESDS, which has ended with a significant change in overall leadership for the organisation. At the UK Data Archive, Matthew Woollard has replaced Kevin Schürer. In Manchester, Angela Dale has handed the operational reins for ESDS Government to Vanessa Higgins, but retains a crucial role in the leadership of ESDS.

This year has seen the formulation of an ESDS Collections Development Committee to advise on the ESDS's strategy for acquiring datasets from beyond ESRC-funded research. This work will progress during 2011-2012, ensuring that the new Collections Development Policy: meets the requirements of the ESRC; allows for the implementation of the ESRC's newly published Research Data Policy; and coalesces with the work of the UK Data Forum.

2009 also saw the publication of 'Managing and Sharing data: a best practice guide for researchers,' which provides ESRC award holders and other data depositors with best practice guidance on preparing data for long-term access. This proved so successful that a second edition was published within six months. It has also been used and promoted by data funders including the ESRC, the Medical Research Council (MRC) and the Natural Environment Research Council (NERC).

The ESDS has continued to make inroads into the integration of ESRC data services, in particular with the Survey Resources Network and the work with the Survey Question Bank which will allow users to move seamlessly from the Question Bank to the online data exploration system of the ESDS.

The services which the ESDS provides in order to enhance researchers' experience continue to grow. These range from enhancing data through quality control checking, verification, creating metadata and enriching documentation to providing thematic resources to help researchers better understand the context and creation of these data collections. To this end, all services held workshops and user meetings in 2009-2010.

This report shows that all front-office activities of the ESDS have expanded this year. On a year-on-year basis, more data collections have been brought into the collection, more user queries have been asked, more data accesses have been made and the disciplinary breadth of users has expanded.

At the time of writing, the full outcomes of the Comprehensive Spending Review are not clear, but it is certain that the ESDS will have to respond vigorously to any retrenchment. As public funding for key social and economic research declines, the ESDS must find more opportunities to re-use and re-purpose existing data. The ESDS currently stands in the vanguard of this movement, and in the coming year it will be crucial to make the most of this opportunity.

Demonstrating the impact of ESDS

ESDS Government

Data in use: crime, safety and community



The issues of crime, safety and community were on the agenda at the 2009 ESDS Government research conference. Representatives from local and central government, academia and the Metropolitan Police gathered at the British Academy in central London to hear about recent research using ESDS Government datasets that demonstrate the importance of crime, safety and community from a policy perspective. Professor Paul Wiles, Chief Scientific Advisor to the Home Office, chaired the conference.

Helen Chester from the University of Manchester drew on several years of data from the *British Crime Survey* and used multilevel modelling to explore the influence of household and area characteristics on property crime victimisation. The analyses established that household characteristics were more important than those of the area. Overall the study demonstrated the value of multilevel modelling, but identified several issues which need to be resolved or considered when applying this method when studying the effects of property crime.

Professor Tim Hope from Keele University used the *British Crime Survey* and the *Scottish Crime and Victimization Survey* to explore the distribution of crime victimisation in the population and his results suggest that delivering crime prevention to the general population as a whole rather than targeting chronic victims would gain a greater overall return on investment.

Emily Gray from Keele University presented a paper which used data from the *British Crime Survey* and the *London Metropolitan Police Safer Neighbourhoods Survey* to present two new ways to measure fear of crime. The first new measure differentiated between diffuse anxieties about crime (a more generalised awareness of risk that may include crime, but also other social or economic concerns) and everyday worries about crime (concrete emotional events of alarm for one's safety and property). The second new measure referred to the impact of these emotions on people's lives: by differentiating between functional emotions that motivate precaution without negatively affecting well-being and dysfunctional emotions that erode people's quality of life and well-being.

ESDS International (macro)

Contributing to the energy debate: a single European gas market?



Photo by: mkrigsmann, Creative Commons, Flickr

Having access to the International Energy Agency databases at ESDS International substantially increases the capacity of the UK academic community to contribute to national, European and global debates regarding energy, sustainable development and the environment.

Following the Russian-Ukrainian gas supply crisis of January 2009, the issue of gas security policy in the European Union (EU) rose on the international agenda and became widely debated. Feeding into this debate was research carried out by Pierre Noël of the University of Cambridge at the Electricity Policy Research Group (EPRG), an organisation funded by the ESRC's Towards a Sustainable Energy Economy programme.

Dr Noël believes that despite an impressive reduction in the EU's relative dependence on gas from Russia, there is a growing perception that Russian gas presents Europe with one of its most pressing geopolitical challenges. His research seeks to understand the political economy of the EU-Russia

gas relationship after the EU enlargements of 2004 and 2007, in particular the question of how the structure of the European gas market impacts the political divisions of Europe vis-à-vis Russia.

Using the *International Energy Agency Natural Gas Statistics* hosted at ESDS International, Dr Noël suggests a new approach is needed, emphasising the large differences between Eastern and Western Europe in terms of dependence on Russian gas and the segmentation of the European gas system along national borders. He concludes that the emergence of a single European gas market – where national markets would be integrated through pan-European competitive trading – would significantly reduce the energy security and foreign policy implications of the EU-Russia gas relationship while improving Europe's ability to speak to Russia with one voice.

The work is published as Noël, P. (2008) *Beyond Dependence: How to Deal with Russian Gas*, European Council on Foreign Relations, London.

ESDS International (micro)

Understanding global change: new data on attitudes across Russia and Eastern Europe



In July 2010, ESDS International released a host of new data from three survey series which form part of a cross-national, cross-temporal programme of research co-ordinated by the University of Aberdeen's Centre for the Study of Public Policy (CSPP).

The ongoing research involves more than 100 social surveys in 17 post-Communist countries dating back almost 20 years and will add considerably to the growing portfolio of post-Communist studies already in the ESDS collection.

The *New Russia Barometer* series, conducted annually since 1992, consists of face-to-face interviews with a stratified representative nationwide sample of around 2,000 Russian adults. The interviews last approximately one hour, and collect information about political, economic and social attitudes and behaviour.

The *New Europe Barometer* series – which began life as the *New Democracies Barometer* in 1991 – covers ten new member states of the EU plus two candidate countries, along with Belarus, Ukraine and the Yugoslav successor states.

The *New Baltic Barometer* covers Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania and has been conducted six times since 1993. Each survey interviews separate samples of Baltic people and Russian ethnics.

Taken together, the barometers represent a unique resource for the cross-national analysis of attitudes in Eastern Europe and Russia over a period of political and economic change. Equally, the comparability of questions from survey to survey, allows researchers interested in just one country to make comparisons across time.



ESDS Longitudinal

The consequences of raising twins



There have been several studies that have looked at twins as research subjects, and in particular as a means of looking at the balance of 'nature' and 'nurture' on different outcomes such as intelligence or social mobility.

It has been much less common to look at the effects on families of having twins (or higher order multiple births).

The aim of Stephen McKay's study, *The Consequences of Raising Twins* – planned in collaboration with the Twins and Multiple Birth Association (TAMBA) – was to consider how having twins affected parental resources and child outcomes. A range of relevant information within the *Millennium Cohort Study* was identified, such as rates of employment, hours of work, marital

status, subsequent fertility and incomes. It was also necessary to control for different features of the family, as those having twins tend to be older than average, and to already have children.

The research found that having twins was associated with lower incomes and higher levels of parental stress, the former resulting, in part, from lower rates of female work participation among those with multiple births.

ESDS Qualidata

Re-using archival data to inform research and re-shape thinking



Professor Mike Savage knows the power of re-using archival data in current research. Between 2002 and 2009 he made regular visits to ESDS Qualidata as part of a project examining social change in post-war Britain. There, he examined a selection of its 'classic sociology' collections, including Elizabeth Bott's *Family and Social Network*, *The Affluent Worker* by John Goldthorpe and David Lockwood, and studies from Ray Pahl and Brian Jackson.

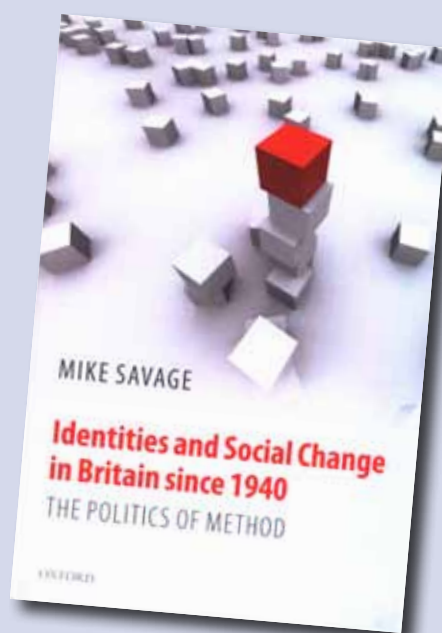
One outcome of that research is his monograph, *Identities and Social Change in Britain since 1940: The Politics of Method* (Oxford University Press, 2010). This work has been acclaimed as offering an original interpretation of the development of social science research methods in the post-war period. In Professor Savage's view, these methods facilitated the elaboration of new class and individual identities which have persisted to the present day.

He also examined how the social sciences (and especially sociology) rose in popularity during the 1960s. In his view, they were seen to offer a more scientific and progressive way of understanding the nation compared to previous framings drawn predominantly from the disciplines of literature and history.

A key theme of his book is the need to celebrate the legacy of social research pioneers of the 1950s and 1960s. He contends that these researchers developed a critical perspective which sought neither to stigmatise nor to pathologise deviant groups, but rather to find new ways to elicit people's ordinary lives.

He also reflects on how the desire to understand national patterns led to a shift in emphasis away from the role of place in people's lives, thus limiting important aspects of the sociological imagination. He therefore hopes that his book is not only an exercise in sociological history, but also a tool to provoke new ideas about the role and direction of the social sciences in the twenty-first century.

Other articles about Professor Savage's work have appeared in the journals *Sociology*, *Contemporary British History*, and *Sociological Review*. In addition, his interest in using archived qualitative social science sources has fed into an important research theme at the ESRC Centre for Research on Socio-Cultural Change. There, several researchers are committed to re-thinking the role of the social science archive in a digital age.



ESDS Access and Preservation



Using the core collection to investigate a theme

Beyond the *British Crime Survey* (supported by ESDS Government), other datasets in the wider ESDS collection can also be used to explore concepts within the theme of crime. For example, one topic currently of great concern to the UK Government and the public is the extent to which young people feel the need to carry a knife for their own protection.

Finding suitable data sources

The Offending, Crime and Justice Survey (OCJS), conducted by the UK Home Office, surveys about 5,000 young people aged 10-25 years in England and Wales about their lifestyles, behaviour, attitudes towards – and experiences of – crime and offending. The OCJS includes questions on knife-carrying, covering prevalence and frequency and type of knife carried.

Data from the 2004, 2005 and 2006 survey have shown some consistency over time, in that around 3.5 to 4 per cent of respondents each year admitted to carrying a knife, with the highest prevalence of knife-carrying occurring among the 15-18 year-old age group. Less than half of those who had admitted to carrying a knife had done so once or twice rather than more regularly, and the majority of knives carried were of the penknife type.

How are data used for research?

An example of how data sources such as the OCJS can be used for research is demonstrated by *Knife crime: a review of evidence and policy*, a high-profile report published in 2007 by the Centre for Crime and Justice Studies (CCJS).

This report gathered information from several sources, including the OCJS, to examine the nature and extent of knife crime, the reasons why knives were carried, and who might be most affected by the problem of knife crime. It also examined potentially effective ways to reduce knife crime.

Among other conclusions, the report called for more research into the motivations for carrying knives in order to enrich the data sources with more detailed contextual information. It noted that “Young people who carry knives are more likely to do so if they have been victims of a crime. They often do so because they feel unsafe, and easy distinctions between victim and offender do not necessarily apply”.



ESDS Government



Government surveys, especially repeated series, provide a key resource for UK social science. ESDS Government promotes and facilitates effective use of surveys such as the *General Household Survey* (now renamed the *General Lifestyle Survey*); the *Labour Force Survey*; the *British Crime Survey* and the *Family Resources Survey*.

Enhancing the data portfolio

The ESDS Government data portfolio continues to develop. During the reporting period, Special Licence modules of the *British Crime Survey* (2008-2009) data were made available for users. The modules cover drinking behaviour, drug use and interpersonal violence, and previously unavailable low-level geographic variables. Other important enhancements to the portfolio are the newly redesigned *Scottish Crime and Justice Survey* (2008-2009) and the *Survey of English Housing* time series dataset (1993/1994-2007/2008).

Contact and collaboration with data producers and data users

Collaboration and interaction with data producers and data users are two of ESDS Government's key roles. In this reporting year the service has held five user meetings – each on a different survey or set of surveys – which have brought together data producers and data users to discuss survey developments and to hear about research findings. The programme is developed in collaboration with the survey producer (the National Centre for Social Research (NatCen) or

the Office for National Statistics (ONS)) and relevant government departments such as the Department for Work and Pensions and the Home Office. Meetings are typically attended by 60-70 people from a range of sectors including academia, voluntary organisations, local and central government and the private sector.

Getting results into the policy arena

ESDS Government research conferences are designed to ensure that government departments who fund major surveys are aware of the high quality research that is conducted via ESDS. In 2009 the ESDS Government research conference on crime, safety and community was planned to be of particular interest to crime policy analysts. Papers covered a range of issues including the distribution of crime victimisation in the general population, changes in offending profiles, property crime and the fear of crime.

Promoting use of data in high quality research

In order to increase the use of government surveys in research ESDS Government held a number of workshops, for a range of themes and a number of audiences. Two hands-on introductory workshops were held. The first, on the theme of crime, was aimed at those with little or no experience of using government survey data and introduced surveys such as the *British Crime Survey* and the *Citizenship Survey*. The workshop included a session from Professor Brian Francis which introduced general crime statistics and how best to measure crime. The second themed workshop had

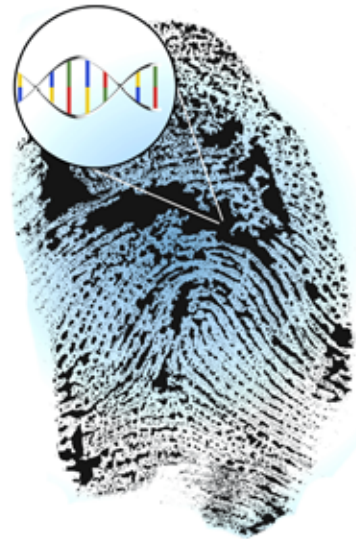


health as a theme. This was run jointly with the teams from the Sample for Anonymised Records and Methodbox (an ESRC e-learning project to help health researchers access data and share expertise more easily). Attendees were largely health analysts from National Health Service (NHS) primary care trusts who had very little experience of using the government survey data.

Four introductory-level short courses on SPSS and Stata were run, as was an advanced workshop on concepts in complex sample design (which was developed alongside a new online guide to analysing complex survey design in ESDS Government datasets). A one-day workshop for methods teachers, designed to promote and increase use of the surveys among undergraduate students, was also run.

Themed resources on crime, safety and community

This year ESDS Government developed a set of new resources around the theme of 'crime, safety and community'. This included an introductory workshop on the theme of crime; an online guide to *Using Government Surveys for Crime Research* which guides users through the crime data available for secondary analysis via the large-scale government surveys; and a teaching dataset based on the 2007 *British Crime Survey*. In order to improve the content and usability of teaching datasets ESDS Government held a consultation with higher education methods teachers and based the new teaching dataset on the results of these consultations and its research conference on crime, safety and the community.



Developing outreach activities

To reach new users, ESDS Government launched a Twitter account and produced a video to introduce the service to new users, available online from the service website.

In addition, the service sends theme-based posters to more than 400 UK social science departments plus twice-yearly newsletters. ESDS Government staff send regular email updates to users, present regularly at conferences, and provide a number of hands-on introductory workshops.

ESDS International



Voter, Mozambique (photo by Andrew Russell)

Now well established in the UK social science user community, ESDS International continues to enjoy a high level of usage due in large part to the continued work to promote and facilitate increased and more effective use of international datasets in research, learning and teaching. This year the service welcomed its 26,000th user.

Data highlights

ESDS International has continued to enhance its data portfolio with the addition of the *United Nations Commodity Trade Statistics Database* (UN Comtrade). This extensive database, containing over 1.1 billion records, is considered to be the most comprehensive trade database available and a valuable new resource for researchers analysing the changing patterns of global trade and their economic, social, and political significance.

Updates from three series of important survey datasets were made available in July 2010. Data from the *New Europe Barometer* (formerly the *New Democracies Barometer*), the *New Russia Barometer* and the *New Baltic Barometer* were deposited by the Centre for the Study of Public Policy at the University of Aberdeen. Between them, these surveys cover much of the former Soviet Union from the 1990s through to the present. In common with other survey barometers, data collection has focused on individual attitudes toward political, social and economic systems. (See the case study for further detail).

Alongside adding new data, the team has continued to improve the presentation of existing databanks. The *International Energy Agency World Energy Statistics and Balances* database has been restructured, the *Organisation for Economic Co-operation and*

Development (OECD) Main Economic Indicators interface has been improved, and data processing programs have been rewritten in response to a number of changes to the International Monetary Fund databases. These include the introduction of new world and regional pilot tables for Balance of Payments International Investment Position data and the addition of two new concepts in the International Financial Statistics world tables.

ESDS International worked with ESDS Longitudinal to produce a resource discovery tool, employing open source timeline software that enables users to set the major UK longitudinal surveys in an international context.

Building research capacity

The past year has been another busy one for ESDS International 'on the road'. Outreach and training events have included courses on 'data resources for East Asia' at Bristol University, 'ESDS International for parliamentarians' at Portcullis House in London, and 'data resources for Africa, Asia and the Middle East' at the School of Oriental and African Studies, London.

Additionally, the team has been actively involved in a number of high profile international events and initiatives including the appointment of the service as the UK node for the Global Project, a major initiative spearheaded by the OECD to foster the development of a set of comprehensive and diverse indicators to measure the progress and well-being of societies.

ESDS International held its flagship event, the fifth successive annual conference at the Institute of Materials in London in November 2009. With a theme of 'real data, real world', the event gave delegates representing both data users and data providers an

opportunity to share experiences and discuss new developments in the international data world. Nick Dopuch of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) presented the IMF's new data initiatives developed in response to the global financial crisis. Toby Green of the OECD spoke about the need for data citation in the international data world. ESRC Pathfinder grant holders discussed their planned research. Anne Yates and Caroline Knowles presented on the Young Lives Project, a long-term international research project investigating the changing nature of childhood poverty by tracking the changing lives of 12,000 children in Ethiopia, India, Peru and Vietnam over a 15-year period.

In addition, staff have given a series of presentations on using real-world data in teaching and the resulting benefits to students at high-profile events for networked information services and learning and teaching. This has positioned ESDS International at the heart of the social sciences quantitative methods agenda while encouraging the use of secondary data in teaching and research.



Paul Murphy, ESDS International developer, working on the SDMX project

Behind the scenes

The technical experts in the ESDS International team have undertaken a significant amount of unseen work during the past year. The data delivery software, Beyond 20/20, was upgraded to version 8.0 for the start of the academic year and the service moved to a more resilient hardware configuration.

ESDS International has continued to work closely with one of its key data providers, the OECD, on an innovative project to improve the way data is delivered to its users. Using the OECD's new Statistical Data and Metadata Exchange (SDMX) web service, ESDS International is the first organisation to connect

its data delivery software directly to the OECD's data warehouse. Because it is anticipated that other intergovernmental organisations will create SDMX web data services in the future, ESDS International is strongly positioned to respond quickly to these new developments in the international data world.

In September 2007, ESDS International began recording all country, year, and series selections made within the World Bank databases hosted by the service using the Beyond 20/20 weblogs. These weblogs of user activity, detailing more than 4,700,000 user selections made within Beyond 20/20, have enabled the team to examine which countries and indicators are preferentially chosen by academics when looking for data to support their research. This work, published by the OECD, showed that India was the country with the highest number of downloads during the period, followed by the United Kingdom, Mexico, Brazil, and South Africa. A map of the global pattern of downloads is available on the ESDS International website.

Engaging with users

ESDS International recognises the importance of user engagement, which provides it with valuable information about users' needs, how the community use the data, and keeps users posted with news of interesting developments. To facilitate this important dialogue, staff send out regular Tweets about new service features, maintain active relationships with institutional librarians, and use the ESDS International YouTube channel to distribute presentations and resources.

A selection of case studies of research use of the data are presented on the service website.

Additionally three major new thematic resources went live this year. The first, cross-national longitudinal microdata resources, provide inventories of birth cohort studies and socio-economic/multipurpose panel studies displayed using third-party, open source timeline software and a page listing cross-national harmonisation projects conducted on longitudinal studies. The second, a resource based on the theme of 'trust', links to PDF questionnaires for a selection of the major cross-national surveys. These questionnaires have links to online results/frequencies for questions on social/political trust. And finally, there is a new resource on the collection and use of biomedical data as part of the key UK longitudinal studies.

ESDS Longitudinal



ESDS Longitudinal has made huge strides throughout its existence with limited resources. The service has grown both in terms of the amount of data made available and the number of users.

Five years ago, the service provided access to, and support for, 34 separate data collections from the then six major longitudinal studies. Today, seven major studies are supported – the *Longitudinal Study of Young People in England (LSYPE)* was added to the portfolio in 2006 – but a more dramatic rise has been seen in the number of individual sweeps, waves, follow-ups and special collections now available to users, which has increased threefold to 104.

Similarly, the last five years have witnessed a burgeoning user base. In 2004–2005, 817 individuals accessed data maintained by ESDS Longitudinal. For the current reporting period, the equivalent figure is 1,661. Over the five-year period as a whole, 5,688 unique users have downloaded at least one dataset from the service's portfolio.

An expanding data portfolio

During 2009–2010, new data have been acquired for the majority of the major longitudinal studies. Wave 18 of the *British Household Panel Survey (BHPS)*, wave 4 of the *English Longitudinal Study of Ageing*, wave 5 of the LSYPE, the fourth sweep of the *Millennium Cohort Survey*, and sweep 8 of the *National Child Development Study*, were all acquired and made available.

In addition to these acquisitions – all available under standard End User Licence conditions – the service has made more restricted-access BHPS data available. Area Classification for Output Areas have been released under Conditional Access and 1991 Ward, Census Code Range data are available under Special Licence.

While the service focuses on seven key studies, these studies do not represent the sum total of longitudinal survey data available via the ESDS. Data for two other important longitudinal studies were also released this year: a 2003–2006 dataset for the *Offending, Crime and Justice Survey* and sweeps 3 and 4 of the birth cohort study, *Growing Up in Scotland*.

Developing novel and innovative resources

Via its relationships with a range of data providers and its management of a varied set of longitudinal data, ESDS Longitudinal holds a bird's eye view of the UK's longitudinal survey data landscape. This vantage point puts the service in a good position to develop resources that allow users to contextualise the different studies and to make comparisons between them.

To this end, two new online resources have been developed in the past year. First, in collaboration with ESDS International, the service is developing 'UK longitudinal data in an international context', a set of web pages that allows users to plot the UK's longitudinal studies in cross-temporal and cross-national space. Open source software from the

Semantic Interoperability of Metadata and Information in unLike Environments (SIMILE) project has been employed to produce timelines as resource discovery tools, allowing users to visualise UK studies alongside their international equivalents. Initially, timelines for birth cohort studies and socio-economic/multi-purpose panels have been produced. Over the next 12 months, timelines will be added for health and health behaviour panels, longitudinal studies of youth and education, and longitudinal studies of ageing.

The second key resource put online this year is 'Biomedical data in longitudinal studies'. This set of web pages has been developed in response to the challenges and opportunities presented by the collection of biomedical information alongside survey data in several of the major longitudinal studies. It introduces the main issues surrounding the collection of biomedical data, describes the different types of biomedical information made available, provides a bibliography of key publications in this developing area of research, and offers an overview of the biomedical data collected alongside surveys and how they can be accessed. An important motivation for producing the resource is to support social scientists who have limited experience of this type of data and to encourage them to use the data available and/or collaborate with other scientists (social or medical).

Community engagement

ESDS Longitudinal continues to support users through its specialist help desk, responding to 75 queries during the year. But the service remains keen to provide much more than an online/email service to its users. A key aspect of the team's work – and an area in which the service makes an important impact – is face-to-face dialogue with both users and data producers.

In terms of engaging users, the service continues to work closely with the Centre for Longitudinal Studies to deliver two introductory workshops a year on the *National Child Development Study* and the *1970 British Cohort Study*, plus another two on the *Millennium Cohort Study*. In October 2009 – in collaboration with the Department for Children, Schools and Families – a workshop was also run on the LSYPE, introducing new and potential users to the study and promoting research already undertaken using the data.

These user workshops provide one example of how the service successfully collaborates with data producers. Equally important is the contact it maintains throughout the year with depositors to discuss future data releases, provide feedback on how data are being used, and advise on data access policies. More formally, during 2009-2010, the service manager has been a member of two expert committees: the National Survey of Health and Development data access project and the Understanding Society methodological advisory committee.



ESDS Qualidata



Data highlights

More than 20 studies have been enhanced and processed by ESDS Qualidata this year, covering such topics as public engagement in stem cell research, attitudes in Russia to human trafficking, voluntary activism in neo-liberal states, and changes to the identity of new mothers.

Two studies are worth highlighting, including Guy Cook's *Discourse of the School Dinners Debate, 2004-2008* which contains downloadable audio recordings from the interviews and focus groups as well as the transcriptions. This reflects recent efforts by ESDS Qualidata to preserve and make available audio data.

Sarah Parry's *Social Dynamics of Public Engagement in Stem Cell Research, 2005-2007* examines the views and concerns of the public, as well as ways of increasing public engagement in the debate about stem cell research. In March 2010 the digital enhancement was completed of over 200 paper-based interviews from the acclaimed 1960s Peter Townsend study *The Last Refuge*, which examined the provision of long-term institutional care facilities for older people.

Teaching and methods

ESDS Qualidata continues its emphasis and activities in training and teaching. Its open-access teaching resources web pages have been revised to highlight its classroom resources on interview and non-interview methods.

At the ESRC Research Methods Festival, staff organised and chaired a successful panel session on using

qualitative data for teaching. Alongside that, one staff member provided a video interview on the secondary analysis of qualitative data for Sage publisher's resource, *Research Methods Online*, a part of *MethodsSpace*.

Technical innovations and developments

ESDS Qualidata is furthering the development of systematic qualitative data processing tools. Its newly developed back-end processing system for qualitative studies is currently undergoing user testing before becoming incorporated into the working procedures of the UK Data Archive. This system will convert deposited interview transcripts into standardised RTF and Text Encoding Initiative-compliant XML format for dissemination via web-based systems. Other archives have expressed an interest in testing this back-end tool.

The ESRC and Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC)-funded Semantic Technologies for the Enhancement of Case Based Learning (ENSEMBLE) project is progressing. Louise Corti is a co-investigator of this ESRC/EPSRC Technology Enhanced Learning Programme project. It is currently working on building a FEDORA repository for complex qualitative data for use in educational settings. Exploring, visualising, and communicating data using semantic web applications are at the heart of this work. In addition, Louise Corti is co-ordinating the international Data Documentation Initiative (DDI) Working Group on Qualitative Data, which includes international representatives from more than ten national data archives. The group is working to create common standards for the archiving and sharing of complex data.



Sociologist Ray Pahl is one of the first Pioneers of Qualitative Research to be featured

Publicity and outreach

Engaging with users to ensure that they are aware of ESDS Qualidata activities, new data collections and current best practice in qualitative data management and re-use is a year-round core activity. ESDS Qualidata staff have participated in a series of workshops on managing and sharing data, covering confidentiality, ethics, and the archiving of qualitative data. This has included training university ethics committees on the ethical and legal issues surrounding qualitative research.

Staff are also directly engaged in the wider methodological debate about secondary analysis and the re-use of data. In December 2009, ESDS Qualidata hosted a well-attended conference, 'Re-using the ESDS Qualidata Pioneers of Qualitative Research Collection'. One innovative aspect – and highlight of the conference – was the pairing in a joint panel of an original researcher, Ray Pahl, with contemporary researchers Graham Crow and Dawn Lyon, who are utilising Ray's original 1970s research data from his Isle of Sheppey studies for their project about present-day Sheppey entitled 'Working and Living on Sheppey'. The session brought to the fore a number of insights into the benefits and challenges of re-using data.

In another aspect of their outreach work, staff are continuing to create and update exemplar re-use case studies as well as case studies from data depositors illustrating how researchers have successfully dealt with archiving challenging data.

ESDS Qualidata is continuing to expand its 'Pioneers of Qualitative Research' web pages, giving access to life history interviews with key pioneering social researchers. These interviews provide fascinating insights into the methodological development, influences and classic research projects of major researchers who have archived data with ESDS Qualidata, including Peter Townsend, Dennis Marsden, and Paul Thompson.

Partnerships are continuing with a number of current research projects including a project by Val Gillies and Ros Edwards of London South Bank University entitled 'Historical Comparative Analysis of Family and Parenting: A Feasibility Study Across Sources and Timeframes'. ESDS Qualidata has facilitated access to a number of classic data collections for this ESRC-funded research, which is assessing the feasibility of conducting qualitative secondary analysis and historical comparison in order to explore people's experiences of family and parenting practices.

In this reporting period, ESDS Qualidata has provided expert guidance to a number of national centres currently setting up national qualitative archiving strategies and centres. Advising on procedures, experiences and lessons learnt from more than 15 years of archiving qualitative data, staff have been engaged in training other national data archives from Austria, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Ireland, Lithuania, and Australia.

Staff members have presented papers at international and national conferences such as the International Association for Social Science Information Services and Technology (IASSIST) Annual Conference on topics including re-use, ethical sharing, qualitative teaching resources, and semantic web tools. In addition, members of ESDS Qualidata continue to publish on a range of topics including archiving, audio data, access, re-use, ethical issues and data sharing. Staff are also consultants and advisory/committee members for programmes and institutions including the Research Ethics Committee of NatGen, the National Child Development Study (NCDS) Social Participation and Identity Project, the Human Communication Audio-Visual Archive, and the JISC Digital Repositories programme.

ESDS Access and Preservation

ESDS Access and Preservation provides most of the back-room functions for the ESDS, but it also carries out data acquisitions from both government and research-based data creators, including the selection of material offered to the ESDS created by researchers funded by the ESRC. This role demands good working relationships with statisticians in a range of government departments. This work also includes providing advice to data creators and managing rights management enquiries. Over the year 476 new studies were brought into the ESDS, including 151 which fall into the non-specialist supported category.

Data highlights

There were a number of significant data acquisitions for the core (non-specialist supported) data collection this year. These include:

- > *Adult Psychiatric Morbidity Survey, 2007* (last conducted in 2000)
- > *National Diet and Nutrition Survey, 2008-2009* (last conducted in 2000-2001)
- > *Wealth and Assets Survey, wave 1, 2006-2008*: Special Licence access (wave 1 of a government longitudinal study of private households, with further waves planned)

> *National Awareness and Early Diagnosis Initiative: Cancer Awareness Measures, 2008* (new national standard measures to be used for cancer research)

> *Offending, Crime and Justice Survey (OCJS), 2003-2006: Longitudinal Analysis Data* (new set of trend data to augment existing OCJS series)

> *Northern Ireland Road Traffic Collision Data* (six surveys covering the years 2004-2009).

In addition, 59 studies created from ESRC-funded research were published through the UKDA-store self-archiving system. The wide range of studies included: *The Neuroscience of Conventions and Norms*, *Animals in Bushman Medicine*, *The Effects of Sexist Humour on the Female Perceiver*, and *Bridging Practice and Research into Learning and Teaching with Technology*.

Ingest processing

ESDS Access and Preservation also carries out ingest processing for all ESDS studies except some ESDS International studies. This includes the complex processes of data validation and conversion and the creation of metadata to fuel the catalogues. Over the year, 778 studies had new catalogue records created by ESDS Access and Preservation.



Access to and support for data

The third major responsibility of ESDS Access and Preservation is to provide access to data resources, and, again with the exception of some of ESDS International (macro) studies, carries this out across the whole of the ESDS.

This reporting period saw the completion of the move to the UK Federated Access Management system (also known as Shibboleth) for authentication of users of the ESDS and the ESRC Census programme. The changeover – and the subsequent upgrade of Shibboleth software – was not without problems, as institutions across the nation struggled to implement the system appropriately. Although many of the problems were outside its direct control, the result was a 67 per cent increase in the number of queries fielded by ESDS Access and Preservation during the first quarter, as compared to the previous reporting period. At the same time, service levels remained undiminished.

ESDS Access and Preservation supports the whole of the ESDS collection, which is not otherwise granted specialist support through the other services. A significant number of the 50 most-used data series in 2009-2010 fell under Access and Preservation support, including the *British Election Studies*, the *National Diet and Nutrition Survey* and the *Workplace Employee Relations Survey*. In 2009-2010, staff answered 41 per cent more enquires than in the previous year, and almost more than 4 times the number answered by the other services combined.

Following the call from the OECD and others, ESDS is investigating introducing persistent identifiers to the collections to improve data citation. Some basic improvements will be introduced during 2010-2011.

Systems and security

A major achievement for ESDS Access and Preservation this year has been the UK Data Archive's accreditation to the ISO 27001 standard for Information Security. Preparation for this audit, essential for the smooth running of the new Secure Data Service (SDS), entailed a review and revision of all information security related policies and procedures. In effect, this impacted nearly every aspect of the service's operation.

This year also saw the replacement of the primary preservation system, ensuring data preservation capacity and resiliency for the coming years. ESDS Access and Preservation also ensures hardware provision, software support, networking, systems maintenance and back-up, technical support and server upgrades for all ESDS staff at the University of Essex.

ESDS Access and Preservation also provides input into a range of activities: staff have contributed to workshops on managing and sharing research data focusing on issues of consent, confidentiality, and disclosure, and on trusted digital repositories focusing on issues relating to good practice for digital archives.



ESDS Management

ESDS Management co-ordinates and unifies the specialist services within the ESDS and carries out most of the administrative and managerial functions of the ESDS. This includes reporting and liaison with its funders – the ESRC and JISC – and engaging key stakeholders, including its Advisory Committee.

It is responsible for developing and implementing standards among social science data archives, and for developing a collections development strategy. It also plays a key role in promoting the service, including authoring the website and producing a series of specialist guides, for example on health, crime, and research methods.

Leadership changes

In August 2010 ESDS Management experienced the largest change since its inception in 2003 when Professor Kevin Schürer stepped down as Director to take a new post at the University of Leicester.

Kevin has been succeeded by Dr Matthew Woollard, an internationally acknowledged expert on digital preservation. Matthew has been Associate Director and Head of Digital Preservation and Systems at the UK Data Archive since 2006, and will be retaining his specialist role.

In addition, Angela Dale retired as leader of the ESDS Government service in September 2010, although she continues to play a crucial role in the strategic leadership of the service.

Advisory Committee

The ESDS Advisory Committee met in October 2009 and February 2010. The February meeting discussed a draft of the Director's Evaluation Report, submitted to the mid-term review panel in March 2010.

Over the year the committee also discussed the Secure Data Service, the ESRC and JISC strategic plans, and changes to the ESDS risk register. The latter were mainly in connection with risks associated with the change from the Athens to the Shibboleth user registration system. The risk register is an important document; its review is a standing agenda item for the committee.

Another important committee item is the prior approval each autumn of the coming calendar year's 'milestones', and the review of progress against these each spring. ESDS Management is responsible for ensuring that the milestones are achieved or, if not, that appropriate action is taken.

Mid-term review

In late 2009, ESDS Management put in much effort to compile a dossier demonstrating the impact of the service. This formed the basis for discussing future strategy at the annual away day in January. These discussions in turn informed the 'Forward Look' section of the Director's Evaluation Report which was discussed by the Advisory Committee in February prior to submission in March 2010.

The Review Panel is chaired by Tim Holt of the University of Southampton. Other members are Mike Hough (King's College London), Frank Sullivan (University of Dundee), Keith Whitfield (Cardiff University), Frank Nolan (ONS), David Utting (JISC), and Chuck Humphrey (University of Alberta).

Collections development

The ESDS has never had a formal collections development policy. Since its inception, activities in this area have been informed by the UK Data Archive's policy. One of the key priorities for 2009-2010 was to transform this into a policy suited for the ESDS alone.

In March 2010 a newly-formed Collections Development Committee composed of specialists from government, academia and the private sector met for the first time. They reviewed the draft ESDS collections development policy and suggested priorities to augment and implement. It is anticipated that during 2010-2011 a strategy will be agreed to ensure that the ESDS keeps one step ahead of researchers' needs into the future.

Research data management

ESDS Management has also contributed ideas and expertise to the ESRC's new Research Data Policy, which includes mandatory data management plans. New web pages with information about good data management and sharing have also been developed, building on earlier work carried out in the UK Data Archive. This initiative has been complemented by ESDS's involvement with the Research Data Access Strategy of the Office for National Statistics (ONS).

This year, ESDS staff won two grants to develop bespoke data management support and training for researchers, which complement work already carried out by ESDS aimed at ESRC grant applicants and award holders.

A 15-month JISC project, funded under the Data Management Infrastructure Programme, focuses on high investment data-rich environments, such as ESRC Centres and Programmes, by expanding the implementation of data management planning and enabling effective data management practices in those research hubs.

An additional ESRC grant is part of the fourth round of the Researcher Development Initiative. The 18-month project provides a programme of focused training for researchers and research support staff on the key issues pertinent to managing and sharing social science data. The project's loftier aims are to influence the requirement of UK postgraduate training to formally incorporate skills – intellectual, practical and technical – in managing and sharing social science data.

Refined branding

A 2009 review of the UK Data Archive visual identity revealed a serious need to make clearer the distinction between the Archive and the ESDS, as many users appeared to confuse the two entities. In response, the Archive reinvented its brand and launched it with a new website in July 2010.

While re-designing the Archive website, ESDS took the opportunity to remove any replications and redundancies between the two sites to clarify the role of the ESDS. For example, the new Archive site no longer offers a catalogue search, instead directing users effortlessly to the ESDS pages.

ESDS role in capacity building

In spring 2010, the ESDS web pages on teaching and learning were revamped. Given that a growing proportion of ESDS users are students and teachers, the aim is to point these groups towards data resources for self-study and lecturing. The use of real-life data in teaching adds interest and relevance to courses and, if the data are updated on a regular basis, ensures that the courses are pertinent to current substantive, theoretical and methodological debates.

ESDS provides support in many areas of teaching research methods: research design, survey design and analysis, software for analysis data, secondary analysis of qualitative data, managing research data, and consent and ethics.

In 2008, ESDS launched its 'themes', enabling researchers and scholars to quickly find what data-related resources are on offer at ESDS on a particular topic or theme. In this reporting period a new theme was launched on crime and social control adding to the theme of health and health behaviour.

Finally, ESDS continues to work with local site representatives to organise training events where academic staff and postgraduate students can learn about ESDS data and resources. This year, events were held at the Universities of Kent and Liverpool in addition to King's College London and Birkbeck, University of London.

Measuring ESDS

This section provides a statistical summary of activity across all sections of ESDS. Figures are also produced in most cases for the previous reporting year in order to enable year-on-year comparisons. However, it is equally important, if not more so, to place the statistical evidence in a long-term context in order to provide a broader perspective.

Below is a short digest of the most interesting statistics collected about the service. The ESDS will be reviewing some of these measures in 2011 and welcomes feedback as it develops and expands the core metrics of the service.

For 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.

Data acquired and processed

With the exception of the important international macrodata series, the data provided by the various sections of ESDS are acquired, processed and made available on the download service for online access via ESDS Access and Preservation at the UK Data Archive. Due to the special licensing arrangements relating to the international macrodata series these are acquired directly by ESDS International at Mimas, then processed and loaded onto the Beyond 20/20 data delivery server in Manchester.

As shown in **Table 1**, the throughput of collections was broadly in line with 2008-2009, although with a small increase overall. Most significantly, there was a marked increase in the number of core datasets, updates and new editions.

Table 2 shows significant decreases in data processing for value-added delivery of ESDS Government and ESDS Longitudinal datasets via Nesstar and for ESDS International via Beyond 20/20. Part of this decrease is due to the increased number of data collections acquired, and an exceptionally high rate of activity in 2008-2009.

Data access

Users wish to receive data for research, teaching or learning in a variety of ways and forms, and meeting these changing needs and requirements is one of the

challenges that continuously faces ESDS. In order to accommodate the wide range of data needs ESDS provides a combination of data access tools. As a result of these multiple routes to, and forms of, data access it is not a straightforward task to measure data usage and certainly not easy, or in some cases appropriate, to attempt to compare the various usage figures across the component parts of ESDS.

In outline, users of ESDS can access data in the following ways. For survey-type microdata, across all services, registered users have the option of downloading a data bundle directly from the data catalogue. These bundles relate to whole data collections or studies which in many cases will contain multiple datasets, and will also include files containing documentation, user guides and notes. Users can also request such data bundles to be made accessible to them by machine-to-machine file transfer protocol (FTP), or written to a fixed portable device (for example, a CD, DVD or USB stick) and sent to them – although the latter is declining in demand. Data bundles can also be made available to users indirectly via third party access arrangements, most commonly university-based data libraries and sister data archives. All these forms of data download are reported in **Table 3a**.

A subset of the micro survey data, primarily those supported by the four specialist units of ESDS, is also made available to users via the Nesstar online data browsing and visualisation tool. This allows users to download whole data collections as mentioned above, but also permits users to define bespoke subsets, filtering on one or more variables within a given dataset, or generate aggregate tabular data in the form of two- and three-way tables, as well as graphical representations of these in the form of histograms, pie charts and (in some cases) maps. All of these can be downloaded to a local device or hyperlinked for sharing or future reference. Only the download of whole data collections is recorded in **Table 3a**, which means that this table does not represent the overall use of the data. A further complication arises from the fact that any of the microdata collections displayed in **Table 3a** can also be redistributed locally to students using the data for instructional purposes. Again, this means that data use in **Table 3a** represents minimum levels of access to data collections.

Table 1 Data collections acquired and processed for online delivery

| Service | 2008-2009 | | | 2009-2010 | | |
|--------------------|--------------|--------------------------|------------|--------------|--------------------------|------------|
| | New datasets | Updates and new editions | Total | New datasets | Updates and new editions | Total |
| ESDS Core | 94 | 20 | 114 | 151 | 51 | 202 |
| ESDS Government | 232 | 119 | 351 | 198 | 119 | 317 |
| ESDS International | 24 | 104 | 128 | 71 | 109 | 180 |
| ESDS Longitudinal | 77 | 54 | 131 | 37 | 23 | 60 |
| ESDS Qualidata | 29 | 2 | 31 | 19 | 0 | 19 |
| Total | 456 | 299 | 755 | 476 | 302 | 778 |

Table 2 Datasets further processed for value-added delivery via Nesstar and Beyond 20/20

| Service | 2008-2009 | | | 2009-2010 | | |
|---------------------|--------------|--------------------------|------------|--------------|--------------------------|------------|
| | New datasets | Updates and new editions | Total | New datasets | Updates and new editions | Total |
| ESDS Core | 2 | 2 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 6 |
| ESDS Government | 104 | 35 | 139 | 43 | 33 | 76 |
| ESDS International* | 1 | 89 | 90 | 0 | 69 | 69 |
| ESDS Longitudinal | 11 | 9 | 20 | 2 | 1 | 3 |
| Total | 118 | 135 | 253 | 50 | 104 | 154 |

*international macrodata are delivered via Beyond 20/20; all other services via Nesstar

Table 3a Data collections delivered to users by access method

| 2008-2009 | Download | FTP | Via/access | Portable | Nesstar | Totals |
|---------------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|----------|------------|---------------|
| ESDS Core | 9,260 | 391 | 964 | 2 | 23 | 10,640 |
| ESDS Government | 24,332 | 1,059 | 3,875 | 1 | 231 | 29,498 |
| ESDS International* | 968 | 269 | 790 | 1 | 0 | 2,028 |
| ESDS Longitudinal | 6,757 | 164 | 445 | 1 | 116 | 7,483 |
| ESDS Qualidata** | 1,174 | 20 | 98 | 0 | 0 | 1,292 |
| Total | 42,491 | 1,903 | 6,172 | 5 | 370 | 50,941 |

| 2009-2010 | Download | FTP | Via/access | Portable | Nesstar | Totals |
|---------------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|-----------|------------|---------------|
| ESDS Core | 10,009 | 606 | 942 | 5 | 16 | 11,578 |
| ESDS Government | 28,936 | 2,387 | 2,577 | 1 | 84 | 33,985 |
| ESDS International* | 1,282 | 148 | 159 | 0 | 8 | 1,597 |
| ESDS Longitudinal | 7,599 | 352 | 455 | 6 | 18 | 8,430 |
| ESDS Qualidata** | 1,074 | 24 | 89 | 0 | 0 | 1,187 |
| Total | 48,900 | 3,517 | 4,222 | 12 | 126 | 56,777 |

* international micro datasets only, macrodata series counted separately (see Tables 3b and 4)

** Nesstar does not include qualitative data

Table 3b Data Reports generated for international macrodata via Beyond 20/20

| Total number of Data Report downloads | Total |
|---------------------------------------|---------|
| 2008-2009 | 120,627 |
| 2009-2010 | 121,356 |

Table 4 ESDS International macrodata accessed via Beyond 20/20

| | Total number of data analysis sessions | Individual users |
|-----------|--|------------------|
| 2008-2009 | 90,236 | 6,674 |
| 2009-2010 | 97,754 | 6,691 |

Table 5 Use of Nesstar online microdata browsing and analysis service

| | Total number of data analysis sessions | Individual users |
|-----------|--|------------------|
| 2008-2009 | 17,944 | 8,419 |
| 2009-2010 | 16,078 | 8,716 |

Nesstar does not include qualitative data or international macrodata series

International macrodata are made available to users via the Beyond 20/20 software interface based at Mimas. This allows the user to browse the data and download tailored subsets of these very large databases. Beyond 20/20 also allows users to create tabular statistics in the form of Data Reports, as well as graphical outputs, similar to those of Nesstar described above. These can also be downloaded to a local device.

It is important also not to overlook the access given to registered users to online qualitative data collections. These consist mostly of open-ended interviews and responses and are not generally downloaded or saved in the same ways as the structured data collections mentioned thus far. Users can download related audio and image files from the collection, but more usually might cut and paste snippets of text, thus making it especially difficult to measure access.

With this outline of data access methods established, **Table 3a** shows that overall the number of microdata collections delivered to users continued the increasing trend of previous years, breaking the 55,000 figure for the first time. Within this figure, the basic distribution of data access between the various services supporting

microdata also remained broadly the same. There seems to have been a continued increasing preference for download and FTP and a significant drop in demand for Nesstar. The increased use of FTP is particularly noticeable. The available statistical information would therefore suggest a more or less continuous year-on-year increase in usage during the first seven years of ESDS.

It is important to note that these figures do not include counts of data redistributed for use in classrooms. Unfortunately, these data are notoriously difficult to capture since lecturers do not always return class registrations in a timely fashion. As a result figures are always at best approximate, but these add roughly a further 50,000 users accesses, in broadly the same proportions by service as shown in **Table 3a**.

Turning to the experience of use for international macrodata, **Table 3b** records the number of Data Report downloads as an impressive 121,356, clearly indicating the high demand for these collections. Access of the Beyond 20/20 system witnessed an increase in the number of registered data analysis sessions compared with those of 2008-2009, as shown in **Table 4**.

Table 6 User queries received by ESDS service responsible for answering

| | 2008-2009 | | | 2009-2010 | | |
|--------------------|-----------|-----------|--------|-----------|-----------|--------|
| | Queries | Referrals | Totals | Queries | Referrals | Totals |
| ESDS Management | 2,845 | 123 | 2,968 | 4,132 | 60 | 4,192 |
| ESDS Government | 255 | 22 | 277 | 411 | 44 | 455 |
| ESDS International | 358 | 9 | 367 | 382 | 11 | 393 |
| ESDS Longitudinal | 70 | 0 | 70 | 75 | 0 | 75 |
| ESDS Qualidata | 228 | 1 | 229 | 146 | 0 | 146 |
| Total | 3,756 | 155 | 3,911 | 5,146 | 115 | 5,261 |

Table 7 New registrations and active registered users

| | 2008-2009 | 2009-2010 |
|-------------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| New registrations | 24,220 | 21,646 |
| Total active registered users | 41,783 | 23,099 |

It is interesting that while the numbers of individual users and downloads have remained at roughly the same high level (Table 3b), the number of registered data analysis sessions has increased by 8 per cent (Table 4). This suggests that online tools are becoming even more significant for access to aggregate data.

Although fewer registered data analysis sessions were recorded for the Nesstar system this year, the number of unique users increased (Table 5).

Data analysis sessions within Nesstar record the number of individual user sessions with the Nesstar software. In a session a user may carry out half a dozen tabulations, graph data and download all these results.

In addition to data access by users it is important to note the continued high demand for documentation downloads, user guides, reports and manuals. One measure of this is PDF downloads, reaching a figure of 2,070,202 – a clear demonstration of the extraordinary value of freely available supporting materials. Such guides and reports are also available in a number of other formats including HTML, RTF and Microsoft Word files, and are not included in this measure.

User queries

The number of user queries increased by 1,350 (34 per cent) over this reporting year (Table 6) with most of the increase, as in the last reporting period, being

witnessed by the central ESDS help desk. Queries to the specialist services remained at roughly the same levels as previously. This increase is almost the same as that in 2008-2009.

Registrations

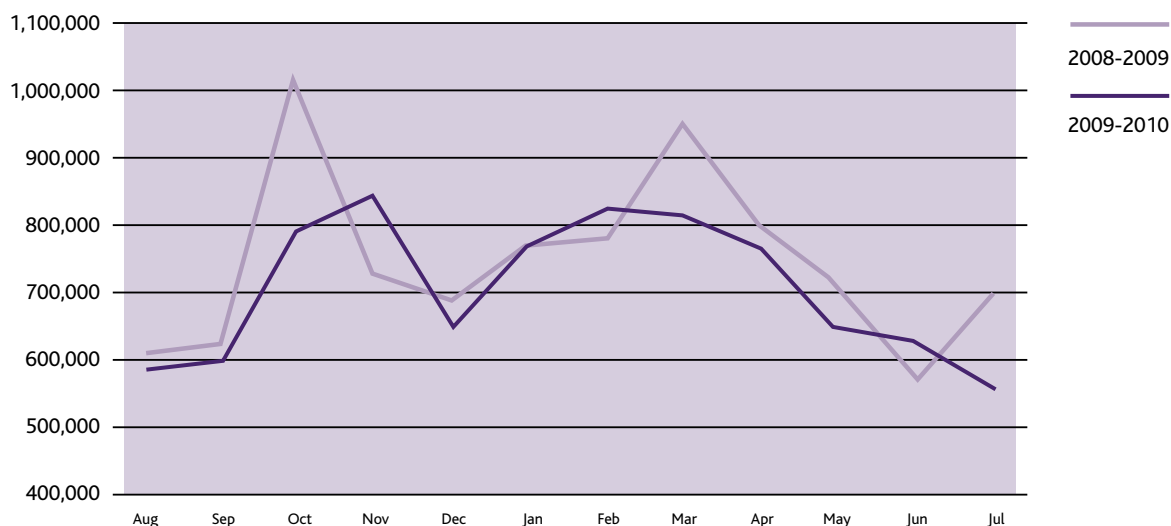
2009-2010 saw a small decline in the number of new user registrations from the previous year (seven per cent), while the number of active registered users declined dramatically. This sudden decline was due to the switch of authentication mechanism from Athens to Shibboleth in August 2009.

Active users are defined as those who have either registered or renewed their registration in the preceding three years. At the change date, all non-Shibboleth registered users were asked to renew their registrations. Many did not, as they had no further use of the service.

Web site usage

As the previous section on data access demonstrated, the internet is clearly the major tool for the delivery of ESDS products and services. However, many web statistics can be misleading since uncorrected counts will give an artificially high figure due to the site being trawled by web-crawlers as well as page calls to image files (pictures, logos and the like).

Figure 1 Website usage August 2008 to July 2010 (page hits)



Once corrections have been implemented, the total number of page hits in the reporting year fell somewhat to 8,490,642, compared to a figure of 8,953,315 in the last reporting period. The pattern of hits over the last two years is shown in Figure 1. Perhaps the most noticeable features of this graph are the generally steady level of use and the peak figure in October, always the busiest time of the year.

One possible reason for this decline in overall web hits is due to the increase in PDF user guides, reports and manuals, not counted here, which replace some web content.

Usage by user type

Breaking usage of the various services down by type or section of user, as shown in Table 8, illustrates that the principal user groups continue to be drawn from academic staff and students at institutions of higher education, ranging from 84 per cent (ESDS Government) to 98 per cent (ESDS International macrodata). Public sector workers (central and local government, charitable organisations, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), etc.) tend to account for between 6 and 12 per cent of usage for most services. The exception to the general trend is with international macrodata, where licensing arrangements imposed by the data owners restrict

use primarily to the academic sector. Here use is more heavily concentrated towards students, both under- and post-graduates, who jointly account for some 84 per cent of use, thus supporting the building of future research capacities.

Usage by discipline

Table 9 shows the relative proportions of active users in the most popular disciplinary areas for each of the specialist services. With some variations, the largest disciplinary users across all services are economics and sociology, with international macrodata being particularly heavily used by the former, and less so by the latter – whilst for qualitative data, the reverse is true. International macrodata, more so than others, are also widely used by the business/accounting/finance sector, which is not surprising given the nature of much of these data. What is perhaps most striking is the fact that all types of data have a broad and wide-ranging disciplinary appeal, suggesting that ESDS reaches much further than the core social sciences, including in its varied user community, health and medical researchers, humanities researchers as well as others.

Table 8 Usage by user status

| | Percentages | | | | | |
|-----------------|-------------|------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|--------------|-----------|
| | Core | Government | International (macro) | International (micro) | Longitudinal | Qualidata |
| Academic | 30.6 | 28.0 | 14.4 | 38.3 | 39.8 | 26.8 |
| Undergraduate | 18.2 | 23.8 | 33.4 | 10.9 | 15.1 | 22.9 |
| Postgraduate | 37.8 | 32.0 | 50.3 | 38.7 | 35.9 | 47.3 |
| Public sector | 10.1 | 13.4 | 0.1 | 9.6 | 7.3 | 2.0 |
| Commercial | 1.9 | 1.9 | 0.0 | 0.9 | 1.0 | 0.2 |
| Other | 1.4 | 0.9 | 1.9 | 1.6 | 0.9 | 0.7 |
| Number of users | 2,118 | 3,077 | 6,691 | 439 | 1,661 | 410 |

Table 9 Usage by discipline of user

| | Percentages | | | | | |
|--|-------------|------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|--------------|-----------|
| | Core | Government | International (macro) | International (micro) | Longitudinal | Qualidata |
| Business/Accounting/Finance | 11.0 | 4.5 | 16.5 | 8.4 | 2.5 | 7.3 |
| Economics/Econometrics/Labour/ Employment | 20.8 | 31.6 | 61.6 | 34.4 | 43.2 | 10.7 |
| Geography/Area Studies | 4.7 | 5.7 | 3.4 | 3.6 | 3.4 | 4.9 |
| Health/Medicine | 7.9 | 6.8 | 0.4 | 4.1 | 8.9 | 5.1 |
| History/Humanities | 2.7 | 1.4 | 0.9 | 0.9 | 0.4 | 5.6 |
| Politics and International Studies | 8.0 | 3.9 | 6.5 | 8.0 | 2.1 | 5.9 |
| Psychology | 4.0 | 2.3 | 0.0 | 3.2 | 4.9 | 10.7 |
| Social Policy/Administration | 4.8 | 5.9 | 1.1 | 6.4 | 6.1 | 5.6 |
| Sociology | 11.9 | 14.5 | 0.9 | 18.0 | 13.5 | 27.8 |
| Statistics/Methodology/Computing | 6.8 | 7.6 | 0.7 | 3.4 | 5.7 | 2.0 |
| Other | 17.4 | 15.8 | 8.0 | 9.6 | 9.3 | 14.4 |
| Number of users | 2,118 | 3,077 | 6,691 | 439 | 1,661 | 410 |

Advising ESDS

ESDS has an Advisory Committee to advise on the general direction and strategy of the service, and to provide the ESDS Director with comments on Annual Reports and reports for periodic reviews.

Chair

Audrey Brown

Department for Children, Schools and Families

Vice-chair

John Curtice

University of Strathclyde

Members

George Alter (from February 2010)

ICPSR, University of Michigan, USA

Sara Arber

Department of Sociology, University of Surrey

Tanvi Desai

London School of Economics Research Laboratory

Keith Dugmore

Demographic Decisions Ltd

Peter Elias

Institute of Employment Research,
University of Warwick

Jude England

British Library

Nigel Fielding

Department of Sociology, University of Surrey

Myron Gutmann (until February 2010)

ICPSR, University of Michigan, USA

Peter Halls

Computing Service, University of York

Julia Lane

National Science Foundation, USA

Corrine Moy

National Opinion Polls

Dennis Roberts

Office for National Statistics

Patten Smith (until February 2010)

Ipsos MORI

Gillian Robinson

University of Ulster

Martin Weale

National Institute of Economic and Social Research

Economic and Social Data Service staff

Cathie Marsh Centre for Census and Survey Research

Angela Dale

Institute for Social and Economic Research

Nick Buck

Mimas

Jackie Carter

Keith Cole

UK Data Archive

Kevin Schürer

Matthew Woollard (from August 2010)

Louise Corti

Melanie Wright

In attendance

Kristine Doronenkova

ESRC

Abi Obafemi

JISC

Michael Hughes

Audit Commission ESDS RRB Liaison Manager

Joe Grice (from February 2010)

SDS Sub-Committee

Paul Boyle (from February 2010)

SDS Sub-Committee

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