

**Meeting 3
ONS, Titchfield
24 September 2009
10:30 – 15:00****Attendees:**

Chris Ashford (Chair) (ONS, Census)
Rob Dymond (CDU)
Richard M Smith (ONS)
Vincent Moynihan (ONS)
Julie Hibbert (ONS)
Stephen Alder (ONS)
Graham Jones (ONS)
Alan Lewis (SASPAC)
Brendan Davis (ONS, Census)
Dave Blythe (ONS)
Oliver Duke-Williams (DFN)
Dominic Moth (ONS, Census)
Paul Richards (ONS)
Rachel Moreton (DCLG)
Justin Hayes (CDU)
Mark Ireland (NOMIS)
Callum Foster (ONS)
Sean Phelan (ONS)

Apologies:

Kevin Trembath (ONS, Census)
Andrew Sansom (ONS)
Sinclair Sutherland (NOMIS)
Simon Field (ONS)
Glyn Oldfield (ONS)
Ed turnbull (GROS)
Cathryn Mcburney (NISRA)

1. Minutes of last meeting and actions arising

The minutes and outstanding actions of previous CWSWG meetings were reviewed, updated as needed, and accepted.

2. Administration & communication

Chris Ashford welcomed Rachael Moreton, a senior research officer in CLG's Regeneration and Economic Development Analysis division, who will be representing local authority perspective. Rachel's role with the CLG involves supporting the use of information and research at a local level to inform decision-making. This includes leading on a programme of support for Local Information Systems (LIS) which collate and disseminate local place-focused data and information to support policy, decision making, and citizen engagement. CLG has also worked closely with ONS on the development of the NeSS Data Exchange (NDE) and seek to further pursue the potential in such web services.

Chris provided details of the potential expansion of group membership which will be explored with Central Government contacts prior to the next meeting, when new members if identified might be added.

The group was reminded of the addresses of the main Output consultation website, and the dedicated CWSWG website

<http://www.ukcensusoutputs.net>

<http://www.ukcensusoutputs.net/cswwg>

and members were encouraged to make use of the sites for between-meeting dialogue and communication, first by registering (if not already registered with the consultation site) at

<http://www.ukcensusoutputs.net/system:join>

CWSWG members will then be invited to the CWSWG site.

Action: All members who have not already signed up should register with the website.

Chris also noted that a revised version of the Terms of Reference for the group have now been added to the website to supplement the original draft. Members who have already noted and responded to the revisions are thanked for their comments.

Action: All members who have not already commented on the revised draft are invited to do so in reply comments on the website.

3. Reports from web services

Brief verbal updates were provided by the web service groups represented (CDU, SASPAC, ONS Web Development Programme (WDP), NeSS, and NOMIS).

Each update reviewed the recent activities and current development progress of each service, and highlighted a number of useful topics and issues covered in discussions throughout the meeting.

NeSS

Update covered the forthcoming NDE2 lite service addition to the NeSS website. Based on Adobe Flex, the REST-like service will be a simpler service focused on ease of use, with less security, and a simplified set of operations that reduces terminology and the need for knowledge of the technology.

More details are provided in the slides accompanying these minutes on the CWSWG website.

NOMIS

Recent NOMIS developments have focused on providing a REST-like operation to access the current sets of data available on NOMIS through a generic SDMX service. A URL will be available shortly to allow for test access, and feedback from group members will be welcome once the URL is released.

A discussion point involved the issues of scarcity in dataset vs. the machine to machine file transfer size required for the high volume inherent with sparse datasets. Continued discussion of more specific or related points is encouraged via the discussion forum on the website.

CDU – Progress with CAIRD and Infuse

Update covered the progress to date of the CAIRD project to deliver a Prototype Application and CAIRD Web Service which is currently being used in development by SASPAC. Information extracted for a sample of UK 2001 Census aggregate counts at all levels of geography is stored in a SQL Server DB, and an SDMX Data Structure with hierarchical codelists defines a single hypercube containing all dimensions. Initial web service developments allow some custom operations but further development is required to accept SDMX queries.

Key findings of development to date are:

- It is vitally important to have a definitive data structure described in advance of data production. Outputs should be produced to fill an existing structure rather than retrofitting a structure to produced data.
- In order to make information useful, in addition to simply documenting it, the DSD must describe relationships relating to complex and larger codelists (eg. geography, occupational classification, age) in ways that enable common operations.

The InFuse project aims to develop and deliver by end July 2010 a service to disseminate the UK 2001 Census outputs that uses the data feed approaches pioneered in the CAIRD Project

Current work has focused on generating codelist information for all of the 2001 data, and future work will involve reconciling definitions and table framework lists to form a consistent consolidated set.

SASPAC

A video presentation demonstrated the current progress of development work involving use of the SASPAC to access the NeSS NDE1, extract and retain data locally, engage with Instant Atlas for visualization, analysis, and further downstream dissemination. Development of an integrated interface will in time enable access using a common template to other services such as NOMIS.

ONS Web Development Programme (WDP)

The WDP Proof of Concept has been widely demonstrated and accepted internally during recent months, and has shown the significant progress of developments under the current direction. There is currently a 6 week review underway to assess the progress to date of the programme, and to evaluate any changes to the approach and direction of associated solutions as the programme transitions into the next stage. Although there are no current plans to make available any form of external access to the API in the current financial year, it is intended that this should be available by Summer 2010.

4. Discussion – User needs and personas

Sean Phelan's presentation introduced the concept of user personas, and covered their definition, use in good practice, and the pitfalls of misunderstanding or misuse.

After a demonstration of some examples of persona use in NeSS and WDP development, the group discussed issues involving the concepts of role vs. persona, and talked through the user types identified in the first Data Feeds Network (DFN) meeting (minutes of this meeting are available in the meetings & events section of the CWSWG website).

A group exercise developed some revisions to the user categories identified, and generated a first estimate of potential volumetrics for each of the user groups. These estimates will be available on the CWSWG website, and members are encouraged to review them, and contribute to refining and enhancing them.

Discussion – Web service usage

Action: Chris Ashford to follow up with Dave Blythe about the NeSS collection, analysis and application of Webtrends site usage data.

Action: All members are invited to contribute any web service usage data or user profiling information for consolidation and presentation to the group either at future meetings or discussion via the website.

5. Summary and next steps

A brief discussion covered the possibilities of future collaboration for ongoing development work and knowledge sharing. Members are encouraged to informally continue discussions via correspondence or the website, and an update on more formal collaboration or partnership working will be presented at the next meeting.

Action: Dominic Moth and WDP members to arrange with CDU and NOMIS for working level technical sub-group meetings to share SDMX experience and concerns, and develop technical non-business topics and issues.

Next meeting: The scheduled date for CWSWG Meeting 4 is 7 December 2009, to be held in London. Group members will be notified in advance of any proposed changes or confirmation of the final plans for Meeting 4.