

CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN STATISTICIANS

UN/ECE Work Session on Statistical Metadata
(Washington, D.C., United States, 28-30 November 2000)

Topic (i): Statistical metadata for dissemination

ISSUES FOR DISCUSSION

Submitted by Statistics Canada ¹

Issue #1

Statistical agencies place a high priority on describing the quality attributes of their data. Some would even say that this is job #1 for a statistical office. What would job #1 be for users of these statistics? How do we find out?

Issue #2

The methods for describing data quality are well established and statistical agencies have a long tradition of producing paper publications containing this information. What strategies should statistical offices use to publish metadata that describe quality in a WWW environment?

Issue #3

The application of classifications such as industry and occupation has long been an important aspect of statistical work. What strategies should statistical offices use to apply controlled vocabularies (another example of a classification) to index their products so that they may be more easily found on and among government websites?

Issue #4

Is it feasible to consider the development of a cross-national statistical thesaurus or a meta-thesaurus for indexing and searching for statistical information? Who would use it/them?

Issue #5

To what extent and how can statistical offices engage users in the assessment of quality and other metadata over the life of the data? Is there a place for a continuous metadata cycle?

Issue #6

References have been made to at least three important metadata standards, namely ISO 11179, the DDI and the Dublin Core. What strategies can statistical offices use 'walk' between them? Is it important for statistical offices to use the same standards for building their metadata bases or can interoperability issues be overcome through the use of cross-walks?

Issue #7

What tools can be used make the development and management of metadata for dissemination purposes easy or at least easier for those who have to create the metadata? In other words, it may be possible to build a metadata cathedral, but will it be possible to maintain it over time?

¹ Prepared by Ernie Boyko.