Imagining Next-Generation Statistical News Releases

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BLS Mission

- Principal US agency responsible for measuring
  - labor market activity
  - working conditions
  - price changes in the economy
- Collect, analyze, and disseminate essential economic information
- Support public and private decision making
BLS news releases

- 160 national office releases / year
- 700+ regional office / year

Structure:
- Identifying information
- Text (with embedded tables and charts)
- Technical notes
- Detailed tables
Research in 2015-16

- News releases have changed little in 60+ years
- Stakeholder outreach to assess user needs
  - Reader survey
  - Focus groups
  - Listening sessions
- => Product needs to change
Results -> 2017 Vision

- Better serve all readers, including journalists, analysts, and the public
  - Provide more information at the time of release
  - Provide greater context to the data
  - Serve as a portal to more data
  - Make data easy to export
  - Be accessible on mobile devices
  - Rely upon automated scripts as much as possible
Mockup(s)

- http://nextgennews.businesscatalyst.com/
Key Design Features

- Orient around interactive charts
- Replace narrative text with bullet points
  - Automatic plus custom
- Show definitions through tool tips
- Implement interactive tables
- Meet accessibility and mobile standards
- Combine releases where possible
Early Feedback

How would you rate the mockups compared with the current news releases?

- Significant improvement
- Definite improvement
- Slight improvement
- Equivalent
- Slightly less effective
- Definitely less effective
- Significantly less effective

CPI: [Graph showing distribution]
EmpSit: [Graph showing distribution]
Next Steps

- Develop functional prototypes
  - End user review
  - Usability testing
- Prototype an authoring system
  - Illustrates flexibilities to BLS staff
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