

**Problems with presentation of the Czech Statistical Office on the Internet**

Paper submitted by Czech Statistical Office<sup>1</sup>

**I. Presentation of the Czech Statistical Office**

1. Czech Statistical Office /CSO/ has been presented up to now via the BBS system, where some selected publications for download were stored and also basic statistical information. Publications were paid in cash or by invoices after closing license contract. There has also the software been placed for electronic data collection /enterprise records/. This system also enabled backward sending of files in report forms and it also operated as the FTP server.
2. Now the presentation is being fully transferred to the WEB server /WWW. CZSO. CZ/ and is also greatly extended. In order to prevent putting into handicapped position the users who are not connected to the Internet /under our conditions it is not as usual as in the other countries/ a dialing server will be put into operation which will enable matching of users with a modem for the WEB pages of the CSO.
3. Principal part of the current CSO presentation comprises of basic statistical information. It concerns regularly published sensitive information /monthly and quarterly / with fixed calendar of publication announced a year ahead, covering actual development of the CR economy. This information is published for all users on the fixed day at the same time /9 o'clock/ and are now available in the ENVOY format /similar to ADOBE AKROBAT/ on WWW.CZSO.CZ. Basic tables and brief comments are their contents.

Monthly statistics:

- Consumers' price indices
- Producers' price indices
- Information on the external trade development
- Information on sales and average wage development in the industry
- Information on production, sales and average wage and number of employees development in the construction sector
- Information on production, sales and average wage and number of employees development in industry.
- Information on production, sales and average wage and number of employees development in agriculture.

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- Information on the sales development in the internal trade, restaurants, accommodation and transport
- Information on the development of selected indicators in the CR economy.
- Seasonally adjusted short-term time series of selected indicators

Quarterly statistics:

- Information on the development of gross domestic product
- Information on the development of average prices
- Short-term prognosis of basic macro-economy indicators
- Information on expected development of external trade

4. Another part of the CSO presentation is an information about the CSO for users /directory etc./ who may utilize also software for electronic data collection. On the same server there is also election presentation /the only one in English and Czech version/. It is currently the best and the most comprehensive CSO presentation. There are also election results, basic information on the Czech Republic, important information for voters, information on the methodology of election results' processing, Election Act etc.

5. Taking into consideration absence of database publication, outputs are at present being prepared for presentation. Here we also newly start and in the Internet there are only some descriptions of some publications with sample publication to look through in the ADOBE READER and ENVOY or to download in EXCEL.

6. It is also considered to include output tables from the processing and to make public register of economic subjects /RES/. The RES page would be generated by application directly from ORACLE database.

## **II. Presentation expansion of the CSO publications and problems connected with it**

7. In this year we try to extend considerably presentation and publication of statistical information in the Internet. Here we encounter some basic problems:

(i) *Relatively low technical level of users' knowledge*

8. This level is caused by relatively short period of the Internet use in our country. Probably the highest experience exists in the group of young people who were acquainted with the Internet at their universities and are able to utilize it in full extent, there are almost no problems with this group.

9. Another group of users covers first of all state administration staff which has also relatively long-term possibility to utilize Internet, despite the fact that their knowledge is considerably lower.

10. The lowest experience level is with the people of companies, where they started to utilize Internet only recently. These people have very low level of knowledge and therefore all has to be prepared for them carefully.

11. This problem has fully appeared e.g. in the course of change in the system of presenting basic statistical publications. We have come over from the ASCII format to the ENVOY format and although we provided users with the corresponding plug-in and viewers, there appeared many problems, when the users were not able to view the information.

(ii) *Format of documents*

12. This problem partially relates to the preceding point, but it mainly concerns publications specified for downloading. Input format of the CSO is WORDPERFECT and QUATTRO 6.2 for Windows /WB2/, while most of users utilize Microsoft Office, in which the WB 2 format cannot be screened. Therefore it

will be inevitable to come over to older version -formats WB 1 /Quattro 6.1 for Windows/ and WQ1 /Quattro for DOS/, but there are some existing limitations, to which our output would not subordinate, or to formats of Microsoft Office. Therefore it would be desirable to organize research among users and to find out which publication might be utilized only for viewing /Envoy/ and which will be adjusted for downloading and in which format they will be provided. It has been considered to scan the publications, but that seems to me inconvenient /perhaps with older publications, which do not exist in the form of sets/ and it would mean to utilize OCR /data in graphic format are rather extensive for the use in Internet/, which supposes the subsequent careful control of publication.

(iii) *Payment for information*

13. CSO incomes are planned each year according to the current budgetary regulations and they are sent back to the state budget. Despite our effort to provide via Internet as much as possible of standard statistical information free of charge it would be inevitable to provide some of them in paid form. There are several possible ways how to pay for the provided information

- *in cash or with invoice after closing license contract*: this method has been utilized up to now, but has some limitations, the main one being time consumption /first of all when providing information into abroad/.

- *payment cards*: but the payment cards are not so much spread over in our country, although for the foreign countries the method would be suitable

- *payment by phone cards*: this method would be the best under our conditions, but it is not still utilized in our country and it also depends what attitude will be taken by the telephone company, also the purchase of a new software for the contact with a customer is expected, which is not the cheapest one under our conditions.

### III. Other use of Internet

14. Internet use enabled mutual connection of the state administration bodies, speeding up and making easier the mutual communication. It mainly concerns ministry, which will have an opportunity to utilize the ministry server administered by the CSO. The only up to now utilized application is the page generated for access into the register of economic subjects, but to this place also data will be transferred, which are regularly provided to the ministries on the base of contract relations with the CSO and also all publication outputs in which the ministries may be interested in to utilize.

### IV. Final note

15. Internet use has always been expanding in our country and therefore it is inevitable that the CSO would try to keep up with this trend. We would like to create a good CSO image with help of Internet presentation, which would be a valuable part of the total presentation of the CSO activities. But it will, of course require also some organizational changes and make some concessions subordinated to that objective and to extend necessary working capacities. It will require unification of publication outputs and to subordinate them to the requirements of the Internet presentation. Due to the international character of Internet it will be desirable to place the presentation simultaneously as widely as possible in English.

16. It will also be required to make general re-assessment of the publication output utilized up to now in our country. Set outputs are in WordPerfect and Quattro 6.2 for Windows or in older software which is not being currently utilized. Unfortunately among packages of older software from various companies /the most usual being Microsoft Office/ there exist big problems with transfer or with correct transfer of the Czech language. We have therefore to specify in which forms and in which versions our outputs will be in order to have them accessible without problems to the broadest public.