

Work session on Statistical Output for  
Dissemination to Information Media  
(Cork, Ireland, 22 - 25 June 1998)

**REPORT OF THE WORK SESSION ON STATISTICAL OUTPUT FOR DISSEMINATION TO  
INFORMATION MEDIA**

Note by the secretariat

The UN/ECE Work session on Statistical Output for Dissemination to Information Media , was held in Cork, Ireland from 22 - 25 June 1998 on the invitation of the Central Statistics Office of Ireland. It was attended by Belgium, Canada, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom and United States of America. Representatives of Eurostat also attended. The United Nations Statistical Division (UNSD) was also represented at the meeting.

1. Mr. Bill Keating (Ireland) chaired the meeting.
2. The provisional agenda was adopted.
3. The meeting was opened by the Director General of the Irish Central Statistics Office, Donal Murphy, who welcomed the participants and wished them success in their work and an enjoyable stay in Ireland.

**ORGANIZATION OF THE SESSION**

5. The following substantive topics were discussed at the Work Session:
  - a) New developments in the use of Internet dissemination of statistical information
  - b) Dealing with negative press coverage
  - c) Making an effective WWW site for information media, including metadata adapted to the needs of media and public
  - d) Measurement of the usage of Internet sites, including user surveys
  - e) Best practices in training in media relation
  - f) Shifting from print to electronic products - how and when?
6. The topics were discussed on the basis of 26 papers prepared by the Central Bureau of Statistics of the Netherlands, Central Statistics Office of Ireland, Centre for Educational Sociology - University of Edinburgh Scotland, the Czech Statistical Office, Eurostat, Federal Statistical Office of

Germany, GOSKOMSTAT of the Russian Federation, Hungarian Statistical Office, INE of Portugal, ISTAT of Italy, Office for National Statistics of the UK, Statistics Canada, Statistics Finland, Statistics Denmark, Statistics Norway, Statistics Sweden, U.S. Department of Agriculture, U.S. Census Bureau, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, U.S. Department of Justice, U.S. Department of Transportation, U.S. Energy Information Administration.

6. The participants appreciated the hospitality and excellent organization that the Irish Central Statistics Office had provided for the meeting and expressed their warm thanks to the organizers.

7. A summary of the main conclusions reached by the participants during discussion of the substantive agenda items has been prepared (in English only) as a separate report and distributed to participants. Upon request this can also be forwarded to other interested persons.

#### **FUTURE WORK**

8. The participants discussed when it would be opportune to have another meeting. They recommended that the Conference continue to convene meetings in this work area at annual intervals as long as the rapid development of the Internet as a tool for disseminating statistical information continued. The format and duration of the next meeting were also discussed and it was proposed to reduce the number of topics and to complete these in three days on a trial basis for next year's meeting. Regarding the format it was not thought necessary to change anything. On the contrary, the participants expressed their satisfaction with the current format of having invited guest speakers from outside statistical offices and of having countries preparing discussion papers both jointly and individually.

9. The participants recommended that a further UN/ECE Work session on Statistical Output for Dissemination to Information Media was to be held in 1999/2000 and should consider the following issues:

(i) How do national statistical offices use the news media to promote and facilitate collection of their national censuses and other surveys? How do they solicit media support?

(ii) What impact has the increasing use of the Internet for dissemination had on the structure, functioning and resource requirements, notably in the public affairs and public relations offices of national statistical agencies? How have changing skill requirements affected human resources?

(iii) Is the relationship between national statistical offices and the news media and other clients (including the media) changing? Are clients increasingly seeking services "just-in-time" instead of acquiring products for reference "just-in-case"? Do clients now expect our information to be delivered to their desktop ("push") rather than seeking out and obtaining information themselves ("pull")? If so, how are the NSOs adapting to this changing environment.

(iv) How are NSOs promoting statistical literacy among the news media and the public? How can we collaborate more effectively with the news media and educational systems in our countries to accomplish this?

(vi) What principles are national statistical offices applying in deciding when to charge the news media and other clients for their products and services and when to provide them free? Has the Internet affected these principles or their application?

11. For each of the above topics joint papers would be prepared by interested agencies. The United States Census Bureau volunteered to lead the preparation of the joint paper under agenda item (i); Statistics Canada for the joint paper under item (ii); the Statistics Netherlands for the joint paper under item (iii); Statistics Finland for the joint paper under (iv); and the Federal Statistical Office of Germany for a joint paper under item (v). Persons interested in participating in this work should contact the lead agencies or the ECE secretariat.

12. The meeting also asked the secretariat to assist the group in surveying statistical agencies' pricing practices towards news media and if possible other services provided to them.

13. ISTAT offered to host the next meeting at a suitable date in the coming year, and agreed to discuss an appropriate date with the ECE secretariat.

14. The participants adopted the report of the meeting at its closing session.

## ANNEX

**Papers presented at the UN/ECE Work session on Statistical Output for  
Dissemination to Information Media (Cork, 22 - 25 June 1998)**

The papers listed below can be obtained on request from the ECE secretariat.

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|---------------------|--|
| Working paper No.2  | The United States Census Bureau's "Extranet" Site, Ms. LaVerne Collins, U.S. Census Bureau   |
| Working paper No.3  | "Shifting to electronic products - keeping strategies consistent with user preferences", Mr. Henrik Hornum, Statistics Denmark   |
| Working paper No.4  | "National Statistical Offices and Administrations, and the Web: a Survey", Ms. Joanne Lamb, Centre for Educational Sociology, University of Edinburgh, Scotland, UK  |
| Working paper No.5  | "Best practices in training in media relations", Mr. Per-Ake Bladh, Statistics Sweden  |
| Working paper No.6  | "Internet publishing at Statistics Netherlands", Ms. Lydia van der Hulst and Mr. Ahmed Aboutaleb, Central Bureau of Statistics, The Netherlands  |
| Working paper No.7  | "Individual and public cases of statistics", Mr. Laszlo Holka, Hungarian Central Statistical Office  |
| Working paper No.8  | "Prospects of Internet use for dissemination", Ms. T.V.Aksenova, State Committee of the Russian Federation on Statistics, Russian Federation   |
| Working paper No.9  | "How to handle adverse media coverage", Mr. Ahmed Aboutaleb, Central Bureau of Statistics, Netherlands; Mr. Jussi Melkas, Statistics Finland; and Mr. Ian G. Scott, Office for National Statistics, United Kingdom |
| Working paper No.10 | "Problems with presentation of the Czech Statistical Office on the Internet", Mr. Pavel Havlas, Czech Statistical Office   |
| Working paper No.11 | "Building a National Transportation Library and Data Archive in the United States", Mr. Robert Zarnetske, Bureau of Transportation Statistics, United States Department of Transportation                          |
| Working paper No.12 | "Dealing with negative press coverage - Eurostat's experience", Ms. Annika Östergren, Eurostat   |

- Working paper No.13 "Training in media relations: Practices in selected national statistical agencies", Mr. Daniel Scott, Statistics Canada; Mr. Ahmed Aboutaleb, Central Bureau of Statistics, Netherlands; and Ms. Sandy Smith, United States Department of Health and Human Services
- Working paper No.14 "New developments in the use of Internet for dissemination of statistical information - Eurostat 2.0", Ms. Annika Östergren, Eurostat
- Working paper No.15 "Building the future: Taking Statistics Canada's Daily from print to electronic", Mr. Wayne Smith, Statistics Canada
- Working paper No.16 "The use of Internet for the Dissemination of Statistical Information", Mr. Marco Pellegrino, Eurostat
- Working paper No.17 "Shifting from Print to Electronic Products: Two U.S. Experiences", Mr. John Weiner, US Energy Information Administration, and Ms. LaVerne Vines Collins, U.S. Bureau of the Census
- Working paper No. 18 "Methods to measure Internet use", Ms. Angela Schaff, federal Statistical Office, Germany
- Working paper No.19 "An analysis of Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) website usage statistics", Ms. Marianne W. Zawitz, U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics
- Working paper No.20 New initiatives from Istat in the field of dissemination of statistical output to information media, Mr. Donato Speroni, Istat, Italy
- Working paper No.21 "Training and writing for the media - The Irish experience", Mr. Dick O'Driscoll, Central Statistics Office Ireland
- Working paper No. 22 "Journalists have high confidence in statistics Norway" , Mr. Atle Jansson, Statistics Norway
- Conference room paper "Who are the users (why) it is (not) possible to track the web user?", Mr. Jan Bruusgaard, Statistics Norway
- Conference room paper "Internet Distribution of Time-sensitive Reports", Mr. James Horsfield, US Department of Agriculture

- Conference room paper "Don't let the bad publicity break you down", Mr. Charlie Weston, journalist and former CSO media adviser
- Conference room paper "Webserver log analysis", Ms. Rachael LaPorte Taylor, US Bureau of the Census
- Conference room paper "INE and the Internet dissemination of statistical information: New developments", Instituto Nacional de Estatística, Portugal