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Topic IV: Improving data dissemination strategies

**IMPROVING DATA DISSEMINATION STRATEGIES IN THE
HUNGARIAN CENTRAL STATISTICAL OFFICE****Contributed paper**Submitted by the Hungarian Central Statistical Office¹**SUMMARY**

1. The Hungarian Central Statistical Office (HCSO) has been disseminating its data on the Internet through the Statat system ([Http://www.ksh.hu](http://www.ksh.hu)) for the past three years. During that period we have been and are continuously developing the Statat system on the basis of our users' requests and our own experiences.

2. Our efforts to meet user requirements have made it necessary to change the methods of data publication. We have to depart from the "publication approach". So far, the data was released only when all of the data in all the tables were at our disposal. Users, however, also need partial data. On the Internet, the data can be loaded into the tables as soon as they become available with no restrictions on size of the individual tables.

3. Our experiences with Internet dissemination indicate the following:

- the need to calculate statistical data on different base years is growing;
- the compilation and dissemination of long time series becomes possible after the homogenization of the data;
- the data can be published within the shortest possible time;
- access to large quantities of data is less expensive at the institutional level;
- data comparability throughout the world can be improved by publishing the methodology applied in the data collection and processing;
- rapid and successful communication is now possible through e-mail.

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4. The majority of users of the STADAT system belong to the entrepreneurial sphere: 55 per cent of a total of over 100 subscribers, 20 per cent are educational institutes and 16 per cent the state administration.

5. It appears that the entrepreneurial sphere badly needs rapid, precise and easily accessible data. Given their scope of activity, the simplest way for them to access statistical data is to receive the data through the Internet. The HCSO disseminates the data in paper or fax form to the state administration and to the editors of newspapers more-or-less free of charge. International organizations such as the UN and the OECD receive the HCSO's data through the Stadat system.

6. The users need to have access to the latest monthly data as soon as possible and to receive time series from the annual data as early as possible. In order to produce long time series in tables the data must be homogenized. When the annual data were published in yearbooks, the problem of comparability did not exist. We have decided to indicate the homogenized and modified data which have been included in a table of long time series with a different letters in order to distinguish them from other data.

Further development of the STADAT system

7. The HCSO is further developing its database system in order to establish a database for dissemination purposes along with the database for the production of statistical data. Work is under way in two directions:

- principles of the contents and functions have been determined;
- survey of the technical facilities of the implementation and examination of potential software has been carried out.

8. The database for dissemination covers all the important statistical topics independent of the data production sphere and the technical environment of data processing. The database will be prepared and systematized according to users' requirements. The contents of the data are described by metadata. The main elements of the database for dissemination are the following:

- the part intended for **external users**: narrow data contents, high aggregation, does not include confidential data, bilingual data, or data available through the Internet;
- the part intended for **internal users**: it has to allow analysis of micro-data, provide a possibility for flexible and fast retrieval/analysis of the most important aggregates; micro-data should be available while analyzing the aggregates.

9. The HCSO has implemented a two-level **data protection** system for the local area network. The first level works in the Information Center of the Prime Minister's Office. This Firewall is very complex and filters attacks from the global Internet zone. In the HCSO, every host is protected from the Internet zone except the WWW. The second security level, developed by HCSO, is a filter against the network of the Prime Minister's Office.