The ONS statistical modernisation programme – what went right; what went wrong?

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Outline

• Background
Background

In 2000:

• Need to upgrade statistical systems
  Expensive; Outdated; High risk
• Need for integration
• Many years of under-investment
• ONS formed through merger
  Added to diversity and complexity
  Need for common culture
2001-2003  Years of hope

- Business case for investment accepted
- Funding rising to £40m pa from 2004/5

- Upgraded technical infrastructure
- Re-engineering 13 business areas
  Labour market, national accounts and population
- New statistical infrastructure incl tools
- Transformed access
  Via the web
Central ONS Repository for Data: CORD
2003-6 Statistical Modernisation Programme

Its goals were, by March 2006:
• To deliver benefits by holding the major ONS statistical sources in a common statistical database, using common processes, tools and practices.
• Produce a 25% increase in the value of statistical outputs
• Manage National Accounts and Labour Market statistics through integrated statistical processes.
• To provide an automated UK-wide population estimates and projections capability.

Restructure into Sources/ Analysis
Emerging problems

- Challenging objective
- Technology Modernisation continued alongside SMP
- Strategic projects - eg CORD design – complex and fell behind causing delays
- Staff capacity issues: consultants ate up money
- Continuation of budget settlement now required new outputs, to be paid for out of planned savings
2006-8 Odyssey

- Abandoned strategic approach: CORD to be built by business projects
- Included technology and web upgrade
- Stronger programme management
- Included some smaller scale projects
- Delivered 10 out of 16 projects
  - But labour market abandoned and national accounts struggling
What have we delivered?

- the national accounts core system
- life events and civil partnerships systems
- annual survey of hours and earnings
- new monthly indicators of earnings
- population estimates (part)
- foreign direct investment
- integrated business register and employment survey pilot (BRES)
- telephone data entry system upgrade for business data
- secure electronic capture system for business data
- upgraded scanning system for business survey questionnaires
- improved matching system for the business register
- Improved reweighting of the Labour Force Survey and redesigned core questions for the Integrated Household Survey
- moving retail price index system to an upgraded server

- an agreed set of corporate statistical tools including ACTR, Banff, Canceis, SAS, and X12-ARIMA.
- a unified quality reporting system
- some progress has been made on unified metadata.
- Improved technical and business capability
- a wide range of clear standards and working practices including IT development and business analysis.
- a more robust programme management culture
- better risk analysis.
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The ONS Design Authority is developing explicit design principles, covering methods, tools, processes and systems.

The new IT strategy (‘Red to Green’) prioritises the development of our most vulnerable statistical systems.

Future development of statistical systems will be led by business areas.

Business areas will use CORD, plus the tools, plus SAS as the technical infrastructure, leverage benefits from the developments achieved to date and extend modernisation into areas where these can best be applied.

Projects will be in bite size chunks ensuring deliverability.