Research Data Centre network for transnational access - four years of experiences by seven European RDCs

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Data without Boundaries – transnational access

- A unique opportunity for researchers to receive specialist support and reimbursement of costs to conduct comparative research across borders

- Academic researchers within Europe were invited to apply for access to microdata from similar services (known as Research Data Centres) in the UK, Germany, Netherlands and France

- Depending upon the RDC, available datasets were **social survey**, **census** and **business microdata** considered to be too detailed, confidential or sensitive to be provided through standard access mechanisms.

Research Data Centres from four countries

- France
  - ➢ Secure Data Access Centre (CASD)/Organization of National Schools in Economics and Statistics (GENES)
- Germany
  - ➢ Federal Statistical Office
  - ➢ German Microdata Lab, GESIS – Leibniz Institute for the Social Sciences
  - ➢ Research Data Centre of the German Federal Employment Agency (IAB)
- Netherlands
  - ➢ Statistics Netherlands
- United Kingdom
  - ➢ Office for National Statistics
  - ➢ Secure Lab, UK Data Archive

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Application process

- Continuous call with eight deadlines
  - ➢ Advertised on DwB web site, by RDCs, DwB project partners and others
  - ➢ First deadline was 15th February 2012
  - ➢ Final deadline was 15th October 2014
- Application form
  - ➢ Researcher details
  - ➢ Research proposal
- Administration check by RDCs
- User Selection Panel
  - ➢ Ranks each project for scientific merit
- National accreditation

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Proposals

- 40 selected from over 60 received
- Approx half started their research.
- In total > 200 onsite access days and >1000 remote
- Researchers resident in Belgium, Croatia, France, Italy, Poland, Spain, Sweden, UK
  - Examples
    - Effects of Leveraged Buy-Outs on Innovation in Europe
      - Netherlands and UK **Community Innovation Survey**
    - A Pan-European Evaluation of the Impact of the EU Emissions Trading System on the Industrial Sector
      - **UK business datasets**
    - Patterns of Labor Market Entry in Closed Occupations
      - **German Microcensus**
    - Occupation and Fertility: Registered Based Evidence from a Danish-German Comparison
      - **Register data from the Germany statutory pension fund linked to data from employment registers**

Support

- Assistance with national accreditation

- Training

- Technical support

- Data information

- Translation (into English only)

- Using the data (but not software or advice on the research)

Challenges

- Co-ordination and administration
- Differences between RDCs (data, number of applications)
- Time constraints
    - ➤ Setting up the process
    - ➤ Application/approval time, including User Selection Panel
    - ➤ Limited research time
- Invalid applications in the beginning
- Information about the datasets
    - ➤ Not centralised
    - ➤ Some information not available in English
    - ➤ Difficult to know which datasets are comparable
- No possibility to combine data
- Drop-outs at various stages of the process – full or partial
- The nature of research

Impact

- Increased visibility of Research Data Centres amongst research community
- Collaboration and greater understanding between Research Data Centres
- Real research with publications http://www.dwbproject.org/access/outcomes.html
- Enabling future research beyond the DwB project
- Enabling ongoing collaborations between Research Data Centres
- Enhanced information about the data
- Demonstrating researcher needs
- Setting precedent for changes to access
- Contributing towards a future vision

Conclusions – what's needed

- Centralised and standardised information about data

- Harmonisation of accreditation

- Centralised training

- Ability to combine data from different RDCs

- A network of RDCs working together to resolve technical, organisational and legal barriers to remote access

- European Remote Access Network - single access points to data

Thanks for Listening

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