Business Micro-data Linking

Andrew Allen

Longitudinal database - Business Structures Database

- A copy of the business register is taken once a year.

- This is then linked to respondent data sets for the key business surveys – including financial and employment surveys - To create a longitudinal research database.

- Linking is facilitated by using the register enterprise/ local unit reference numbers.

- It is also possible to link external datasets by using the Register matching service.

Approved Researchers

- The BSD can be accessed by Approved Researchers in the Secure Research Service .

- The researchers can access the database from a safe setting in ONS offices and a few other government offices.

- They cannot take micro-data out of the research environment – only aggregated results.

- Their research has to be approved by ONS before the project starts and ahead of publication

Future developments

- Developing a new approach – called IDEAS

- This will facilitate linking of the business and address registers to people.

- Will enable new research questions to be answered.

- Key to ensure security and de-identification when people are concerned.

New Statistical Business Register

- The existing BR was designed purely for business sampling, not research.

- This leads to some weaknesses in terms of variable periodicity and meta data for researchers.

- The new SBR is being designed to satisfy both sampling and research users.

- The new SBR will hold up to date variables, will have better consistency between variables and better meta data. A new Cloudera infrastrucure will also facilitate better data linking.