Data Manifesto Royal Statical Society Cheat Sheet

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Introduction: Data for better policymaking

There is a great opportunity for more efficient and effective policy-making if we use data to inform what we are doing. There are three things the government should do to improve data for policymaking:

Source: http://www.rss.org.uk/Images/PDF/influencing-change/20-16/RSS_Data%20Manifesto_2016_Online.pdf

Data to strengthen democracy and trust

Our democracy relies on the quality of data in the public domain, and the public's trust in it. There are three things the government should do to improve data for democracy:

1. Ensure that data quality and data ethics are taken into account in decision making. The UK Statistics Authority should play a key role in ensuring official statistics are trustworthy and inform policy. Government should end the practice of pre-release access whereby some people in government see statistics before the public. A Council for Data Ethics should proactively consider ethical challenges emerging from new data science developments.

2. Citizens should have greater access to quality local data . The availability of crime and accident data has shown local communities are interested when the data is relevant to them. Central government should encourage greater publication of data at local level and build on good practice.

3. Private companies should be transparent about how they use data. Firms that actively collect data should enable scrutiny of their methods and their data policies. Private schools, hospitals, and other public services provided by private providers should adhere to the same data standards and transparency as those in the public sector

Data for better policymaking

1. Evidence must be taken more seriously in policy formulation and evaluation, and official statistics should be at the heart of policy debate. We should keep investigating what works in policy. Government should publish the data and evidence that underpin any new policies it announces.

2. Greater data sharing between government departments for statistics and research purposes would provide opportunities for a range of public services / policy areas ranging from 'smart cities' to better healthcare. Privacy safeguards should be built into any sharing of personal data at the outset.

3. Politicians, policymakers and other professionals working in public services (such as regulators,teachers,doctors etc) should be given basic training in data handling and statistics to ensure they avoid making poor decisions which adversely affect citizens.

Data Manifesto



Data: the driver of prosperity

Our well being depends on economic prosperity, which in turn depends upon exploiting our investment in data, and on our skills as a society to understand and use data. There are four things the government should do to improve data
for prosperity:

1. The Government should uphold its commitment to increase investment in our science and research base, to keep pace with other leading scientific nations. Alongside this, the government must maintain the UK's reputation as a destination for students and research professionals to live and work. Skills and knowledge from our public research system should be shared for public and private benefit

2. To make the most progress on innovation, data from both public and private research should be as open as possible. We need to make further progress on opening up government data, which can be a rich source of innovation at relatively little cost, particularly if it is effectively marked with standard codes for geography, time and other attributes

3. In an era of new types of data, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) and the wider Government Statistical Service must be given adequate resources
to retain and improve statistical series and to develop new ways of making data easily accessible to business and policymakers, educational institutions and civil society.

4. To prepare for the data economy we need to skill up the nation. We need to train teachers from primary school through to university lecturers to encourage data literacy in young people from an early age. Basic data handling and quantitative skills should be an integral part of the taught curriculum. In particular, we should ensure that all students learn to handle and interpret real data using technology

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