

Editorial

Hello and welcome to the first RadStats issue with a new colour cover – and a new editor. Lee Williamson is based at the University of Manchester and her research area is demography, with special interest in small areas and ethnic groups.

The articles in this edition of Radical Statistics are based on presentations at this year's Radical Statistics conference, which was held in February at the Bradford Resource Centre. One reason for the conference theme of '**Democratising access to statistics**' was that this is an area where Radstats members are making a practical contribution. The main focus of the meeting was four projects which get ordinary people involved with statistics through some combination of web sites, generally open access, and actual fieldwork on schools and communities.

Holding the meeting in Bradford enabled the Bradford Community Statistics Project, based at the Resource Centre, to play a major role. The **Bradford Community Statistics Project** provides specialist support to community organisations, including making data available on the web in an easily understandable form (for more information see <http://www.communitystats.org.uk>). This was the focus of the presentation and workshop session led by **Mike Quiggin**, who makes some observations about the experience of the project in his article.

All the access projects presented at the conference work with census data, and the census is arguably the most democratic of all official statistics, covering the whole population and every locality. **Ludi Simpson** opened the conference and led a discussion on the 2001 Census. His article addresses widespread concerns about the census results, and the One Number Census methodology on which they were based.

Understanding current patterns of inequality needs data on long-run trends. **Humphrey Southall**, who also helped coordinate the conference presentations, gave the first public demonstration of his project's web site, giving access to data on total population back to 1801, infant mortality back to 1881 and unemployment back to 1931 – but all re-calculated for modern local authorities, and accessible by typing in a postcode. His article discusses how he obtained National Lottery funding for this, and some of the practical problems in building and sustaining a statistical web site for a wide audience.

The other two projects are more ‘official’ and less ‘radical’ statistics, but again try to bring statistics and statistical thinking to a very wide audience.

The **CensusAtSchool** project develops statistical understanding by guiding pupils as they carry out their own census at their school. **Doreen** Connor, based within the RSS Centre for Statistical Education at Nottingham Trent University and the project’s coordinator, gave a presentation and led an interactive workshops at the conference. She writes about how a school census works, and how the project now links schools in four different countries.

The Office for National Statistics’ **Neighbourhood Statistics Service**, and their web site, were created as part of the National Strategy on Neighbourhood Renewal, and aim to provide ‘comprehensive and up-to-date information about deprived neighbourhoods’ – although the system covers all areas, not just those defined as deprived. **Rebecca Wead**, from ONS, explains the need for small area information and discusses the difficulties in providing data for detailed output areas while respecting confidentiality requirements.

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