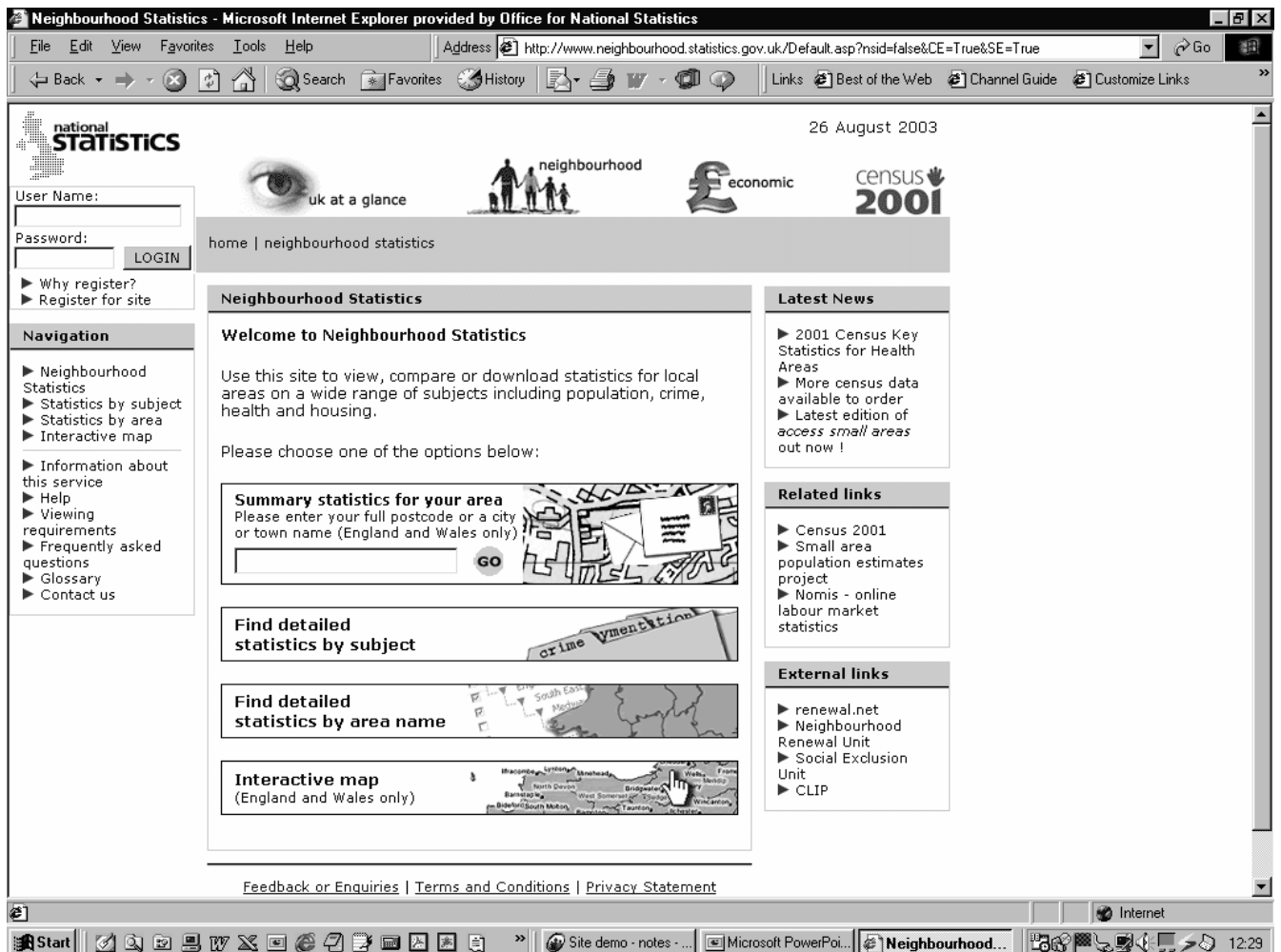


Neighbourhood Statistics - Fast, Free and at your Fingertips

Rebecca Wead

Neighbourhood Statistics (www.statistics.gov.uk/neighbourhood) is a revolutionary new Internet service from the Office For National Statistics (ONS). The service aims to provide comprehensive, small area information to improve understanding of local problems and enable better targeting of solutions.

Figure 1 **Neighbourhood Statistics website**



Created as part of the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal, Neighbourhood Statistics intends to overcome the barriers in obtaining good quality small area information and make it accessible to all. Working in close liaison with the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit, Local and Central Government, Neighbourhood Statistics is maximising the

use of national administrative sources, as well as exploring potential

datasets held in other areas. Good practice in data collection, sharing and use is being promoted, and safeguards have been implemented to ensure that individual information can not be identified from any data released on the web-site.

A key requirement for Neighbourhood Statistics is to provide information for areas smaller than wards. Ward level information has several disadvantages. Firstly, wards are often too large to assess what is happening at a local level, especially as they are often made up of neighbourhoods with diverging characteristics. Secondly, ward boundaries are subject to change, making monitoring particularly difficult. The introduction of Output Areas, consisting of around 125 households as the lowest level of geography will address both the issues of size and change, as Output Areas will be small and relatively constant. Due to disclosure and quality issues, not all data can be released down to Output Area level. Therefore 'Super Output Areas' are being developed. This uses Output Areas as statistical building bricks and will aggregate these units to create three layers of geography between the Output Area and the Local Authority District level. Super Output Areas will be available next year.

In the meantime, the Neighbourhood Statistics website is constantly being developed and new information added. Of particular interest will be the results of the 2001 Census, which will be released throughout 2003 and will provide the first information at Output Area level. A significant number of non-Census datasets will also be added. Future developments will include the ability to view the location of services, such as hospitals and schools, and thematic maps will also be available later this year.

For more information on Neighbourhood Statistics visit our website **www.statistics.gov.uk/neighbourhood**. If you have any comments or questions, please contact rebecca.wead@ons.gov.uk

Rebecca Wead

Office for National Statistics

Segensworth Road

Titchfield, Fareham,

Hants

PO15 5RR

Rebecca.Wead@ons.gsi.gov.uk