

OAC USER GROUP Steering Group

INTRODUCTORY NOTES for meeting on 18 January 2007

Those who have put their names forward to join the Steering Group are currently

- * Martin Callingham (Birkbeck College)
- * Chris Denham
- * Tony Duckenfield (Steer Davies Gleave)
- * Keith Dugmore (RSS SUF)
- * Oliver Duke-Williams (University of Leeds)
- * Sheena Gordon (ONS)
- * Judith Gretton-Dann (Eastern Region Health Laboratory/University of Cambridge)
- * Lorraine Johnson (Whitbread)
- * Lorraine Kitching (MVA)
- * Alan Lewis (Greater London Authority)
- * Martin Robson (London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham)
- * Tom Smith (Oxford Consultancy for /social Inclusion (OCSI))
- * Dan Vickers (University of Sheffield)

Anna-Marie Jones moved on from ONS after she put her name forward, and Sheena Gordon has now joined the Group. John Wicks of MVA arranged for his colleague Lorraine Kitching to join the Group.

This membership represents a very good cross section of a diverse OAC user community. and there will be an opportunity at the beginning of the meeting for members to give a brief summary of their interest in OAC from different perspectives.

AGENDA ITEMS

2. OAC seminar: report and contact with prospective members of UG

The seminar confirmed that there is considerable interest in the use of

OAC. The range of interested organisations was particularly striking, and this is a great strength, with OAC making connections across sectors.

A brief report on the seminar, and links to the presentations, was put on the RSS website at

<http://www.rss.org.uk/main.asp?group=&page=1321&event=303&month=11&year=2006&date=>

All those who attended the seminar, those who booked but did not attend, and those who had to be turned away were sent e-mails alerting them to the report and the intention to form an OAC User Group. The e-mails were sent by Paul Gentry of the RSS to allow opt out from a UG mailing/membership list, but we are hopeful that the vast majority of those contacted will join the list, and that the RSS will then provide it for UG use. Possibilities for expanding the list can be discussed under item 9 on publicity.

3. User Group: terms of reference

The suggestion is that the ToRs are kept very simple, and first thoughts are based on ideas from Martin Callingham

- i. to help users access and apply OAC as the basis for effective and open geodemography with wider benefits;
- ii. to provide opportunities to share experiences and build expertise;
- iii. to help advances to be made through new methods and applications; and
- iv. to operate through open meetings, a self help network, and a website for the OAC user community, overseen by a steering group.

4. User Group: membership of the Statistics Users Forum

This would offer the benefits of hosting and publicising meetings at the RSS, and also a means of putting forward priorities for official statistics, including the 2011 Census.

The Group would need to apply to join SUF, and an application would be considered by the SUF Executive Committee. Keith Dugmore

would expect the Committee to be supportive in principle, but he will advise us on further points.

5. Steering Group: function, and roles for members

The UG ToRs suggest a range of activity for the wider Group, but clearly this depends on input from the Steering Group in the first instance. Roles to consider are

- 'administration' of information, and communication with the wider membership
- provision of expert advice on technical and statistical aspects, and on applications
- development of case studies to spread the word about OAC
- preparation of written guidance and a directory of OAC users
- representing OAC users in consultations
- promotional activities, including events and liaison with the main user sectors
- web site editorship

It would be helpful for members to think in advance about roles they might undertake, and any backing or resources that their organisations might give, and also whether they would be able to act as one of the 'public' contact points in the UG.

6. OAC: brief reports on current developments

Selective updates, with particular reference to UG activities in 2007. I should be most grateful to be told of contributions in advance.

7. User Group: activities for 2007

Aside from what might be termed the 'virtual' activity, face to face activity would help to give focus to activities. A concern is that many people were turned away from the November seminar, and a (suitable modified) re-run might be considered for March or April, also aiming to attract further UG members, Hopefully this would not take too much organising effort, with perhaps more effort going into a later meeting on a different theme, for which ideas would be welcome.

8. Communications and website

There is an essential task to maintain and update the mailing/membership list securely once released by the RSS.

There might be 'newsletter' style mailings and alerts, but a website is probably essential to act as the hub of Group activity.

9. Publicity for OAC and the User Group

The RSS and SUF have a lot of outlets for publicity. For example, the list of channels used for publicising the 2006 SUF conference would in many cases also be suitable for OAC. There are also outlets for publicity in the main users sectors, use of which which could combined with the role of liaison with particular sectors, and on the web, for example the Geodemographics Knowledge Base which already covers OAC. Wider publicity might also be considered, and OAC already has a mention in Wikipedia under 'Geodemography'.

Chris Denham
8 January 2007