

From:
Chris Denham
Chair, OAC User Group
83 Bowes Hill
Rowlands Castle
Hants
PO9 6BS

To:
Keith Dugmore
Honourary Officer, Statistics Users Forum
Royal Statistical Society
12 Errol Street
London EC1Y 8LX

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Dear Keith

Output Area Classification User Group: request to affiliate to the Statistics Users Forum

I am writing on behalf of the recently formed Output Area Classification (OAC) User Group to request affiliation to the RSS Statistics Users Forum (SUF).

The Group was inaugurated at the beginning of the year to promote and support use of OAC, after assistance from the RSS for which we are most grateful, and already has a mailing list of around one hundred from across all major statistics using sectors.

The Group is focussed around the well established methods and output of area classification, but OAC is distinctive as it is in the public domain - a basis for 'open geodemographics' - encouraging interchanges between sectors on issues ranging from the underlying statistical methodology to interactive graphics for effective presentation. This open approach is possible as a result of relatively recent changes in the policy on access to government information,

and access is an area where we feel the Group can contribute significantly to the wider interests of SUF.

OAC itself distills key results from the 2001 Census for the whole of the UK at a fine grain to indicate the character of local areas in a non-disclosive way, and like other area classifications, has wide ranging applications, including the profiling of populations, structuring other data, and the targeting of resources. We feel that much of this is highly relevant to SUF priorities.

The aims of the Group are to help users apply OAC, to provide opportunities to share experience and build expertise, and to help advances to be made through new methods and applications, operating through open meetings, a self help network, and a dedicated website, enabling it to represent the interests of the OAC user community.

The Group is being administered in its initial phase by an enthusiastic steering group drawn from the academic, commercial, and public sectors, with representation and support from ONS. There are points of contact for the wider Group for all aspects of its activity. We want the activities and the way the Group is run to reflect the views and needs of OAC users, so these will be reviewed regularly.

I would be happy to provide further information about the User Group, or to discuss any aspect of its activity. We look forward to contributing to SUF, and to working with other groups to help ensure that statistics users have an effective voice.

Yours sincerely

Chris Denham