15th Conference of the International Association for Official Statistics

Laura Dewis

Chief Publishing Officer, Office for National Statistics

- **1. Background**
- 2. Vision & ambitions
- 3. User research & engagement
- 4. Lessons learned
- **5. Questions**



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The Office for National Statistics is the UK's largest independent producer of official statistics.

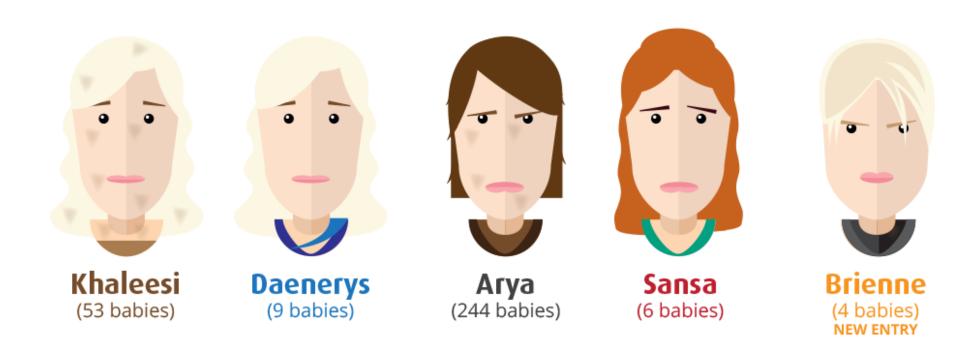


The website receives approximately 500,000 visitors per month.



The annual list of popular baby names is our single most popular release.





Source: Baby Names, England and Wales, 2014



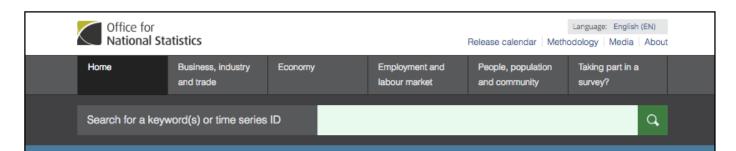


Keywords related to inflation account for eight out of ten of our most popular searches.



The Office for National Statistics launched a new website on 26th February 2016.





Welcome to the Office for National Statistics

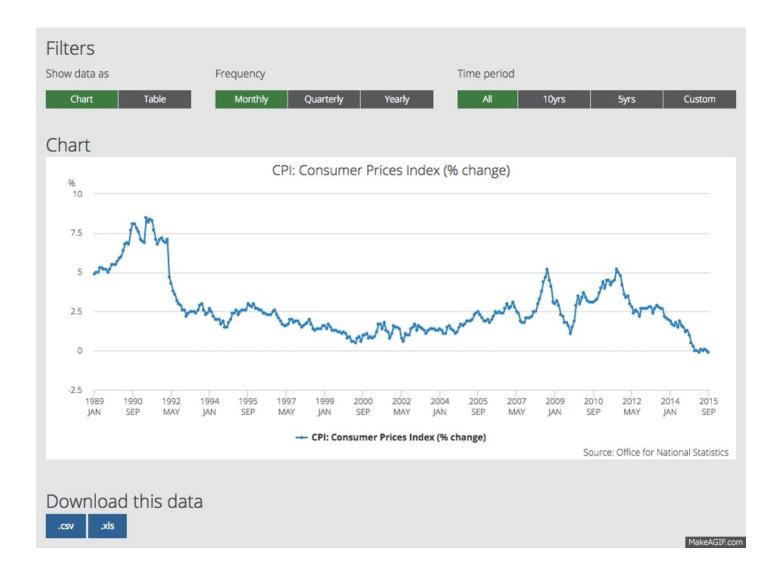
The UK's largest independent producer of official statistics and the recognised national statistical institute of the UK.

A to Z of statistical bulletins

Α	В	С	D	Е	F	G
н	I	J	к	L	М	N
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Headline news, figures and publications





It replaced a website that had been widely criticised by users. Including being called; "..a national embarrassment." in the Financial Times.



According to a Parliamentary Administration Select Committee; "The Office for National Statistics website makes figures hard to find and statistics are often presented in a confusing way.."



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To be widely respected for informing debate and improving decision making through high quality, easy to use statistics and analyses on the UK's economy and society. Better Statistics. Better Decisions.

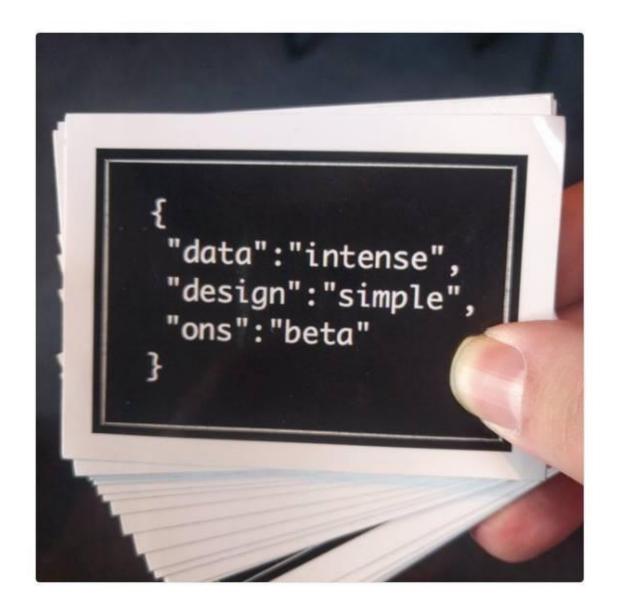


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Data intense. Design simple.





Of the web, not on the web. Stephen Dunn (while at the Guardian).



C U www.ons.gov.uk/economy/grossdomesticproductgdp/timeseries/abmi/data
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Make things open: it makes things better

www.gov.uk/design-principles#tenth.



Start with needs*

*user needs not government needs

www.gov.uk/design-principles#first.



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Always put our users first

We always start with our users. We ask, observe, analyse and act based on their needs. We don't make assumptions. We have empathy for our users.



Almost 2000 individuals & 80 organisations

contributed to our user research or provided feedback on the website as it evolved in the open.



More than 300 people

contributed to the research for the new navigation structure alone.



Three personas: expert analyst, information forager & inquiring citizen.

used to improve research recruitment never in place of observed insights.



ons.gov.uk focuses on information foragers & expert analysts.

but to ensure that 'inquiring citizens' were catered for we launched Visual.ONS as an experiment - it features new formats and more topical content.



Africa	Asia	Europe	N.America	Oceania	S.America	\times
	2004 Country of residence	Rank	Show data		2014 Country of residence	
	USA 🚺			0	France	
	France 📿			2	Germany	
	Germany			-3	USA	
Iris	h Republic 🏼 4)			Irish Republic	
Ne	etherlands 🧲			6	Spain	
	Spain 🌀			6	Netherlands	
	Italy 🔽				Italy	
	Belgium			-8	Poland	
	Australia 🧕			9	Belgium	
	Canada 🔟				Australia	
S	witzerland 🕧			1	Norway	
	Sweden 🕧			-12	Sweden	
	- · · /					

otal expenditure			 Up a level 	Back to top		
otal expenditure > Average hou	usehold spend of £531.30 per	week.				
	Housing(net), fuel & power (excludes mortgage payments and council tax/rates) £72.70	Other expenditure items £70.10	How much did we spend on			
			R) 🗶 👠		
			Chocolate Wine taken home	Live Footwear entertainmef u r women		
Recreation & culture £68.80	Restaurants & hotels	£42,50 Clothing & footwea £23.70	· + (6			
			Leisure/ Lottery gym fees	Mobile Newspape phone fees		
	Miscellaneous goods an services £40.00	nd Communication/coholo £15.50 doiseat & narootis £12.30	₩ Å	٠		
Food & non-alcoholic drin £58.80	ıks		Pet food Plants fertilise			
	Household goods & serv £35.40	vices Education £9.80 Health £7.10				

Public beta

we provided public access to the Beta of the site as it was developed for six months.



Guerilla testing.

visited universities and statistical conferences seeking feedback.



Critical friends.

group of [very] expert users who were regularly consulted.



Surveys.

user satisfaction survey to provide a benchmark and a teminology survey to investigate use of language.



Online tools.

especially Loop11 and Chalkmark for quick tests to investigate hypotheses suggested by wider user research.



Ethnographic research.

visiting users to observe them using the website in their workplaces rather than in articificial circumstances.



Diary studies.

asking a cohort of users to maintain a diary of their experiences of using the website. When/why/where and sentiment at time of use.



A/B testing.

making use of tools like Google Experiments & Optimizely to show users different versions of same page to see which worked best.



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Being open is not enough.

despite the public Beta, regular blogging, all the user research, liberal use of social media & talks all around the UK most users were taken by surprise by the new site.



Users want to help.

we spoke to users all over the UK and they were always generous with their time and their knowledge.



You cannot please everybody.

despite all our user research and engagement some users will feel let down because we did fix the issues that frustrate them most.



People dislike change.

even users who hugely disliked the previous website found the move to the new one jarring. 'Big bang' launches are challenging.



Launching is the start not the finish.

we received more feedback in the first two weeks of the launch than in the previous six months.



Internal users are important.

we could have started our internal engagement activities earlier and provided more resource to them.



Make your roadmap public.

it is vital to make sure users understand that there is a commitment to continous improvement and a public roadmap makes a statement.



Working this way is hard but extremely rewarding.

spending this much time with this many users increases empathy with their challenges and they with yours.



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Thanks.

