



Making data accessible: Building trust with users

**15th Conference of the International
Association for Official Statistics**



Laura Dewis

Chief Publishing Officer, Office for National Statistics



Making Data Accessible: Building Trust with Users

- 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.

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**The website receives approximately
500,000 visitors per month.**

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



Khaleesi
(53 babies)



Daenerys
(9 babies)



Arya
(244 babies)



Sansa
(6 babies)



Brienne
(4 babies)
NEW ENTRY

Source: Baby Names, England and Wales, 2014



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

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

Search for a keyword(s) or time series ID



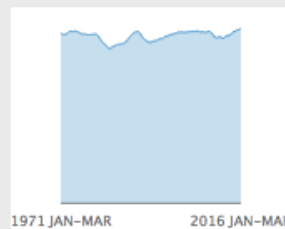
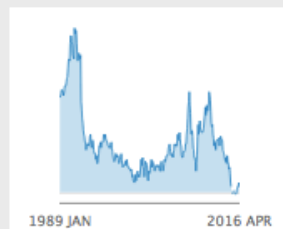
Welcome to the Office for National Statistics

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

A to Z of statistical bulletins

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A | B | C | D | E | F | G |
| H | I | J | K | L | M | N |
| O | P | Q | R | S | T | U |
| V | W | X | Y | Z | | |

Headline news, figures and publications



Employment rate

74.2%

2016 JAN-MAR

Looking to download
time series?

Try our time series explorer

Filters

Show data as

Chart

Table

Frequency

Monthly

Quarterly

Yearly

Time period

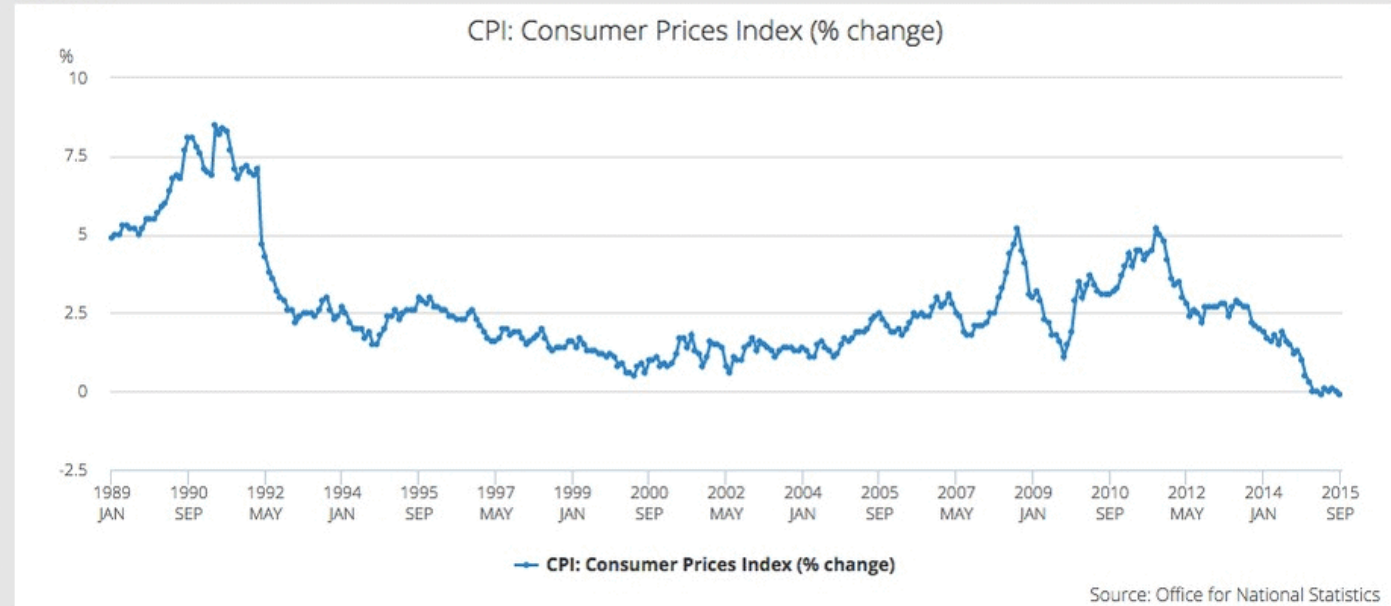
All

10yrs

5yrs

Custom

Chart



Download this data

.csv

.xls

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

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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.

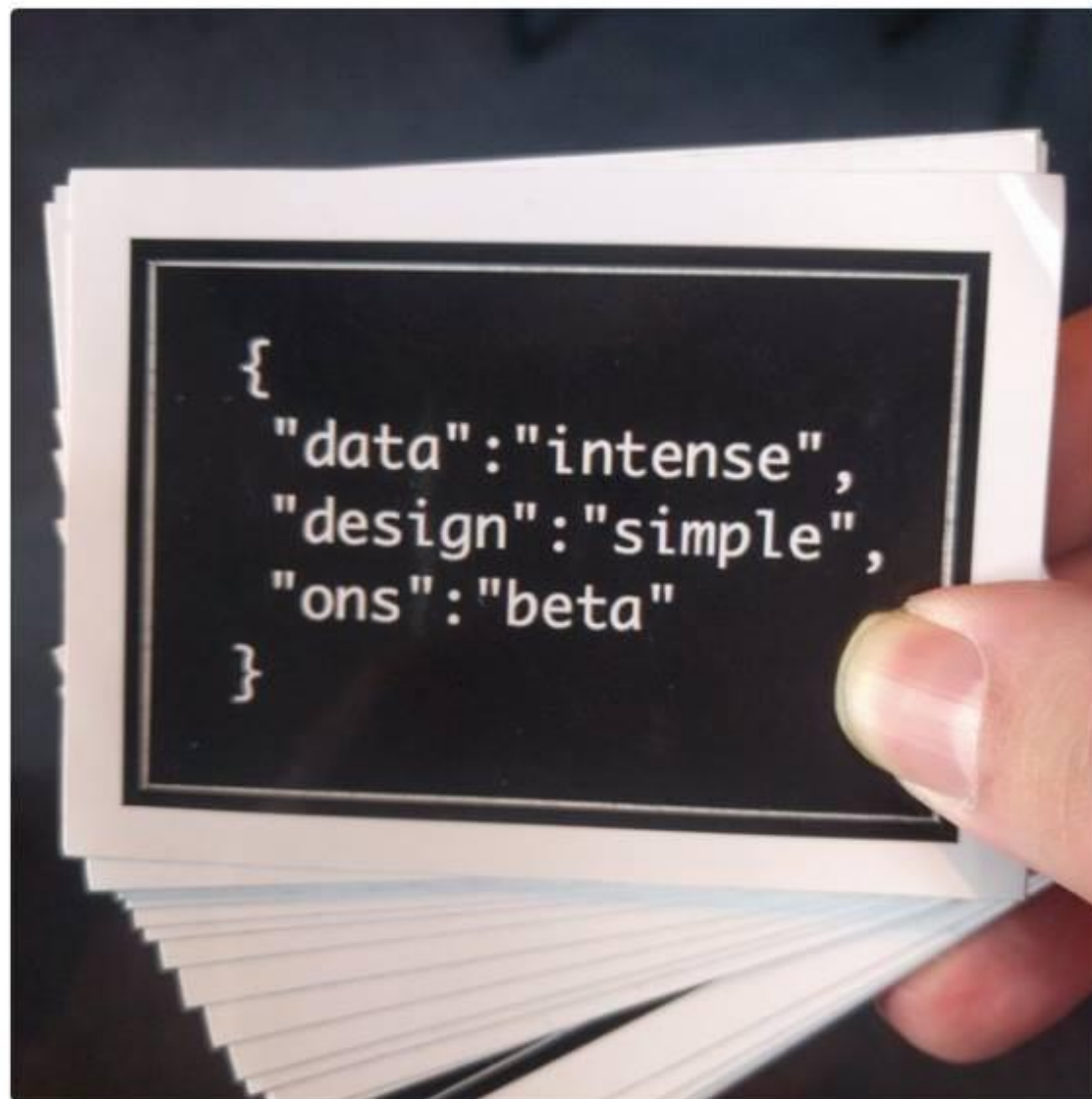
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To be widely respected for **informing debate and improving decision making through high quality, easy to use statistics and analyses on the UK's economy and society.**
Better Statistics. Better Decisions.

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Data intense. Design simple.

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Of the web, not on the web.

Stephen Dunn (while at the Guardian).

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**Make things open: it
makes things better**

[www.gov.uk/design-principles#tenth.](http://www.gov.uk/design-principles#tenth)

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Start with needs*

***user needs not government needs**

[www.gov.uk/design-principles#first.](http://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.

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**Almost 2000 individuals &
80 organisations**

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

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More than 300 people

contributed to the research for the new navigation structure alone.

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

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

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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.

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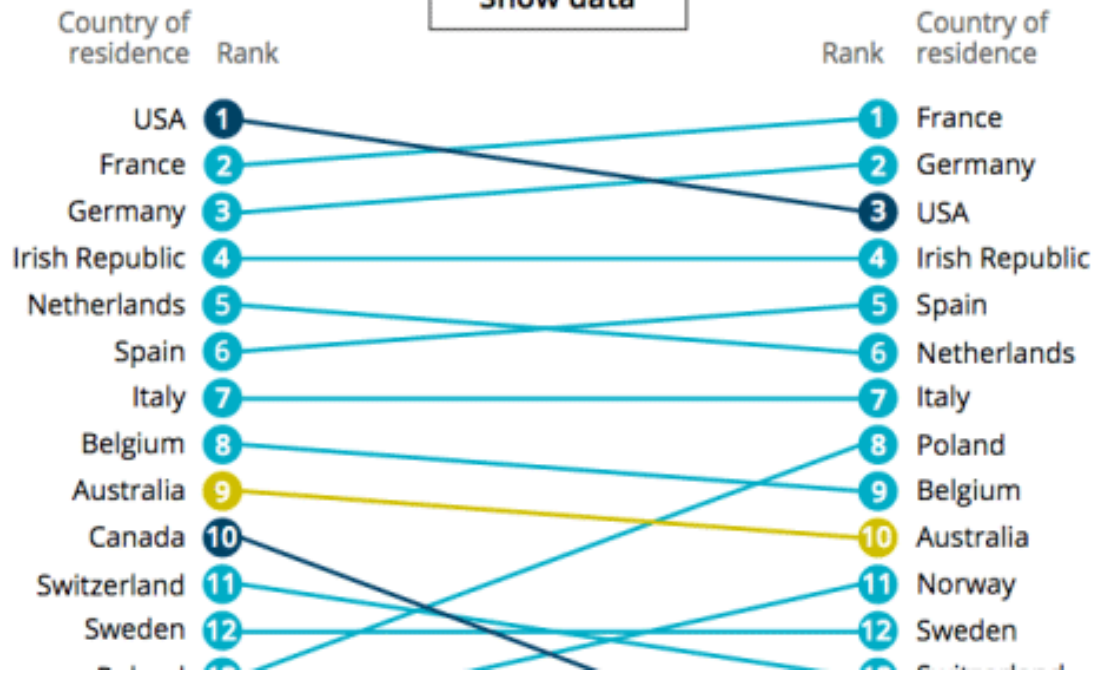
- Africa
- Asia
- Europe
- N.America
- Oceania
- S.America



2004

2014

Show data

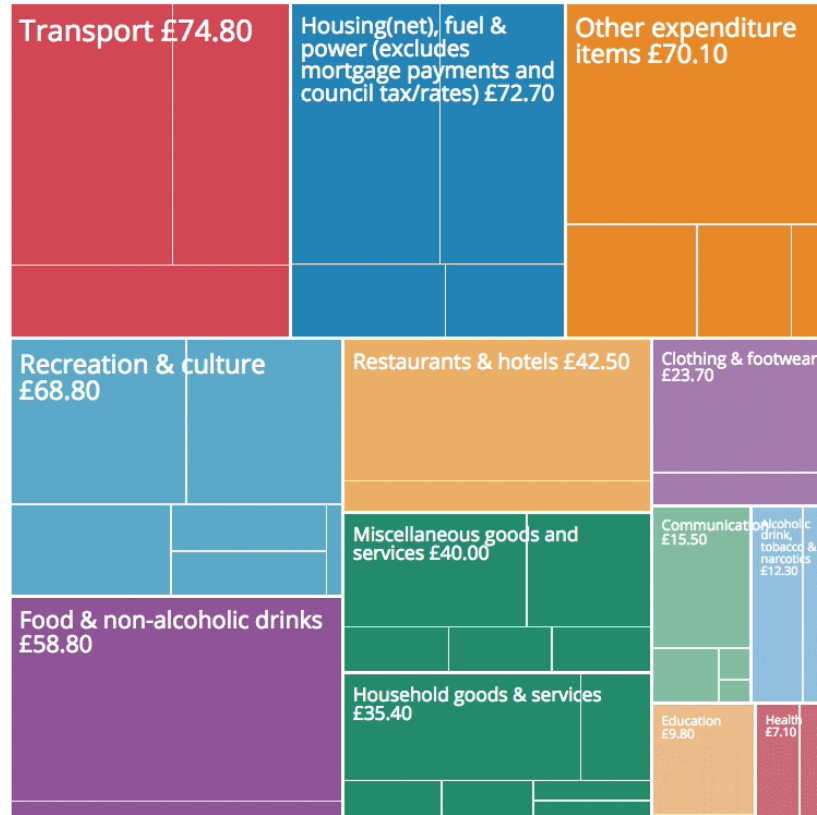


Total expenditure

[Up a level](#)

[Back to top](#)

Total expenditure > Average household spend of £531.30 per week.



How much did we spend on...



Chocolate
Wine taken home
Live entertainment
Footwear for women



Leisure/gym fees
Lottery
Mobile phone fees
Newspaper



Pet food
Plants & fertilisers
Tea at home
Takeaway meals

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Public beta

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

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Guerilla testing.

**visited universities and statistical
conferences seeking feedback.**

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Critical friends.

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

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Surveys.

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

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Online tools.

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

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Ethnographic research.

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

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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.**

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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.

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Users want to help.

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

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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.

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People dislike change.

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

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**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.**

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Internal users are important.

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

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Make your roadmap public.

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

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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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Making Data Accessible: Building Trust with Users

Thanks.

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