



Advisory Group Paper CLIP (05) 03

Address Register Development

Introduction

1. After the 2001 Census the Office for National Statistics (ONS) initiated a series of studies designed to improve population estimates in the areas that proved hardest to count in the 2001 Census in England and Wales. As part of these studies ONS commissioned an address matching exercise. This detailed matching of census addresses with Manchester and Westminster address lists highlighted shortcomings in the Census address coverage.

Action

2. This paper sets out the current situation with regard to Address Register Development. CLIP Census sub group members are asked to note for information.

Address Matching Exercise

3. After the 2001 Census the Office for National Statistics (ONS) initiated a series of studies designed to improve population estimates in the areas that proved hardest to count in the 2001 Census in England and Wales. As part of these studies ONS commissioned an address matching exercise.
4. The detailed matching of census addresses with Manchester and Westminster address lists highlighted shortcomings in the Census address coverage. In Manchester it was estimated that between 11,883 and 16,443 addresses were missed in the Census. In Westminster between 11,647 and 14,544 addresses were missed.
5. One of the key problems with the preliminary 2001 address lists was their deficiency in identifying dwellings. Addresspoint was used in the 2001 Census. This essentially grew from the Postcode Address File which identified Royal Mail delivery points rather than dwellings. Where a single letter box serviced more than one dwelling in a converted house the sub-premise data would not necessarily be separately identified.
6. The address matching exercise also highlighted the fact that that no single view of addresses existed and that separate address sources had conflicting information. In order to remedy this situation ONS has been a major advocate for a definitive centrally maintained UK address register which would combine the disparate data sources. The major sources of address information essential to a UK address register come from Local Authorities, the Royal Mail and Ordnance Survey.

Address Register Development

7. The last five years have seen Local Authorities making great strides in developing Local Land and Property Gazetteers (LLPGs) and setting up processes to maintain the National Land and Property Gazetteer (NLPG). Much of the impetus for this work has come from the implementing electronic government (IEG) program. In the same period Royal Mail and Ordnance Survey have also been looking to improve their address products. Royal Mail has developed a multiple residence file which includes sub-delivery point data. It has also created a separate new build file.
8. In May 2005 ODPM announced plans for a new national, high-quality spatial address infrastructure built from LLPGs, the NLPG, the National Street Gazetteer, the Postcode Address File (PAF) and Ordnance Survey AddressPoint. In August 2005 Ordnance Survey and IDeA announced that plans to transfer ownership of the NLPG to Ordnance Survey as an input to the NSAI could not be agreed. In terms of a single national address source we are now back to square one.
9. ONS will still push for a single data source for addresses, but in the meantime we have to plan for none being developed. ONS is about to begin research comparing the suitability of OS Address Point, OSAI alpha data and the NLPG for meeting the needs of the Census 2011.
10. The research involves comparing the current OS Address Point product with the new OS OSAI product and the NLPG. The work will focus on a limited set of geographical areas, determined by the OSAI Alpha data which is available for Manchester, Carlisle, Cardiff, and Glasgow. The NLPG and OSAI will be compared against the OS Address Point data set, taking this as the default option for the census address list.
11. The initial matching phase of this evaluation will end in February 2006. Following this initial stage a further period of evaluation will take place informed by the results of matching. During this second phase we will be sharing the results of the matching exercise with the data providers in order to reconcile differences. It is anticipated that this work will involve address checking exercises.
12. Census has no preconceptions as to which of the national address sources will best support the 2011 requirement nor has it ruled out the possibility of using more than one address source. Pre-delivery address checks will be carried out in all 2007 test areas. Results of this address checking exercise will also be used to further evaluate sources. In the long term Census has not excluded the possibility of pre-delivery checks being carried out in all areas before the 2011 Census.

Martin Ede
2011 Census Business Systems Design
November 2005