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Topic IV: Improving data dissemination strategies

**IMPROVING DATA DISSEMINATION STRATEGIES IN THE
CENTRAL STATISTICAL OFFICE OF POLAND**

Contributed paper

Submitted by the Central Statistical Office of Poland¹

SUMMARY

1. The core principle of statistical data dissemination is that all users have the right to equal, equivalent, simultaneous access to statistical data. The basic principle of developing data dissemination in the Central Statistical Office (CSO) of Poland is to make the best use of all media available. Internet is the fastest and most convenient media for data dissemination. It permits the transmission of the right product to the right people in the right way, and at the right time.

2. Currently the CSO and all the Voivodship Statistical Offices have their own Internet pages, made available by dedicated servers. The CSO's Internet pages (<http://www.stat.gov.pl>) include general information about the office and the Polish statistical system and statistical data. The general part includes statistical laws and regulations, the organizational structure of the CSO, research schedule, list of publications, information about REGON and TERYT registers, and about the Central Statistical Library. The data part includes announcements by the head of CSO, current information - preliminary results, current statistical bulletin, maps with statistical data, basic economic and financial indicators according to the IMF Special Data Dissemination Standard, and a data bank which contains 1200 indicators for cities, voivodships, and Poland as a whole.

3. The contents of the Central Statistical Library are available through the Internet using an Automated Library Expandable Program (ALEPH). It provides Internet access to retrospective data base (6000 records) as well as supplementary current bibliographic descriptions, CSO publication data base, statistical yearbooks and journals. The system is of the client-server type, based on an ORACLE database. It is characterized by a user friendly, graphical interface and hypertext capability. The system consists of modules which handle its different tasks, such as cataloguing, on-line Public Access Catalog (OPAC) searching, thesaurus, etc.

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4. Integrating the Central Statistical Library to the Internet gave the internal users of the CSO the ability not only to browse through this library's database, but to browse through all library databases available on the Internet. The OPAC catalogue is available on any computer with an Internet access through the World Wide Web. More information about ALEPH and the database of the Central Statistical Office is available on <http://statlibr.stat.gov.pl>.

5. The Statistical Information System (SIS) project was started to further develop the methods and procedures of data dissemination. The project is based on an integrated data 'warehouse' system.

6. The SIS provides:

- A spatially and temporally organized database of information: data collection techniques, sources, storing places, and delivery points;
- A set of rules for information collection, processing, saving and storing, including specification of delivery procedures of this information to users;
- A set of data elements which is coordinated and of the desired structure;
- Ease of use, despite the inherent complexity of the large number of interacting system elements.

7. Among its other uses, the system will provide the information for databases of the Statistical Publishing Establishment; Catalogues of tables, maps, charts, frequently ordered items; and information for international organizations. The amount and scope of information presented on the Internet and through the Bulletin Board System (BBS) will be increased.

8. Making the data available in a 'warehouse' type common database enables the user to search and browse through data using any 'key words', perform the standard statistical analysis, create user-defined tables, aggregate data according to a given algorithm, use the archive data, create outputs to a printer, disk, CD-ROM, or another file, create maps, charts, and graphs.

9. The key aspects of the developed system are flexibility in grouping the data, many different information sources, and the possibility to present the results in various forms.

10. Creating such a diversified system with a wide range of inputs and outputs, is a task, which can only be realized in phases over a period of time. The first completed phase was limited to integrating only those applications, which deal with the national economy. As phases of SIS are completed, new technical solutions must also be prepared, e.g. purchase of equipment.

11. The experiences of other statistical institutions, which have already been through this process, will be very helpful to us, both from the technical and methodological viewpoint. Those experiences will allow us to shorten the time needed to integrate our statistical information system with countries of the European Union.