Online Code of Practice of Statistics review

Summary of findings and how we're going to improve the website

December 2019

Summary of findings

Why did we carry out this review?

- To understand how people use the online Code of Practice for Statistics (the 'online Code').

- To understand what they think about the online Code.

- To identify ways to improve the online Code.

You said

What's working well

- The online Code is accessed often – the homepage has been viewed over 42,000 times since launch in February 2018.

- Most respondents to our user survey are satisfied with the online Code's content, accessibility and navigation.

- Users who tested the online Code are impressed with the content and breadth of information.

Areas for improvement

- The website works well for government statisticians but not as well for other types of users.

- Some users who accessed links to guidance or case studies did not find them helpful.

- Some users think navigation and labelling can be improved.

We did

We've already made some changes to the online Code based on the feedback we received. We've:

- improved the labelling and naming of pages.

- tidied up the homepage.

- created a new page for case studies of organisations voluntarily applying the Code.

What next

We'll take on board as many suggestions for new content and features as possible. We'll consider all our contractor's recommendations from the user testing sessions.

We will also:

- scope the development of a microsite (a "website within a website"), which would provide more flexibility and functionality.

- run a workshop with users to define and develop the key user personas, to help different types of users easily access the information they need.

- consider new ways to alert users to new content, such as through blogs or OSR's monthly newsletter.

Questions?

If you have any questions about our findings or you want to provide feedback on the online Code, please send an email to:

regulation@statistics.gov.uk

Keep up to date with the Office for Statistics Regulation's work

For all our latest news and updates subscribe to our monthly newsletter.

Detailed findings

How we collected data and feedback

1) <u>Measures of web use</u> – Google Analytics data from 22 February 2018 to 30 November 2019 told us how many times pages were viewed and how long people spent on the website.

2) <u>User survey</u> – 24 respondents told us about their use of the online Code, their satisfaction with the website, and additional material they would like to see.

3) <u>User testing</u> – nine users told us what they think does and doesn't work well.

The online Code is accessed often

42,740   Unique pageviews of the online Code homepage since launch (22 February 2018)

8,520   Unique downloads of the Code

4,210   Unique pageviews of the voluntary application homepage

540   Unique downloads of the 'Guide to Voluntary Application'

17,160   Unique pageviews of the Office for Statistics Regulation (OSR) homepage

77,540   Unique pageviews of the UK Statistics Authority (UKSA) website homepage

*These figures include use of the online Code by OSR.

The most accessed principle is T3: Orderly release
The least accessed is V5: Efficiency and proportionality

Most accessed principles

Pillar	Principle	Unique pageviews
Trustworthiness	T3: Orderly release	**2,400**
Trustworthiness	T1: Honesty and integrity	**2,060**
Trustworthiness	T6: Data governance	**1,950**

Least accessed principles

Pillar	Principle	Unique pageviews
Value	V5: Efficiency and proportionality	**790**
Trustworthiness	T5: Professional capability	**930**
Value	V2: Accessibility	**970**

Use of the online Code

- Most respondents to the user survey are involved in the production of official statistics. We also received responses from those who produce data and analysis that aren't official statistics.

- Most respondents use the online Code to read the principles and practices of the Code, or to access guidance or case studies about complying with the Code.

- Most respondents access the online Code at least once a month.

- Some respondents use the online Code more frequently than a PDF or paper copy of the Code.

Overall, respondents are satisfied with the online Code's content, accessibility and navigation

Most respondents agreed or strongly agreed that:

- the online Code meets their needs

- the information is helpful

- the information is clear

- it's easy to find the information they are looking for

- the navigation menu is user friendly

- they would recommend the online Code to a colleague

Some respondents who accessed links to guidance or case studies did not find them helpful

- Some respondents thought it was difficult to find specific guidance or tools, such as the Code mapping tool.

- Respondents made suggestions for new content and features:

  - **Guidance:** on pre-release access, management information, and freedom of information requests

  - **Case studies:** on ad hoc statistical products and how they should be released

  - **Features**: notifications when content is added or updated

We'll take on board as many of these suggestions as possible

Comments from survey respondents

"I always carry a paper copy of the code and my own paper copy of just the Principles and Practices. I use these and then go to the online version if I need to delve deeper for info for myself or to provide advice to others."

"Although the drop-down boxes are handy, if you aren't quite sure what section the info would be in, a lot of time is spent clicking links."

"The site works pretty well for me as a government statistician. Something to think about is how well it works for non-statisticians such as our policy colleagues, politicians and the public. Developing this could be a good way to raise public awareness of the issues and the code."

Users who tested the online Code are impressed with the content and breadth of information…

"It amazes me how much is buried in here."

"The site is more than it first appears."

"It makes us more aware that we should be doing things actively."

…but think navigation and labelling can be improved.

"As long as you know what you are looking for, you can find it."

"You need to move about it before you can use it."

User testing feedback – user personas

You said

- Users like the idea of the user persona boxes on the homepage (which allow different types of users to access the information that's most relevant to them), but think they require further thought.

- Some users said that either they didn't fit in to any one persona or that they would fit in to all four personas so did not know which one to click on.

What next

- We'll run a workshop with users to define and develop the key user personas, and to understand where users expect to find information.

User testing feedback – navigation

You said

- Users struggled to understand if information sat under the pillars, resources or Frequently Asked Questions (now called 'About the Code').

- The pillar diagram on the 'Code of Practice' page is overlooked.

What next

- We'll look into restructuring the homepage to make information easier to find. We'll consider moving the pillar diagram on the 'Code of Practice' page to the homepage, and replacing the 'Code of Practice' page with 'About of Code'. Users who tested a prototype of the website with these changes found this structure more intuitive.

User testing feedback – labelling

You said

- The labels in the navigation could be clearer, for example, some users did not find the name 'Helpful Resources' helpful.

- There are inconsistencies in the way drop-down boxes are labelled, including those linked to case studies and resources.

We did

- We improved the labelling and naming of pages, including the 'Guidance and resources' pages (previously 'Helpful resources) and the 'About the Code' page (previously Frequently Asked Questions).

User testing feedback – accessibility and content

You said

- For new visitors, the main information on the homepage is hidden too far down the page. When users were asked what they would click on first, some said they would download a PDF copy of the Code.

We did

- We tidied up the homepage by reducing the amount of text.

- We moved the 'Download the Code' button to the bottom of the homepage to encourage greater use of the website.

- We created a new page for case studies of organisations voluntarily applying the Code.

We will scope the development of a microsite

- The online Code has grown and expanded since it was built. A left-hand navigation menu makes structuring new content difficult.

- Our contractor recommended developing a microsite (a "website within a website") for the online Code. This approach has several advantages:

  - Normal navigation with dropdown menus (as on the current UKSA website) would provide more flexibility as the online Code continues to grow.

  - It would help users navigate the website in a more intuitive way.

  - It would "future-proof" the online Code – meaning that the online Code would stay the same, even if changes are made to the UKSA website.

Methods and quality information

Measures of web use

- Unique pageviews or downloads are measures of the number of sessions during which a page was viewed, or file was downloaded. Because users are likely to view the same page multiple times during a session, the measures provides a more accurate reflection of the number of visitors than pageviews of downloads. While they are not measures of the number of unique users, they are a reasonably good proxy.

- Unique pageviews of the OSR homepage and UKSA website homepage are included for comparison and cover the same time period (22 February 2018 to 30 November 2019).

User survey

- The survey ran between February and April 2019.

- It included questions about use of the online Code, general satisfaction with the website, and satisfaction with individual pages.

- We received 24 responses from a range of users, including official statistics producers and those voluntarily applying the Code pillars. Most respondents are satisfied with the online Code's content, accessibility and navigation. Respondents also made suggestions for improvements to resources, guidance, and navigation.

User testing

- Nine users tested the online Code on a desktop computer.

- Seven users were official statistics producers and two users were voluntary adopters of the Code. Some users had a working knowledge of the online Code whereas others only had a basic knowledge.

- Each user performed a series of tasks, including finding information about the Code and who it is for, the pillars of the Code, and resources and guidance.

- Some users were shown a prototype of a different version of the online Code with ideas for development.

- The testing sessions were run by our contractor.