

## **OAC User Group: News: March 2007**

The Group is now up and running and has a membership mailing list of some 120, with another 40 potential new members coming to the repeat of November's seminar. The Group has recently become affiliated to the Statistics Users Forum (SUF), and has set up its own website. There are contacts to help with use of OAC, and activity in 2007 will focus on applications.

### **Affiliation to the Statistics Users Forum**

An important step for the User Group was affiliation to the Royal Statistical Society (RSS) SUF earlier this month. The Group will now have representation on SUF and, acting with other user groups, scope to influence official statistics.

The formal decision was made at the meeting of the RSS Council on 7 March which ratified a recommendation by the SUF Executive following an application on behalf of the Group. This stressed that, whilst the Group is focused around the well established methods and output of area classification, OAC is distinctive as it is in the public domain - a basis for 'open geodemographics' .

There is more information about the aims and activities of SUF section of the RSS website at <http://www.rss.org.uk/main.asp?page=1607>

### **OAC website**

A dedicated website for OAC and the User Group has been initiated by Dan Vickers. Hosted at the University of Sheffield, it has a temporary page at the moment which includes updated background on OAC, first made available for the inaugural seminar in November <http://areaclassification.group.shef.ac.uk/>

Planned content includes: about OAC and access to OAC datasets; FAQs, guidance, contacts, and getting help with OAC; case studies of applications; a self help discussion forum; news, links, and forthcoming events; and information about the User Group. Launch of the next version is scheduled for [early April] and everyone on the Group mailing list will be sent a link.

Dan welcomes ideas about the website and offers of content (contact details below).

The activities of the Group will also feature on the SUF pages of the RSS website.

### **OAC seminar repeat**

The seminar on 'Exploring the use and value of OAC', quite heavily over subscribed when first held in November, is being repeated on the afternoon of 2 April at the RSS in London and again bookings are near capacity.

Full information is on the Group website and links to the report of the earlier event, the programme and slide presentations are on the RSS website at <http://www.rss.org.uk/main.asp?group=Statistics%20User%20Forum%20Events&page=1333&event=303&month=&year=&date=>

## **Autumn event**

With the successful establishment of the User Group, our focus for the rest of 2007 will be on applications for OAC, whilst also being involved in relevant parts of the plans for the 2011 Census. These are likely to be themes of an event to bring Group members together in the autumn.

Plans will be confirmed in early May and will be well publicised, but meanwhile it would be very helpful to have ideas on making the event as valuable as possible to the wider membership of the Group. Please contact Martin Robson (details below).

## **OAC mapped**

The University College London Centre for Advanced Spatial Analysis (CASA) has prepared a trial 'mash up' of OAC on Google maps of Great Britain viewable at <http://www.casa.ucl.ac.uk/googlemaps/OAC-super-EngScotWales.html>

And it's well worth a look. The seven OAC super groups are mapped, with zoom to street level and an option to vary colour intensity. Unfortunately the very variable resolution of satellite/air photo imagery on Google at the moment in Great Britain hampers best use of this 'layer', but a page with test mapping of London

<http://www.casa.ucl.ac.uk/googlemaps/OAC-super-L.html>

where there is high resolution imagery throughout the area shows how telling the overlay of OAC on detailed images of urban areas can be.

## **Membership profile and JISCmail**

The User Group has attracted interest from across the public and private sectors indicating the opportunity for productive contacts through an 'open' resource. Currently there are members from approximately 25 commercial organisations, 25 academic organisations, 15 Local Authorities, 75 other Public Sector organisations and 25 unknown organisations.

We aim to contact you with regular information on User Group activities so if you are interested in being on the OAC User Group mailing list please click on this link to join the OAC-USERS list on JISCmail:

<http://www.jiscmail.ac.uk/cgi-bin/webadmin?SUBED1=oac-users&A=1>

Joining the JISCmail mailing list has the advantage that you are control and you can leave at any time at the click of a button.

## **Report or suggest activity**

A prime purpose of the User Group is to provide a network of contact between the wider membership for information exchange and support. Members of the steering group will provide an initial lead, but contributions about all OAC related activity is welcome, particularly to feature on the Group website, together with suggestion of what would be most useful to those using of planning to use OAC.

Please contact Martin Robson (details below).

## The steering group, contact points and help with OAC

The first phase of User Group activity is being run by a steering group of volunteers, with representation and support from ONS, who put themselves forward at the inaugural seminar in November. They represent the current cross-section Group membership and are

Name	Organisation	Email
Martin Callingham	Birkbeck College	martincallingham@yahoo.com
Chris Denham	ex-ONS	chrisdenham@waitrose.com
Tony Duckenfield	Steer Davies Gleave	Tony.Duckenfield@sdgworld.net
Keith Dugmore	Demographic Decisions	dugmore@demographic.co.uk
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Judith Gretton-Dann	Cambridge University	judith.gretton-dann@rdd-phru.cam.ac.uk
Lorraine Johnson	Whitbread	lorraine.johnson@whitbread.com
Lorraine Kitching	MVA	lkitching@mvaconsultancy.com
Alan Lewis	GLA	alan.lewis@london.gov.uk
Martin Robson	LBHF	martin.robson@lbhf.gov.uk
Tom Smith	OCSI	tom.smith@ocsi.co.uk
Dan Vickers	University of Sheffield	d.vickers@sheffield.ac.uk
Carolyn Watson	ONS	areaclassifications@ONS.gsi.gov.uk

All steering group members would welcome contact about the use of OAC and potential applications in their sectors.

The steering group wants the way the Group is run and its activities to reflect the views and needs of the wider membership, and these will be reviewed regularly. Notes of the steering group meetings will also be put on the Group website.

**Contacts** in the steering group for specific aspects of OAC are

Classification methodology and category profiles - Dan Vickers

Case studies of applications - Tom Smith

Research into new applications - Martin Callingham

Area classifications by ONS - Carolyn Watson

Group website - Dan Vickers

Contacts with members and Group administration - Martin Robson

Statistics Users Forum - Keith Dugmore

Group events and general directions - Chris Denham

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