

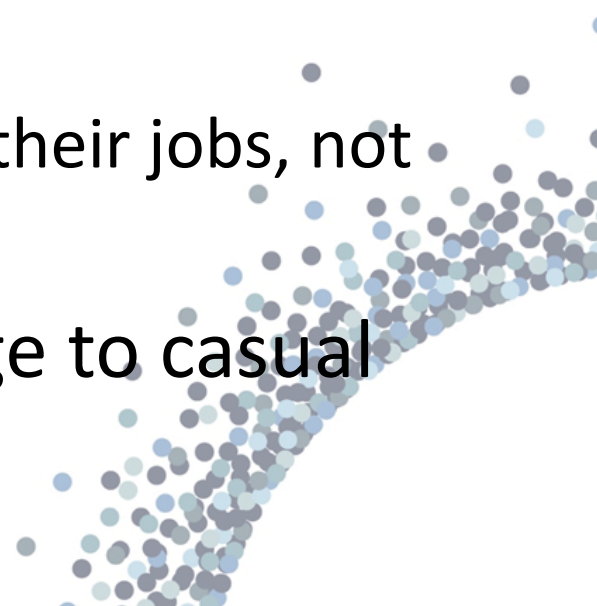


Migration Observatory: Experience of Using Migration Data

Dr Scott Blinder

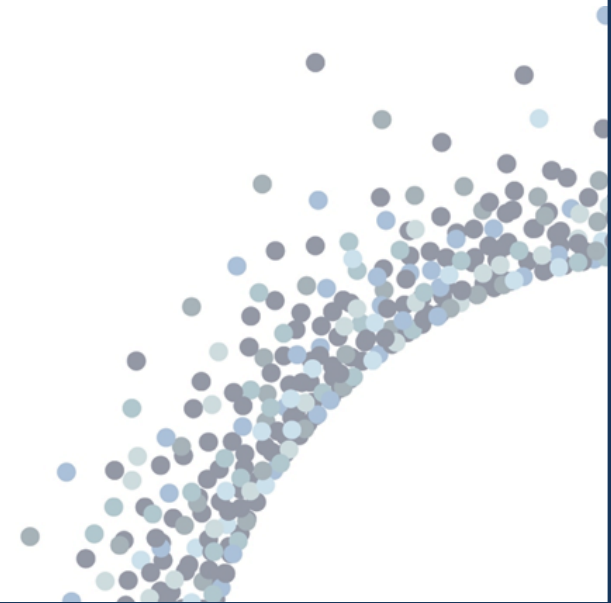
Conference of the Migration
Statistics User Forum
Home Office
17 Sept 2013

Regular and casual users

- “Regular users” = specialists (narrow definition)
 - “Casual Users” = most people
 - Includes journalists, NGOs, local governments, some academics
 - Many need to use these data for their jobs, not just for idle curiosity
 - MigObs – regular, but also bridge to casual
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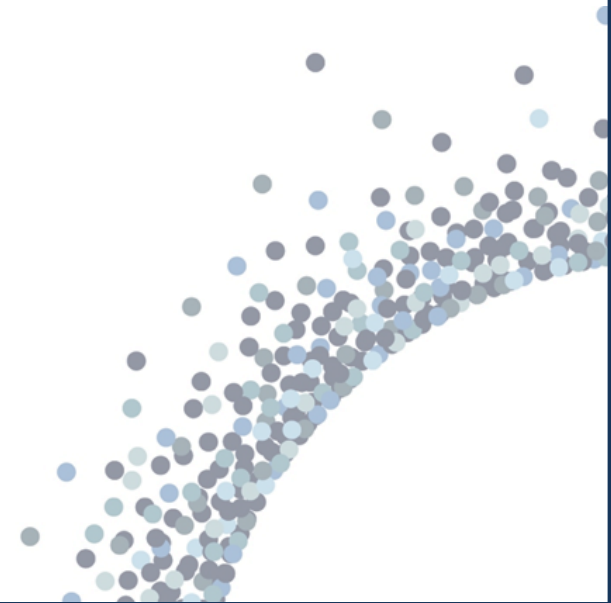
Needs of different users

- Regular users – expert, long-term needs, focused
 - Often consensus on new data needed
 - The more the better
 - Need for explanation, metadata



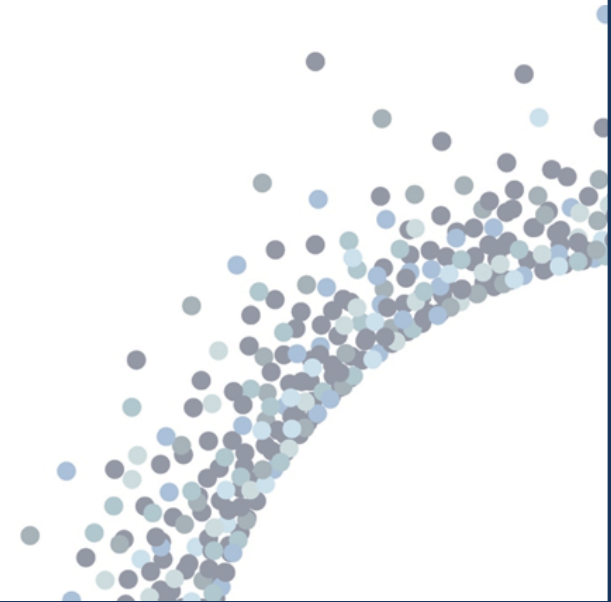
Needs of different users

- Casual - specific, reactive, often time sensitive
 - Want specific info, and want it now (media)
 - Need guidance to find it
 - May want data to fit narrative, rather than build narrative around data



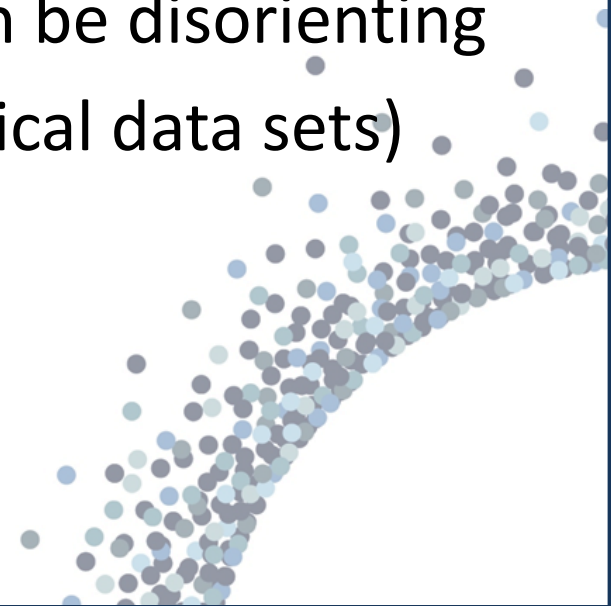
Needs of different users

- Non-users – most of the general public – few users, needs unpredictable, presumably most learn about data through media if at all



Our experience as a regular user

- For regular users:
 - HO & ONS data increasingly well organised and documented
 - Input into data collection (e.g. via this forum)
 - Even so, even ‘improvements’ can be disorienting
 - (and, still would like longer historical data sets)

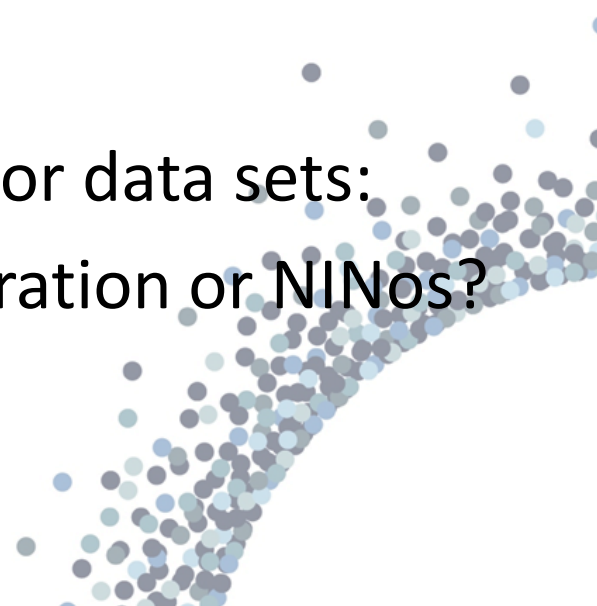


The casual user

- Difficult to find information directly from ONS or Home Office
- Confused about multiple sources, data sets
- Little understanding of technical issues, e.g. margin of error
- Even if they find it, they are not confident they've found it!
 - Our internal example

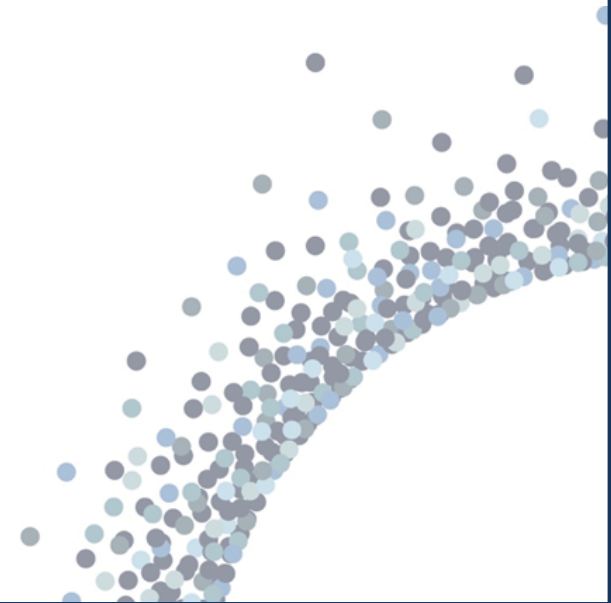


Inquiries to MigObs

- Can be very vague or very specific
 - Specific requests hard to anticipate
 - May fix on a particular data point from media or ONS/HO release
 - Depend on day's story
 - Not consistent re area of interest or data sets:
 - Will it be EU-15 or EU-8? Net migration or NINOs?
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Possible lessons

- These issues are not going to be resolved by a better website...
- ...nor through consultation process – this attracts the expert users, not the casual



Help for the casual user?

- ‘Casual users’ need either immediate guidance or longer-term education (or both)
 - Journalists = generalists, so particularly difficult – inevitable need for intermediaries?
 - Relationships among data sets a key frontier for research and public communication
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