

# **Survey and Statistical Communication**

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**With thanks to:**

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**UK Office for National Statistics**

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Any views expressed in this presentation are those of the author and not necessarily those of the UK Office for National Statistics

# Overview

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- Defining communication, surveys and statistics
- The communication process
- The context that we operate in
- The respondent, user and survey organisation perspectives
- Communication initiatives
- Concluding comments and possible next steps

# What is communication?

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Communication is the:

- imparting or exchange of information by speaking, writing, or using some other medium
- means of sending or receiving information

Oxford Dictionary

Imparting (one-way communication)

Exchange (two-way communication)

# Surveys and Statistics

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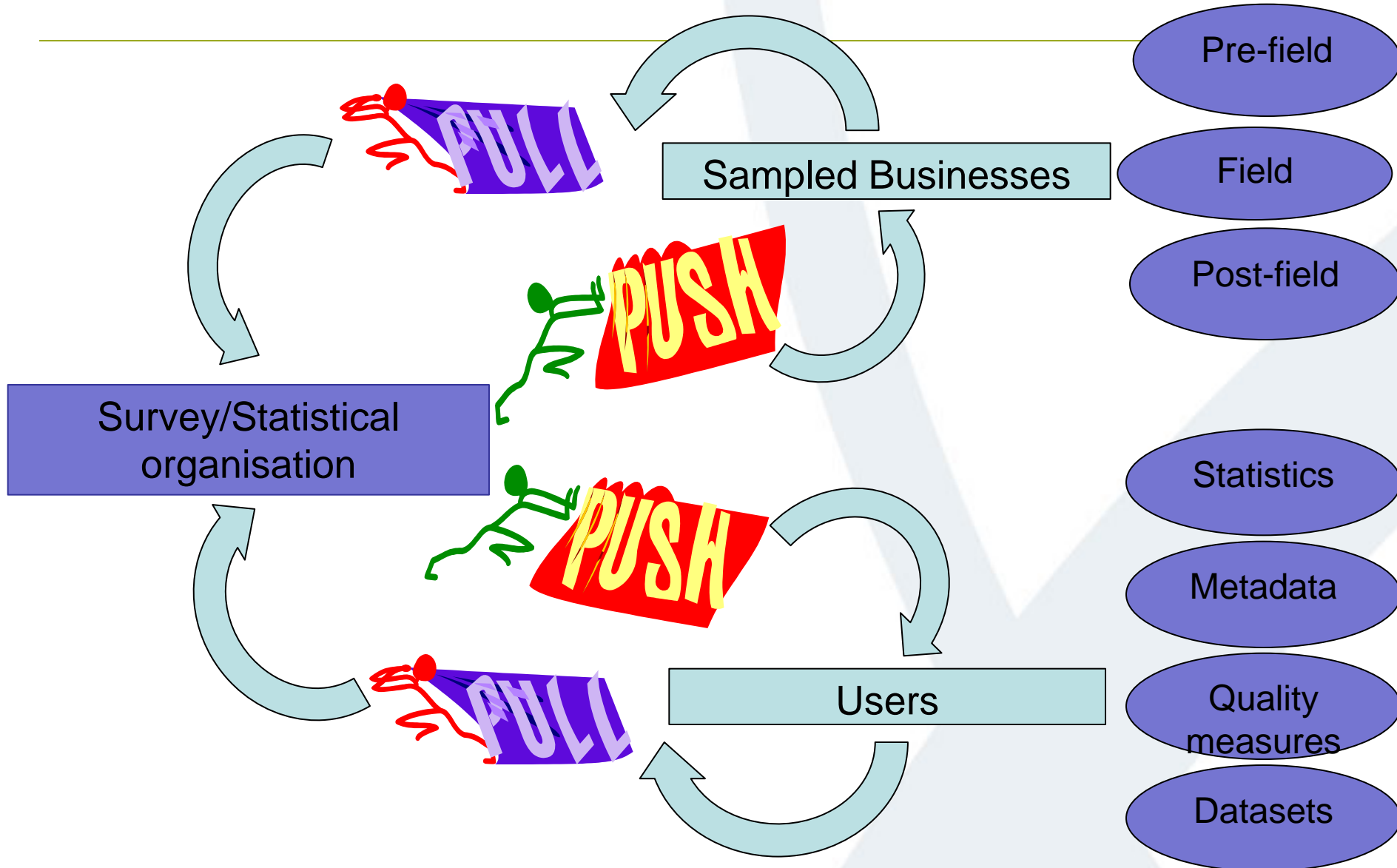
- “A survey can be seen as a research strategy in which quantitative information is systematically collected from a relatively large sample taken from a population”

De Leeuw, E.D., Hox, J.J., and Dillman, D. (2008). “The cornerstones of survey research,” in: De Leeuw, E.D., Hox, J.J., and Dillman, D. (eds.), *International Handbook of Survey Methodology*, pp. 1-17, New York: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, p. 2.

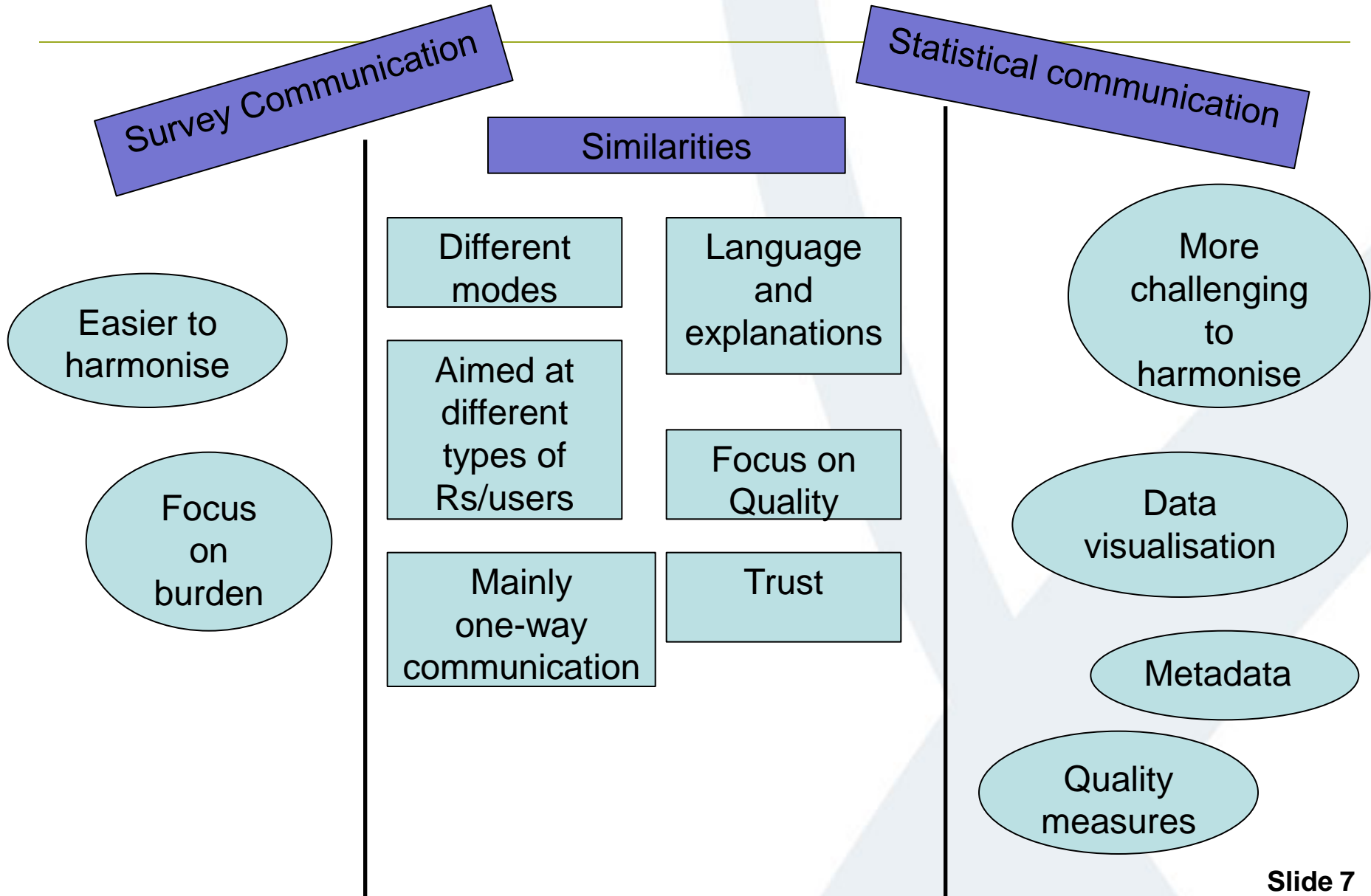
- The survey outputs are *statistics*; “quantitative descriptors”

Groves, R.M., Fowler, F.J., Couper, M.P., Lepkowski, J.M., Singer, E., and Tourangeau, R. (2004). *Survey Methodology*, New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, Inc. p. 2.

# The Business Survey and Statistical Communication Process



# Similarities and Differences



# Businesses as providers and users of business data

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Bavdaz et al (2011) found that:

- Businesses do use NSI statistics
- At Statistics Netherlands 50% of requests come from businesses
- Most widely used are prices, inflation and purchasing power
- Micro and small businesses generally use “processed and prepared information e.g. media summaries”

Bavdaz, M., Giesen, D., and Biffignandi, S. (2011) Businesses as Users of NSI Statistics: Opportunities for Creating Greater Value Added, BLUE-ETS project.



# Context

## Environment

- The survey and/or statistical organisation is physically detached

## Survey and/or statistical organisation

- Produces goods and services

## Respondents need:

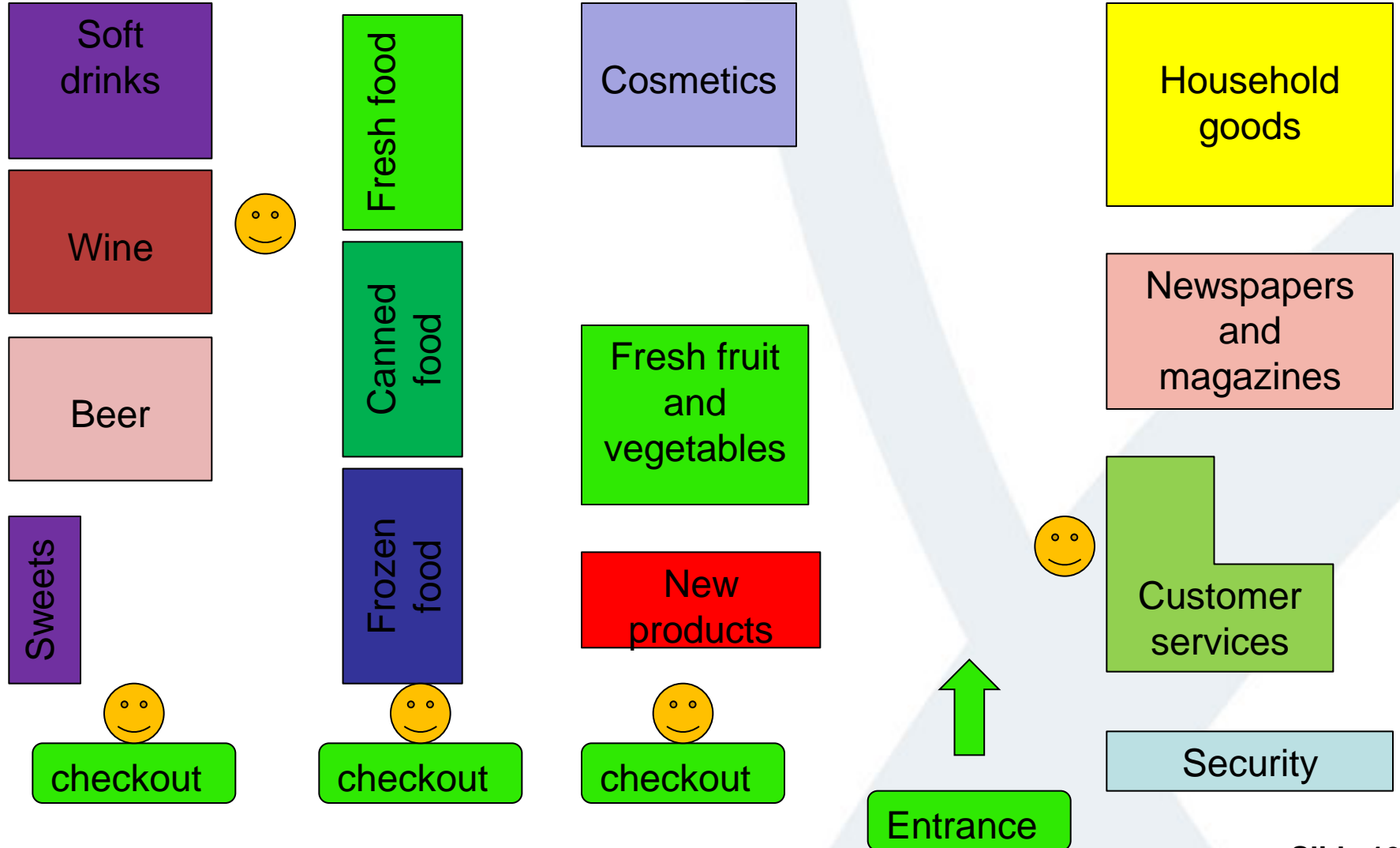
- to know what and how they are contributing
- to have trust in and knowledge of the survey and/or statistical organisation

## Users need:

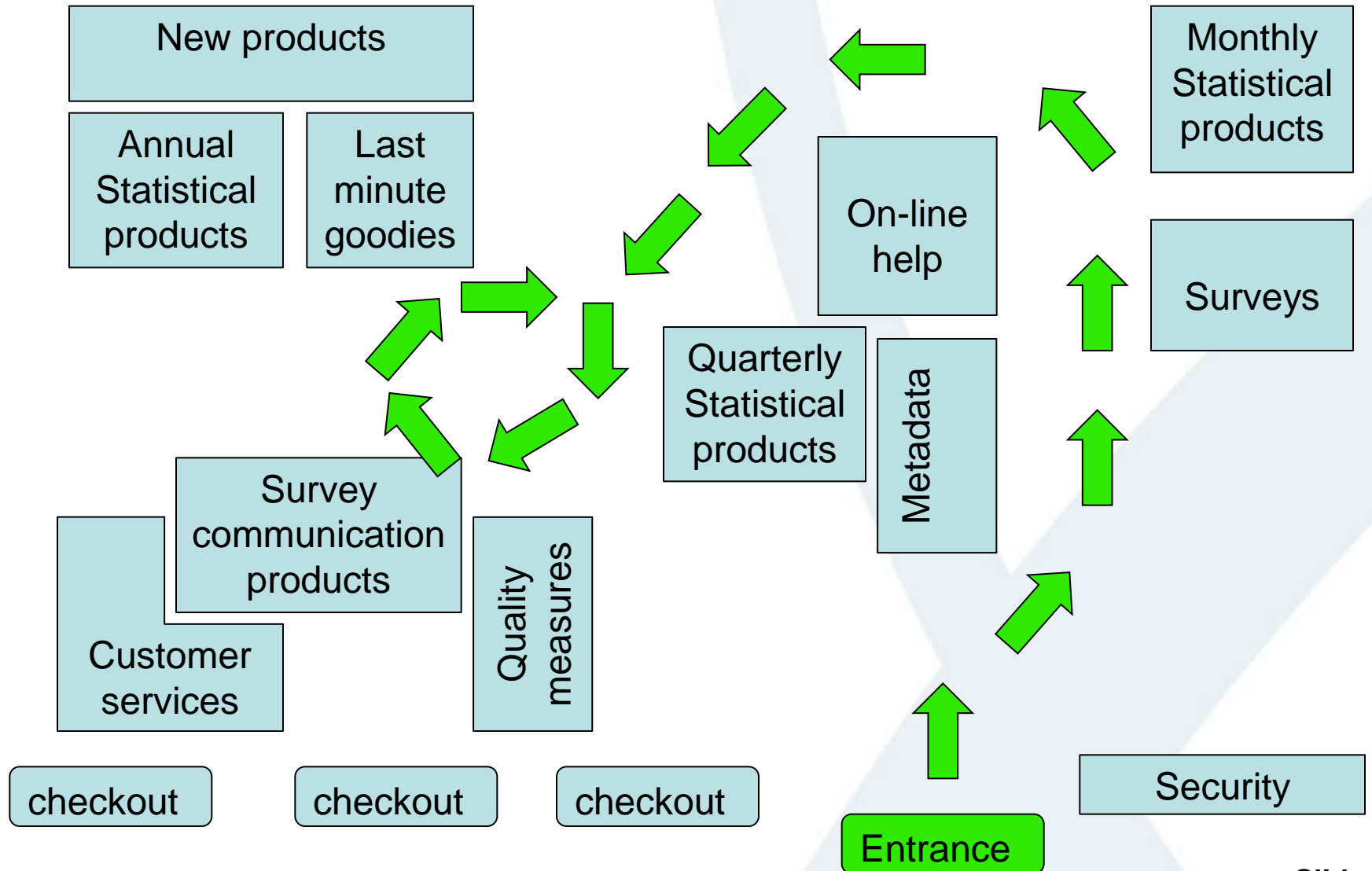
- to know what goods and services to use
- access to goods and services
- to understand how to use them
- trust in the survey and/or statistical organisation

# Coming to the market place: the 'modern' supermarket

Lights, smells, special offers, loyalty cards



# Coming to the market place: The virtual survey and statistical supermarket



# The respondent perspective

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## Types of business survey respondents

Types	Examples
Expert	Accountant
Semi-expert	MIS staff
Non-expert	Window cleaner

- Quality
- Actual response burden
- Perceived response burden

# What Causes Perceived Response Burden?

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## Perceptions of survey design

- Questions
- Questionnaire
- Mode
- Communication
- Response process

## Who is conducting the survey

- Perceptions of the survey organisation - Is it trustworthy?

## Motivation

- Business use of statistics
- Society use of statistics

## Level of response competence

## Actual burden

Time to collect information

Time to complete the questionnaire

# Cognitive interviewing research findings (December 2012) (1)

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## Respondents wanted more information:

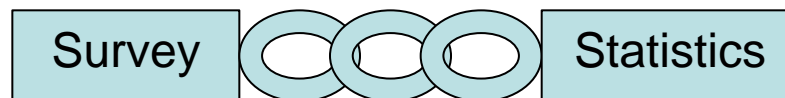
- About the survey organisation
- On why the survey is being conducted
- On the use of the statistical outputs
- On confidentiality
- To be concise

# Cognitive interviewing research findings (2)

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## Respondents also wanted:

- Links to the page where the relevant outputs were published
- To know how important their data are
- Clarity on when and how to respond



# So what have we been doing to improve business survey communication?

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Launched initiatives to:

- Improve the respondent experience
- Reduce actual and perceived burden
- Reduce response chasing
- Maintain and hopefully improve data quality
- Build trust in the survey organisation



# An example of improvements...

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Questionnaire front page developments



### Monthly Business Survey

Please do not discard this important document – your response is legally

Clear message that compliance is required

Contact name  
Address 1  
Address 2  
Address 3  
City  
Postcode

Please write any changes to your name and address in the box below, using black ink:

More visible deadline date

To be completed for: THE BUSINESS NAMED ABOVE

Please complete and return by 7 December 2012

Dear Sir or Madam,

Please find the November 2012 questionnaire for the Monthly Business Survey (MBS) attached. If actual figures are not available, please provide informed estimates. Once complete the questionnaire can be returned by post or fax using the details in the box below.

The results from the survey contribute to the calculation of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the UK. GDP is the primary measure of the overall state of a country's economy; it is extensively reported in the media and reflects the UK's economic performance. The MBS figures are published monthly and can be found on the A-Z of Business Surveys pages on our website: [www.ons.gov.uk/surveys](http://www.ons.gov.uk/surveys).

We guarantee that while your employment is less than 10, you will be included in just this one ONS business survey and receive no more than 15 monthly questionnaires. You must complete and return all questionnaires, after which you will be excluded from our business surveys for at least 3 years. The Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings is not covered by this guarantee.

You are required by law to complete this questionnaire. If you do not complete and return this questionnaire by 7 December 2012, penalties may be incurred (under section 4 of the Statistics of Trade Act 1947). Information you provide is kept strictly confidential. It is illegal for us to reveal your data or identify your business to unauthorised persons.

Thank you for your co-operation,  
Office for National Statistics

#### Questionnaire return details

To return via fax:

To return via post:

01633 65270  
Please use the prepaid envelope provided

#### Contact numbers

~~For more information on the MBS, please contact the Respondent Relations Team~~ (To request a questionnaire in Welsh)

~~For more information on the MBS, please contact the Respondent Relations Team~~ If you would like to use our Minicom service for the Deaf

To complete the questionnaire in Euros

For any other queries, please contact the Respondent Relations Team

or go to [www.ons.gov.uk/surveys](http://www.ons.gov.uk/surveys)

0300 1234 921

01633 811111

0300 1234 921

0300 1234 921

Contact details moved to one place so less clutter & easier to find

More information on confidentiality – a key concern for respondents

Guidance will be provided on how to write these paragraphs, but we are also providing example paragraphs for surveys, and definitions of measures such as GDP, RSI etc

Survey purpose paragraph added (if not already present). The paragraph should:

- Provide respondents with information on the concrete use of the statistical output;

- Provide respondents with a link to the page where the relevant outputs are published;

- Emphasise how important the respondent's data are (simply adding the words 'imperative' or 'are key in contributing to....' can alter the style and tone of the existing paragraph);

- Emphasise that it is *their data* that is used to produce key outputs (minor change to language e.g. many of the survey purpose paragraphs start with the words 'The information supplied is used to estimate....' *when changing it to 'the information you supplied is used to estimate...' would be much better*).

**BIG PROGRESS!** Addition of new user friendly URL to take respondents to respondent FAQ web pages – hopefully reducing unnecessary calls to RR. Have never been able to include this URL before!

# Other respondent communication initiatives

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Meetings with:

- Key respondents
- Trade associations

# The user perspective

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## Types of users

Types	Examples
High volume	City analysts
Medium volume	Researchers
Low volume	Students
No volume	My mother

- Quality
- Speed of access and burden
- Utility for decisions

# PASC written evidence

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Users wanted, for example:

- More resources allocated to statistical communication and presentation
- Comparability across outputs
- Improved access to data (search and re-use)
- Improved quality measures, metadata and guidance
- More and better engagement (market research and customer insight)
- “Turning customers into fans”

# Focus group findings (October 2012)

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Users want:

- Easy and quick access to statistics
- Improved statistical commentary and explanation
- Metadata
- Information on changes and revisions
- There was a general perception of trust in ONS statistics
- Improved 'marketing' was raised several times

# The survey organisation perspective

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- Reduce costs
- Reduce burden on respondents and users
- Produce 'quality' surveys and statistics
- Increase the quality and utility of products
- Reach a wider user basis

# The links between business survey and statistical communication

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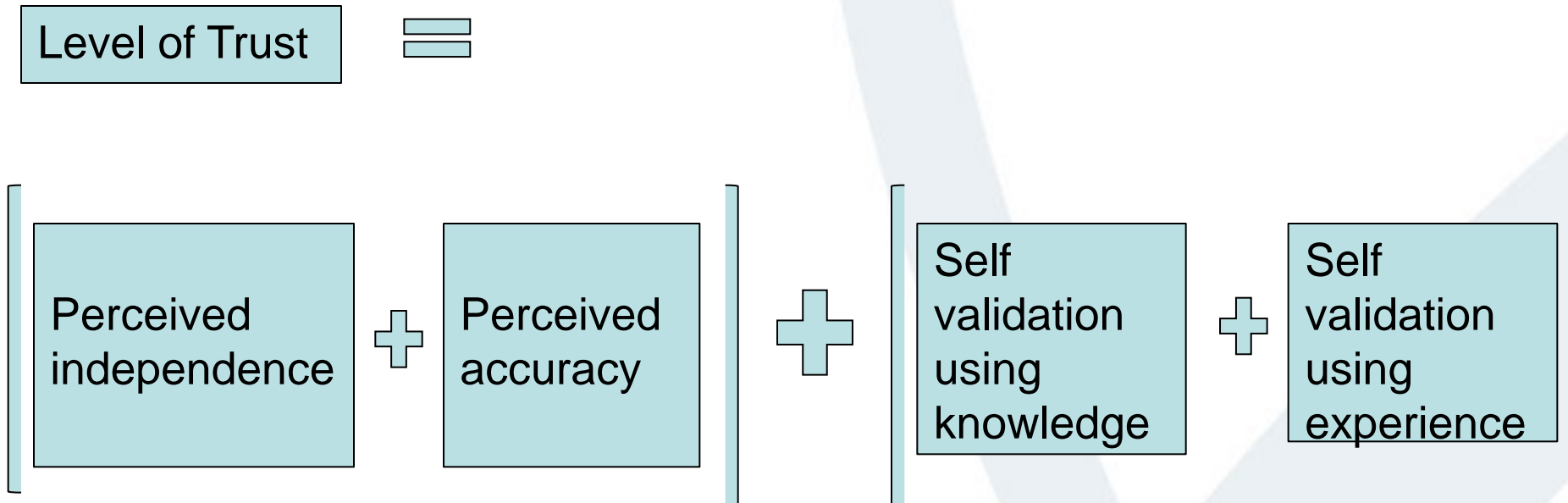
- Respondents (Rs) and Users both want access to statistical products (Rs to know what their data are used for, users to use the data)
- Businesses can be both providers and users of business data
- Rs and Users need to have knowledge of and trust in the survey organisation



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So how is trust determined?

# Determinants of Trust




Wilmot, A., Jones, J., Dewar, A., Betts, P., Harper, R., and Simmons, E. (2005) Public Confidence in Official Statistics: A qualitative study on behalf of the Office for National Statistics and the Statistics Commission, Office for National Statistics.

# Statistical Communication Initiatives

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<b>Access</b>	Landing Pages Interactive user guide html format
<b>Products</b>	Podcasts Infographics Articles
<b>Commentary &amp; presentation</b>	Improving statistical bulletins
<b>User groups</b>	Short term statistics Sixth form students

# Access: New Landing Pages



Office for National Statistics

JOBS

Accessibility **A A A**

Search

Home Browse by theme Publications Data Release calendar Guidance and methodology Media centre About ONS

You are here: Home > Browse By Theme > Economy Print friendly

**Theme: Economy**

Overview Summaries and Publications Data tables

**Gross Domestic Product** **-0.3%** Q4 2012

**Consumer Prices Index** **2.7%** January 2013

**More Figures**  
Unemployment rate 7.7%  
Public Sector Net Borrowing excluding financial interventions £15.4 billion

**How ONS statistics explain the UK Economy**  
The circular flow of income shows how financial payments flow between firms and households within the economy.

**Summary of Retail Sales, January 2013**  
Summary of key points from the Retail Sales release for January 2013

**A tale of many price indices**  
What inflation is and why we measure it

**Index of Production, December 2012**  
Summary document containing headline data from the Index of Production statistical bulletin December 2012

**Non-EU exports overtake EU exports**  
UK trade gap widens as exports to EU countries slow down

**Consumer Price Indices Summary, January 2013** **Summary of Producer Price Index, January 2013**

**Related links**  
Economy methodology  
Economy Quality and Methodology Information reports

**Enter your spending patterns to display your personal inflation**  
Requires an SVG-enabled web browser, such as Firefox or Chrome

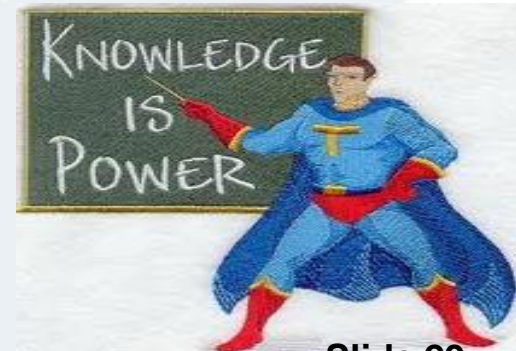
**Sign up for email alerts**  
Get a notification when we release new data

- + Agriculture and Environment
- + Business and Energy
- + Children, Education and Skills
- + Crime and Justice
- **Economy**
  - + Government Receipts and Expenditure
  - + National Accounts
  - + Personal Finances
  - + Prices, Output and Productivity
- + Government
- + Health and Social Care
- + Labour Market
- + People and Places
- + Population
- + Travel and Transport

# Access: Interactive Business Statistics User Guide

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- In response to a requirement from UK Statistics Authority assessment of the Annual Business Survey, ONS developed the **Business Statistics User Guide**.
- The key aim was that using the Guide, a **non-expert** user would be able to make the correct decision about **which data to use**.



# Access: Interactive User Guide in action

Search by source, release, product, or filter on the [ONS website](#)

## Results table (hide this section)

Note: you can refine this list by ticking boxes of interest to you in the section above

[website](#)

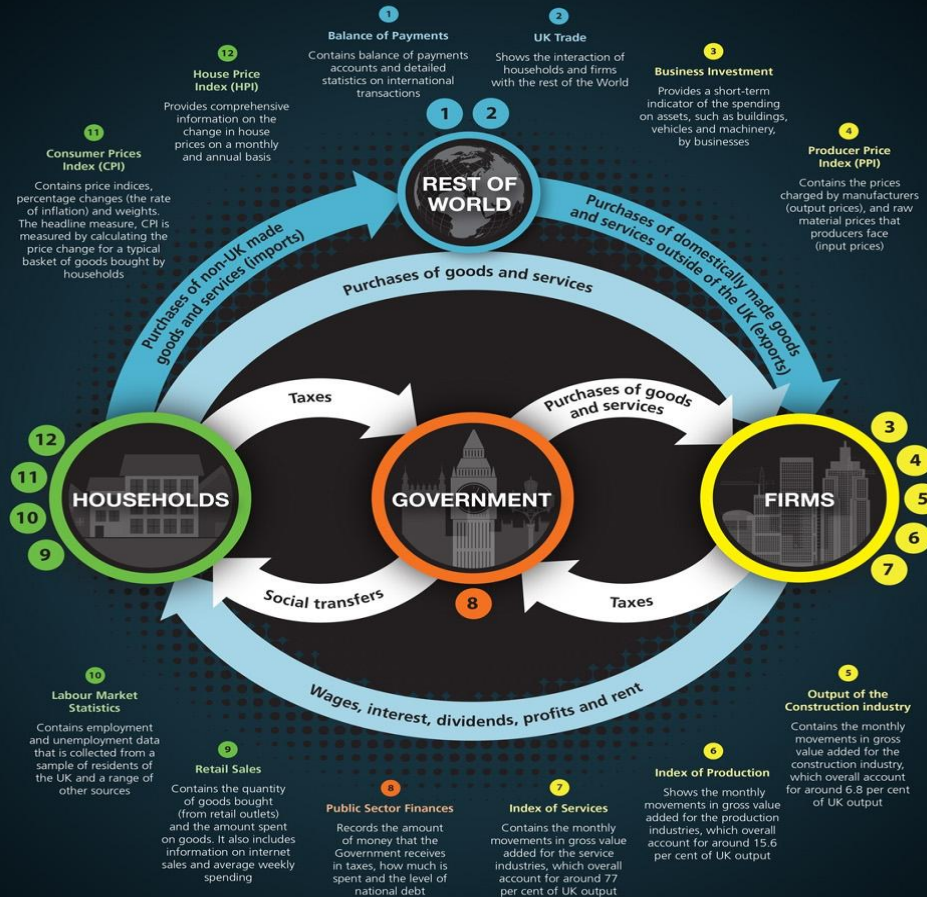
indicator	level of industry detail and other breakdowns	publishing frequency	notes on use	use this for	links to releases & further information
total stocks and work in progress - increase during year	industry sector, section, division, group and class (1 - 4 digit SIC 2007); sub-classes (5 digit SIC 2007) and further geographical breakdowns available on request from <a href="mailto:abs@ons.gsi.gov.uk">abs@ons.gsi.gov.uk</a>	annual	largest survey of UK business, covering around two-thirds of the UK economy (by GVA); agriculture - crop and animal production, financial activities and public administration and defence are excluded	EU comparisons; understanding the levels of contributions to the UK economy from different sectors at a point in time; detailed breakdowns by industry and geography	<a href="#">Annual Business Survey (ABS)</a>
total stocks and work in progress - value at beginning of year	industry sector, section, division, group and class (1 - 4 digit SIC 2007); sub-classes (5 digit SIC 2007) and further geographical breakdowns available on request from <a href="mailto:abs@ons.gsi.gov.uk">abs@ons.gsi.gov.uk</a>	annual	largest survey of UK business, covering around two-thirds of the UK economy (by GVA); agriculture - crop and animal production, financial activities and public administration and defence are excluded	EU comparisons; understanding the levels of contributions to the UK economy from different sectors at a point in time; detailed breakdowns by industry and geography	<a href="#">Annual Business Survey (ABS)</a>
total stocks and work in progress - value at end of year	industry sector, section, division, group and class (1 - 4 digit SIC 2007); sub-classes (5 digit SIC 2007) and further geographical breakdowns available on request from <a href="mailto:abs@ons.gsi.gov.uk">abs@ons.gsi.gov.uk</a>	annual	largest survey of UK business, covering around two-thirds of the UK economy (by GVA); agriculture - crop and animal production, financial activities and public administration and defence are excluded	EU comparisons; understanding the levels of contributions to the UK economy from different sectors at a point in time; detailed breakdowns by industry and geography	<a href="#">Annual Business Survey (ABS)</a>
balances - by product, industry sector, country	continent; countries; industry sector; products	annual	international transactions by UK businesses; travel and transport, banking and other financial institutions, higher education, and most activities in the legal professions are excluded	analysis of UK trade and competitiveness, international comparisons	<a href="#">International Trade in Services (ITIS)</a>
exports - by product, industry sector, country	continents; countries; industry sector; products	annual	exports by UK businesses; travel and transport, banking and other financial institutions, higher education, and most activities in the legal professions are excluded	analysis of UK trade and competitiveness, international comparisons	<a href="#">International Trade in Services (ITIS)</a>
imports - by product, industry sector, country	continents; countries; industry sector; products	annual	imports by UK businesses; travel and transport, banking and other financial institutions, higher education, and most activities in the legal professions are excluded	analysis of UK trade and competitiveness, international comparisons	<a href="#">International Trade in Services (ITIS)</a>
exports	industry sector, section, division, group and class (1 - 4 digit SIC 2007, depending on size of industry)	monthly	the data are current price, and not seasonally adjusted	time series giving an early indication of what is happening in the economy; analysis of trends, including in growth and of activity by sector; forecasting	<a href="#">Turnover and Orders in Production and Services Industries (TOPSI)</a>



# Products: Infographics

## How ONS statistics explain the UK economy

The circular flow of income shows how financial payments flow between firms and households within the economy. It also shows the interaction between different sectors of the economy and the rest of the world. Gross domestic product (GDP) measures the total output of the UK economy, and the quarterly national accounts build this into a complete picture of all the transactions shown in the graphic.



# Commentary and Presentation

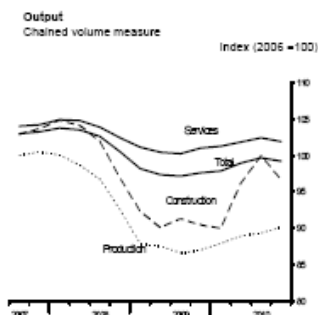
### Gross domestic product preliminary estimate 4th Quarter 2010



Date: 25 January 2011  
Coverage: United Kingdom Theme: The Economy

The chained volume measure of gross domestic product (GDP) decreased 0.5 per cent in the fourth quarter of 2010, following growth of 0.7 per cent in the previous quarter. Supplementary analysis of the impact of the bad weather in December is provided on page 7.

Output in the production industries increased 0.9 per cent.  
Output in the construction sector decreased 3.3 per cent.  
Output in the service industries decreased 0.5 per cent.  
GDP increased 1.7 per cent in 2010 Q4 compared with 2009 Q4.



GDP at market prices

Percentage change: latest quarter on previous quarter

		Chained volume Indices 2006=100	GDP	Total Production Industries	Construction	Total Services
Seasonally adjusted						
2009	Q1	98.2	-2.2	-5.1	-4.8	-1.3
	Q2	97.4	-0.8	-0.3	-2.4	-0.7
	Q3	97.2	-0.3	-1.1	1.4	-0.2
	Q4	97.6	0.5	0.5	-0.9	0.7
2010	Q1	97.9	0.3	1.1	-0.6	0.3
	Q2	99.0	1.1	1.1	7.0	0.6
	Q3	99.7	0.7	0.5	3.9	0.5
	Q4	98.2	-0.5	0.9	-3.3	-0.5

### Gross Domestic Product Preliminary Estimate, Q4 2012



Coverage: UK  
Date: 25 January 2013  
Geographical Area: UK and GB  
Theme: Economy

#### Key points

- GDP was estimated to have decreased by 0.3% in Q4 2012 compared with Q3 2012.
- Output of the production industries was estimated to have decreased by 1.8% in Q4 2012 compared with Q3 2012, following an increase of 0.7% between Q2 2012 and Q3 2012.
- Construction sector output was estimated to have increased by 0.3% in Q4 2012 compared with Q3 2012, following a decrease of 2.5% between Q2 2012 and Q3 2012.
- Output of the service industries was estimated to have been flat in Q4 2012 compared with Q3 2012, following an increase of 1.2% between Q2 2012 and Q3 2012.
- GDP was estimated to have been flat in Q4 2012, when compared with Q4 2011.
- GDP is estimated to have been flat between 2011 and 2012. Users are, however, reminded that this figure is subject to revision in the second estimate of GDP when all quarters of 2012 are open for revision.

#### Key figures

Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is one of the main indicators of economic growth. Further information on GDP can be found at paragraph 2 in the background notes. Unless otherwise stated, all data in this bulletin are seasonally adjusted and have had the effect of price changes removed (i.e. the data are deflated). Further information on some of the key concepts (including seasonal adjustment and deflation) underlying the estimates can be found at paragraph 4 in the background notes.



# Next Steps

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UK Statistics Authority statement of strategy:

Strategic Priority 2: Impact

Ensure that official statistics are well communicated and make the right impact

# Next Steps: Survey and Statistical Marketing?

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- Target markets to identify respondent and users' needs
- Produce products to meet their needs
- Promote products
- Distribution of products
- Support services

# So where do we go from here?

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I would like to suggest that we:

- Continue to research respondent and users' needs
- And continue to actively look at how we can improve the experience and meet the needs of business survey respondents and the wider statistical user base

# If you would like to get involved in developments

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Please contact me at:

[jacqui.jones@ons.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:jacqui.jones@ons.gsi.gov.uk)

# DESIGNING AND CONDUCTING BUSINESS SURVEYS

GER SNIJKERS  
GUSTAV HARALDSEN  
JACOUI JONES  
DIANE K. WILLIMACK



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# Thank you

[jacqui.jones@ons.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:jacqui.jones@ons.gsi.gov.uk)

If you would like more information on the  
interactive user guide please contact:

[Nafeessah.Ameeruddin@ons.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Nafeessah.Ameeruddin@ons.gsi.gov.uk)