

Data Management and Analysis Group

Census Team - SASPAC Workplan 2008-09



The central graphic features a stylized map of Greater London in shades of orange and red. Overlaid on the map are several data-related icons: a percentage sign (%), the Greek letter sigma (Σ), a bar chart with four bars of decreasing height, and a balance scale. The word 'Saspac' is written across the map in a large, yellow, rounded font.

Saspac

DMAG Briefing 2008-20

May 2008

DMAG Briefing 2008-20

April 2008

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SASPAC Workplan 2008-09

Introduction

The SASPAC project sits within the Census Team and is part of the Data Management and Analysis Group. The project currently has one full-time permanent post:

- SASPAC Project Officer (Senior Research and Statistical Analyst) - **Alan Lewis** – responsible for the management and development of the SASPAC project.

Following the publication of Census data, an additional full-time member of staff is recruited to deal with the increase in service demand.

SASPAC (Small Area Statistical PACkage) is a piece of software designed to facilitate the storage, interrogation, and analysis of large datasets produced by the UK Census Offices. These datasets are derived from responses to the decennial Census questionnaires and hold aggregated data relating to a variety of geographic areas.

SASPAC is essential for efficient storage of, and access to, large quantities of Census data held by the GLA. These electronic data holdings include 1981, 1991 and 2001 Censuses and will incorporate the 2011 Census results once published.

SASPAC is a 'not for profit' initiative that is owned by the Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA) and managed by the GLA. Prior to the GLA, the project was managed by the London Research Centre (LRC), who were successful bidders in a competitive tender exercise for SASPAC in 1989. In July 2000 the formation of the GLA saw the LRC, along with SASPAC, absorbed into this new organisation. The software continues to be supported by its users' annual subscriptions. The income generated allows for the enhancement of the software, producing updated datasets as released by the Census Offices and provides a helpdesk support service. Currently, there are over 250 organisational members of the SASPAC Support Scheme, these include: local, central and regional government, health sector, academia, Census Offices and the private sector. However, following the release of the 2001 Census results, the number of members peaked at over 380 organisations.

Clients and stakeholders

Services provided by the SASPAC project are used by a wide range of organisations:

- Greater London Authority and Functional Bodies
- Local government in England, Wales and Scotland
- Regional Government in England
- Central Government
- Health sector in England, Wales and Scotland
- Academics institutions across the UK
- UK Census Offices
- Private sector

The projects development is overseen by the SASPAC Advisory Panel (SAP) whose membership comprises of a number of experienced SASPAC users. The panel is chaired by an officer from the software owners - IDeA. This group oversees the projects development and exists to ensure that the initiative continues to develop in line with user expectations.

Although managed and directed by the Project Officer, there are a number of contractors that provide services to develop and support the project:

- Pecan Tree Ltd – primarily responsible for the software's Graphical User Interface (GUI)
- Citilabs Ltd - responsible for the software engine
- Katalysis Ltd – provide strategic development services
- Pebblestone Ltd – provide and support SASPAC's integrated Geographical Information System (GIS)
- Geowise Ltd – provide and support SASPAC's integrated Web Publishing tool

These services were secured through Mayoral Approval Form MA2890 on 1st April 2007. The project officer works closely with these contractors to support the daily use of the software as well as developing and delivering the longer-term project goals.

What we do

The SASPAC project can be broadly split into the following areas of work:

- Helpdesk support – a phone, email and website service that provides Census/SASPAC advice, guidance and support to members of the Support Scheme.
- Promote and develop wider use of the software through demonstrations, presentations and training events.
- Identify, process, manage and make available a variety of datasets to software users.
- With guidance and consultation with users, establish and deliver the short and long-term development goals of the project.
- Represent and promote our users and stakeholder's interests in Census consultation and planning processes undertaken by the UK Census Offices.
- Manage and maximise the SASPAC budget, which includes undertaking negotiations and tendering for contractors.

Representation and networking

The nature of the SASPAC project means the Project Officer is often required to deliver presentations and/or demonstrations at conferences, meetings and workshops. These vary in nature but are often aimed at promoting the software to potential users or updating existing users on recent developments.

The Project Officer attends the following meetings:

- Census Strategy Group – discusses the strategic development of SASPAC and any Census related issues.
- SASPAC Advisory Panel – user group that oversees and informs SASPAC's development.
- ESRC Data feed network – working group investigating the format of 2011 Census data delivery.
- OAC User Group – promotes the use of ONS' Output Area Classification (available in SASPAC) and other area classification.

Meetings between the Project Officer and the various software contractors are undertaken as necessary.

SASPAC also regularly presents at the London Census Users' Group (CUG), which meets on a quarterly basis.

2008/09 Priorities

There are a number of priorities that SASPAC wishes to address during 2008/09:

- Continue to provide software and Census advice, guidance and training to all users. This will be delivered through phone and email support, our website: www.saspac.org, technical documentation, e-bulletins and training courses.
- Raise all 2008/09 Support Scheme invoices and establish new consortium arrangements where necessary.
- Continue to identify, process and make available Census and other datasets of interest to users.
- Deliver at least one new software release to all users.
- Convene and hold a SASPAC Advisory Panel meeting.
- Continue to progress a SASPAC 2011 project plan in preparation for the release of the next Census results.
- Carry out a user consultation exercise to ascertain their requirements for SASPAC in 2011.
- Develop further the web-based technologies introduced with SASPAC v8.5 released March'08.

Dissemination of work and outputs

Any new software release is distributed to users on CD, whilst large datasets are typically sent out on DVD media. Increasingly the SASPAC website is used to allow users to download data and software updates as required.

All software documentation and training materials are available through the SASPAC website. The site is updated periodically and email alerts are sent to users. A regular e-bulletin is also distributed to all users. These contain general SASPAC/Census information items as well as notices relating to forthcoming meetings and events.

When required, presentations, demonstrations and training sessions are delivered at appropriate meetings and conferences to further promote and market the software service.

Data supply

Data is mainly supplied by the UK Census Offices (ONS, GROS and NISRA) but additional boundary datasets are provided by Ordnance Survey and Pebbleshire Ltd. The project is always keen to investigate datasets from other sources that users may find beneficial.

Development Programme

There are a number of existing and new areas of work related to the SASPAC project in 2008/09. These include:

- Release SASPAC v9.0 to all users. This version will include the Geowise InstantAtlas Web Publisher and a revised manual and contextual Help file.
- Update and incorporate SASPAC v8.5 developments in the training documentation and programme.
- Develop further the SASPAC Google Maps™ interface released v8.5. Investigate how more GIS-related tools can be incorporated into this feature.
- Investigate the potential for versions of SASPAC, and its integrated applications, to be automatically updated via the Internet.
- Integrate further datasets into the software (e.g. population projections and local government performance indicators), to widen SASPAC's use during the mid-point in the Census cycle.
- Develop a "SASPAC in 2011" project plan - including funding opportunities.
- Organise a SASPAC Advisory Panel and a consultation exercise to establish user requirements for 2011.

Regular Briefings from the GLA Data Management and Analysis Group (DMAG)

Recent DMAG Briefings 2008:

2008-01	Census Information Note 2008-1	Eileen Howes
2008-02	PayCheck 2007	Lovedeep Vaid
2008-03	GLA 2007 Round Ethnic Group Projections	Baljit Bains
2008-04	Council Tax Analysis	Elizabeth Williams
2008-05	A Profile of Londoners by Country of Birth	Lorna Spence
2008-06	Claimant Count Model 2008: Technical Note	Lorna Spence
2008-07	GLA 2007 Round Demographic Projections	John Hollis
2008-08	Greater London Authority Constituency Profiles	Elizabeth Williams & Caroline Hall
2008-09	Family Resources Survey 2005/06: Results for London	Lovedeep Vaid
2008-10	London Borough Migration 2001-06	John Hollis
2008-11	Social Exclusion Data Team Workplan 2008/09	Social Exclusion Data Team
2008-12	Demography Team Workplan 2008/09	John Hollis
2008-13	Education Team Workplan 2008/09	David Ewens
2008-14	Census Team Workplan 2008/09	Eileen Howes
2008-16	GIS Team Workplan 2008/09	Gareth Baker
2008-17	Lone Parents on Income Support by Ethnic Group	Lovedeep Vaid

Recent DMAG Briefings 2007:

2007-16	Key Facts for Diverse Communities: Ethnicity and Faith	Baljit Bains
2007-17	A profile of Londoners by housing tenure	Lorna Spence
2007-18	Londoners and the Labour Market: key facts	Lorna Spence
2007-19	Benefit Claimants in London 2006	Lovedeep Vaid
2007-20	Worker Registration Scheme	Elizabeth Williams
2007-21	Economic Activity Rates in London	Richard Cameron & Giorgio Finella
2007-22	ONS Model-based Income Estimates: 2004/05	Lovedeep Vaid
2007-23	Background to DMAG Poverty Profiles	Lovedeep Vaid
2007-24	Counting the Population: GLA Submission to the Treasury Sub-Committee	John Hollis
2007-25	Census Information Note 2007-2	Giorgio Finella

A full list of DMAG Briefings is available to internal customers through the GLA Intranet; otherwise please contact dmag.info@london.gov.uk A CD containing PDF versions of the Briefings, or hard copies, can be provided.

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