

ABS unit record data: current access and future directions

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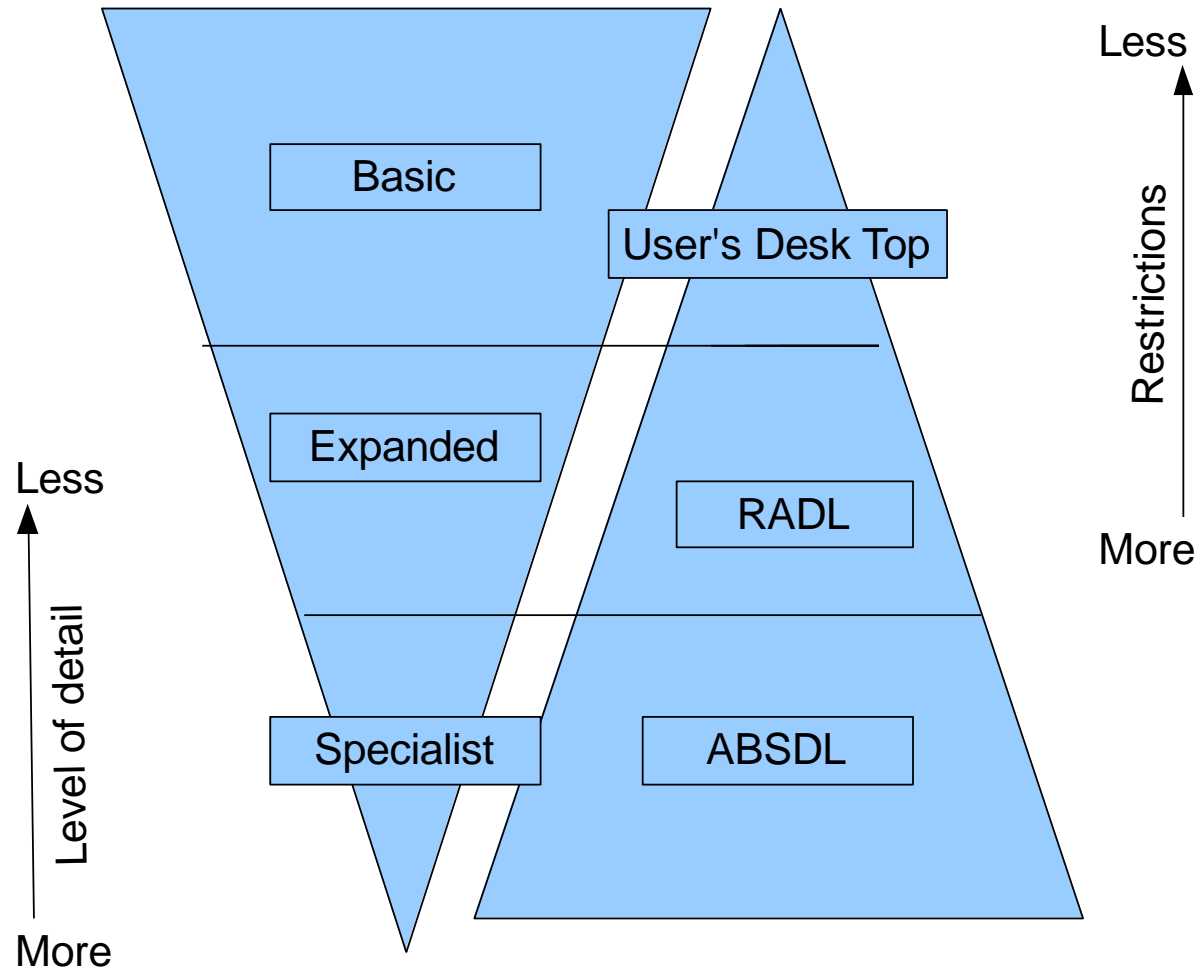
First Assistant Statistician

Integrated Collection and Dissemination
Services Division

Modes of access

- Balancing act
 - Between meeting legislation requirements, and research needs for access
 - Restrictions on the data, environment or both
- The Confidentialised Unit Record File (CURF):
 - ‘Basic CURFs (those most highly confidentialised) on CD-ROM
 - ‘Expanded’ CURFs (more detailed data) in the Remote Access Data Lab
 - ‘Specialist’ (customised) CURFs in the on-site ABS Data Lab

Types of microdata and access



What is available

- Over 100 CURFs are currently on the [List of available CURFs](#) on the ABS website
- The [List of expected CURFs](#) shows what is scheduled for release

Current usage

- Around 1,500 individual users in over 100 Australian organisations:
 - Government – mainly C'th
 - University sector
 - private organisations
- AVCC agreement extends access to Statistics NZ microdata files

Uses and outcomes

- Policy and program development and review; cabinet briefings; higher degree/postgraduate research; consultancies; models for a range of purposes and clients. Examples:
 - [Journal articles, conference papers, reports](#)
 - NATSEM's [STINMOD](#) product

Overseas experience

- Where provided, usually on-site data lab
- Some NSOs limit usage to particular types of research or researchers
- ABS regarded as leader on remote execution (RADL)
- But all keen to:
 - address increased national/international demand
 - develop remote execution or access
 - establish a common metadata standard

ABS aspirations

- Improve richness of datasets
 - Composite datasets
 - De-identified unit records (MURFs)
- Collaborate nationally and internationally
 - Common access “look and feel”
 - methods
- Provide an environment to assess above data sets (see next slide)

Future directions

- Improving the richness of data
 - Cross Portfolio Committee to develop principles and protocols
- Providing a Table Service
 - 60% of jobs
 - Census Table Builder (already delivered)
 - Survey Table Builder
 - Count data, magnitude data, unweighted data
 - household, business, longitudinal and composite micro data
 - by stages from mid next year

- Providing an Analysis Service
 - Microdata files on users' desktops?
 - Synthetic data files to develop models
 - Program run against MURFs
 - Privacy Preservation Analytics?
- ABSDL for highly complex analyses
- Improving access to national and international microdata
 - Common metadata standards
 - Mapping out a strategic role for the ABS
 - Custodians of other agencies' microdata?
 - Access to other NSOs' microdata?

- Questions?