Becoming Accredited as a DEA Processor

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What we will cover

- The Digital Economy Act (2017)
- Becoming an Accredited Processor
- The UK Data Archive's experience

Digital Economy Act (Research) 2017

- Legislation provides certainty and clarity for public authorities and researchers on data available for research

- The Bill (Act) creates a gateway for public authorities to access data in the public interest

- Uses a trusted third party model where:
    - an **accredited processor** links, de-identifies, and makes data securely available to an **accredited researcher** for an **accredited project**

The Digital Economy Act (DEA) 2017

- Gained Royal Assent on the 27th April 2017

- Makes substantial amendments to the Statistics and Registration Service Act (SRSA) 2007

- Codes of Practice and Accreditation Criteria (Research)
  - Governing principles on disclosure of data
    - Legal, Accreditation, Data security/confidentiality, Public interest, Ethical, Proportionality, Retention, Transparency

  - Accreditation Criteria
    - Processors, Projects and Researchers

Supporting UK Research

- UK Statistics Authority (UKDSA) as the Accreditor (Section 61 of the Act)

  - Accredited Projects and Researchers
    - Consistent with existing ONS Approved Researcher scheme

  - Accredited Data Processors
    - Data linking/matching/preparation; and/or
    - Provision of secure research facility
    - UK Data Archive became an Accredited processor in March 2020

Becoming an Accredited Processor (1)

- Complete spreadsheet

- Must satisfy numerous criteria in two broad areas:
  - Security (17)
  - Capability (23)

  - All areas of compliance must be thoroughly documented, e.g. controlled documents, website info, guides (SDC Handbook!), records in Helpdesk system, website, procedural documents, logs, job descriptions...

Becoming an Accredited Processor (2)

- Evidence pack to be produced

- Spreadsheet to:
  - Reference evidence
  - Provide commentary
  - Include links/pathways to evidence where possible

Becoming an Accredited Processor (3)

- Site visit

- Akin to an audit – can speak to any staff member or ask to see any of the evidence referenced in the spreadsheet

- Need to be judged "mature" or "good" in each area.

- Areas judged to be met only to "partial" or "minimal" degree will need to be worked on before re-submission

The UK Data Archive's experience

- Set up a working group
  - Security submission
  - Capability submission

- Review accreditation requirements
- Identify relevant evidence

Capability requirements

Internal organisation	Transparency	Services and products available to researchers	During employment
• Provision of access to data • Statistical disclosure controls • Ingesting and transferring data and code • Research integrity • Data cataloguing	• Public Register • Sharing of relevant management information and practices	• Providing the right products to researchers • Provide a quality service to researchers	• Training Standards • Appropriate skills and experience

Example 1: Statistical disclosure controls

Confirm that the processor has procedures in place to ensure that any data (or any analysis based on the data) retained by the researcher, or published, are 'statistically disclosure controlled' to minimise the risk of data subjects being re-identified or other misuses of the data.

- SDC Output procedures
- SDAP SDC Handbook

Example 2: Skills and experience

Confirm that the data processor trainers have the experience and skills, to deliver training on specialist topics and support research carried out under the DEA.

Provide evidence that only staff with the right set of skills, experience, and security clearance perform these tasks (handling de-identified data).

- Created 'Secure Access Services: Staff Skills and Professional Development' document
- SDAP Competency Framework

Site visit

- Discussed evidence provided
- Viewed some of our systems e.g. JIRA Helpdesk
- Talked to other staff members about the processes

- Accreditation confirmed

Webinar: The Digital Economy Act and DEA Data

UK Data Service and UK Statistics Authority

25 March 2021, 14.00-15.00

https://www.ukdataservice.ac.uk/news-and-events/eventsitem/?id=5734

Questions

- Has anyone been able to go through the accreditation process whilst being in lockdown or is there anything that we can do besides submit the paperwork and wait?
- Has demand for access to data increased since being accredited?
- Are any of the accredited research centres willing to share the number of active projects that they have and how many staff are managing the data requirements?