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# Introducing an electronic Fieldwork Management System in the European Social Survey

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## Overview

- The problem: Monitoring decentralised fieldwork cross-nationally
- The solution: Fieldwork Management System (x 2)
- Experience in ESS Round 9
- Next steps





## The problem

- ESS involves survey data collection in 30+ countries
- Careful monitoring during fieldwork is important
  - Achieve target number of interviews
  - Minimise error (e.g. unit non-response) whilst data collection still in progress
  - Ensure adherence to ESS standards and cross-country comparability
- But not straightforward
  - Data collection is decentralized and involves multiple stakeholders operating in different national contexts
  - Lack of real time information. Contact Form dataset available only at end of fieldwork





## The solution

- Introduce new electronic Fieldwork Management System to:
  - Provide timely monitoring data during fieldwork
  - Standardise fieldwork monitoring across countries
  - Streamline communication between stakeholders





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Collaboration with



• 2012-2014



• 2015-2019



• 2017-2019



With thanks to:

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Widdop  
Roberto Briceno Rojas





## FMS (1) – CASE/SAMPLE CTRL



Contact data from  
**mobile app (CASE  
CTRL)**

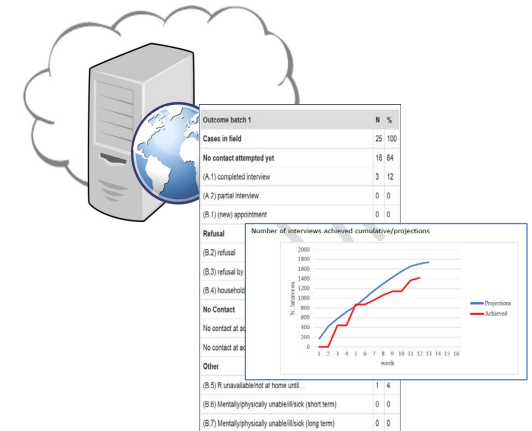


Data transmitted to/from  
a **local case management  
system (SAMPLE CTRL)**



Uploaded data shared via the  
**central Fieldwork Management  
System (FMS) – SURVEY CTRL**

- Web-based
- Accessible to National Teams and Central Team



Based on SHARE's existing Sample Management System (SD-SMS)





## FMS app (CASE CTRL)

☰

Please enter search string.

✓ **100001**  
Outcome: Complete interview  
Last contact: Monday, 25/09/2017 11:04


🏠 psu: 101  
15 Fitzgerald Avenue LONDON LANCS BT13 9ZZ

⚠ **100051**  
Outcome: Partial interview  
Last contact: Monday, 25/09/2017 10:53

🏠 psu: 101  
15 Fitzgerald Avenue LONDON LANCS BT13 9ZZ (Right)

🕒 **100101**  
Outcome: Not contacted yet  
Last contact:

🏠 psu: 102  
15 Fitzgerald Avenue LONDON LANCS BT13 9ZZ

Case 101551 

**Result of the visit:** result\_visist

1 Completed interview

2 Partial interview

3 Contact with someone, don't know if target respondent

4 Contact with target respondent, but NO interview

5 Contact with somebody other than target respondent

6 No contact at all

7 Address is not valid (unoccupied, demolished, institutional)

8 Other information about sample unit





## Central case management system (SAMPLE CTRL)

### Case list

1505  
Case list

23  
Complete

7  
Appointment

1500  
Cross sample

1399  
Not contacted

12  
refusal

Actions -

Search (by case ID or region)

Search:

Search Names:

Filter on interviewer:

Filter on outcome code:

Limit:

Case ID	Interviewer ID	Batch	Region	Last outcome	Contact attempts	Date last contact	Appointment date	Unavailable until	Refusal
1	401	1	South west England	#1: Completed interview	1	05-09-2017 00:00			Not applicable
2	401	1	South west England	#0: Appointment	1	08-09-2017 00:00			Not applicable
3	401	1	South west England	#0: No contact at all	1	07-09-2017 00:00			Not applicable
4	401	1	South west England	#7: Address is not valid (unoccupied, demolished, institutional)	1	06-09-2017 00:00			Not applicable







## Implementation challenges

Scoping study with ESS fieldwork agencies and NCs (2016)

- **Cross-national variation:** Sample frames, IT infrastructure, in-house systems, survey culture, legal framework
- **Data security:** Transfer of personal data to a central server accessible by third party
- **Technology:** Availability of mobile devices, lack of local IT support, interviewers reluctant to adopt new technology?
- **Agency resistance:** have own in-house systems, loss of autonomy, perceived lack of trust



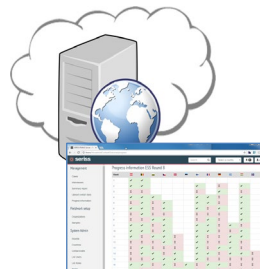


## FMS (2) – Upload portal

Contact data from  
**agency in-house  
systems**

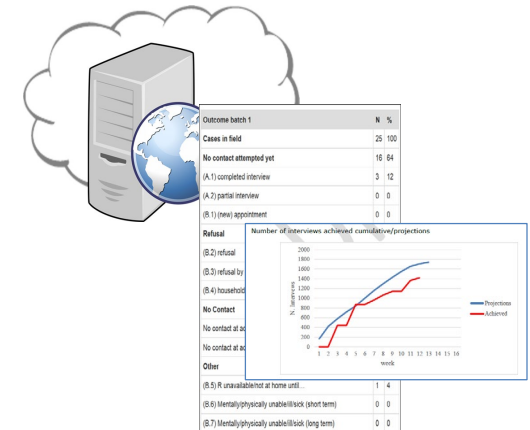


**Agency uploads case level  
data** using a pre-defined  
template



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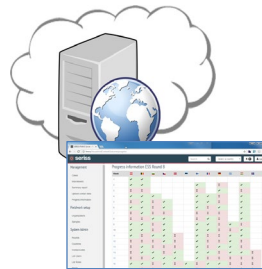


Contact data from  
**agency in-house  
systems**

UPLOAD  
PORTAL



**Agency uploads case level  
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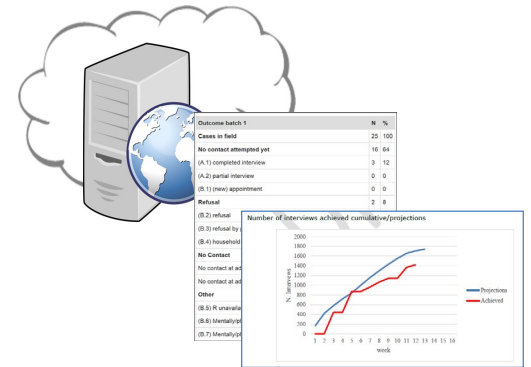
CASE  
CTRL



Contact data from  
**mobile app (CASE  
CTRL)**



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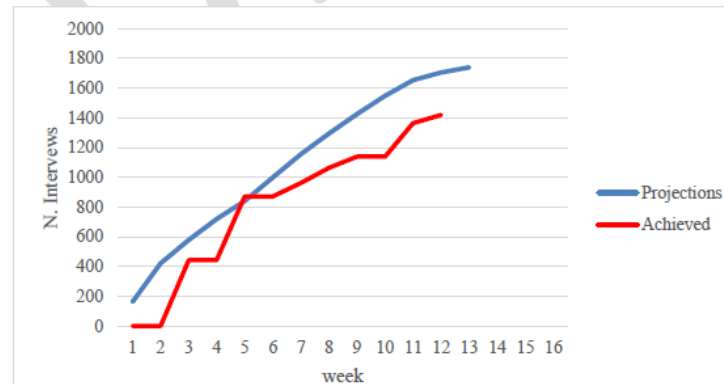




## Common set of summary reports across countries

Outcome batch 1	N	%
<b>Cases in field</b>	25	100
<b>No contact attempted yet</b>	16	64
(A.1) completed interview	3	12
(A.2) partial interview	0	0
(B.1) (new) appointment	0	0
<b>Refusal</b>	2	8
(B.2) refusal	2	8
(B.3) refusal by proxy	0	0
(B.4) household refusal (before selection)	0	0
<b>No Contact</b>	1	4
No contact at address after 4+ contact attempts	1	4
No contact at address (< 4 contact attempts)	0	0
<b>Other</b>	2	8
(B.5) R unavailable/not at home until...	1	4
(B.6) Mentally/physically unable/ill/sick (short term)	0	0
(B.7) Mentally/physically unable/ill/sick (long term)	0	0

Number of interviews achieved cumulative/projections





## Comparing different approaches

	ESS Rounds 1-8	FMS Upload Portal	CASE CTRL
Level of aggregation	Country-level  (Regional, by interviewer )	Country-level Case-level  Interviewer-level Regional (by gender, age)	Country-level Case-level Contact attempt level Interviewer-level Regional (by gender, age)
Timeliness	Fortnightly/Weekly	Weekly	Daily
Consistency in data collection	(Standardised) contact form  PAPI/CAPI	(Standardised) contact form  PAPI/CAPI	Shared contact form  Common data collection App
Consistency in reporting	Nationally generated word/excel file	Centrally generated online reports	Centrally generated online reports
Accessibility	Updates via email from national teams	Manual upload to shared portal	Automatic data sync





## FMS in ESS Round 9

- **FMS APP (CASE CTRL)** in use in five countries (SE, NO, DK, RS, SK)
- **UPLOAD PORTAL** in use in remaining countries – 20 and counting





## Portal implementation

- Some countries had initial problems with formatting of upload files
- Once fieldwork underway (nearly) all countries able to make weekly uploads as required
  - Uploads being made regularly i.e. on same, pre-agreed day each week
  - Data files are generally complete and records up to date
  - Christmas break caused a few issues
- Highlights importance of CAPI Contact Forms and regular transmission of all info back to fieldwork agency





## FMS benefits for central fieldwork monitoring

- For most countries, FMS provides more detail than previously e.g. full breakdown of different outcome codes, numbers of contact attempts, regional comparisons etc.
- Charts and tables in SURVEY CTRL – and central calculation of response rates etc. - provide easy way to compare performance across countries/over time
- More information on interviewer capacity than previously
- Move to standardised monitoring has prompted valuable discussion about definitions e.g. what constitutes a contact attempt, use of “other” outcome code
- Stimulated joined-up discussions with NC team and fieldwork agency
- Access to case-level records make additional analysis possible







## Further improvements possible

- Summary reports in SURVEY CTRL may benefit from including additional indicators, especially at start of fieldwork
  - e.g. Calculating response rate for “cases with at least 1 contact attempt” vs. full sample
- Possible to further streamline feedback loop between stakeholders
  - e.g. with use of “notes” field in upload portal
- Further work to be done exploring full analytic potential of case-level data.
  - Set up automatic flags for potentially problematic countries, cases, interviewers





## Conclusions

- Use of electronic centralized fieldwork management system can assist central monitoring by providing data which is more comprehensive, timely, consistent and accessible
- More than one approach to providing a central fieldwork management system
  - Possible to accommodate cross-national variation
- FMS is just the beginning
  - Stakeholder communication
  - Effective use of data





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