

BREACH OF THE CODE OF PRACTICE FOR OFFICIAL STATISTICS

A breach of the Code of Practice for Official Statistics occurs where one or more provisions of the Code were not followed in situations where an exemption or exception had not been approved by the UK Statistics Authority's Head of Assessment, as required in paragraph (xii) of the Code's preamble. Rules on pre-release access to statistics are covered in the relevant Pre-Release Access to Official Statistics Orders; the Code applies as if it includes these orders.

1 Background Information

Name of Statistical Output (including web link if relevant)

Timetabled train kilometres (TTKM)
<http://dataportal.orr.gov.uk/displayreport/report/html/443149bc-2631-48e7-9ee8-dac4223a801b>

Name of Producer Organisation

Office of Rail Regulation (ORR)

Name and contact details of person submitting this report, and date of report

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2 Circumstances of Breach

Relevant Principle/Protocol and Practice

Protocol 2, release practices. Practice 8

Date of occurrence

Monday 10 October 2011

Nature of breach (including links with previous breaches, if any)

2011-2012 Q2 TTKM data was due to be published on Thursday 13 October. On Monday 10 October, when my colleague was viewing the previous release, he noticed that Q2 data was already available. Pre-release rules were therefore breached.

We previously breached the code of practice in June 2011, by prematurely releasing

data via the portal. The breach in June was due to an error in the portal's taxonomy, which controls the date release of indicators that can be interrogated via the report wizard. We have since introduced quality assurance processes, and the taxonomy is scrutinised by two people before being modified in the live environment. The breach on 10 October 2011 (as outlined below) related to pre-created reports on the portal, and was not due to errors with the taxonomy.

Reasons for breach

TTKM data is presented to the public via an online data portal. The TTKM data is calculated within the data warehouse through an SQL based view that queries raw data in the data warehouse tables. The results of these queries are then used to populate Reporting Services reports which are presented via the online data portal. The views contain a filter based on data values that ensure the reports only display data up to the allowable point in time in ORR's publication timetable. The breach occurred as this date filter within the TTKM view was changed incorrectly, thereby allowing Q2 data to be leveraged via the portal.

3 Reactions and Impact

As soon as we discovered the breach the Q2 data was taken off the portal. There has been no impact or any reactions from anyone outside of the Information and Analysis team.

4 Corrective Actions Taken (include short-term actions, and long-term changes made to procedures)

We will add a further date filter to all Reporting Services reports that include official statistics. This will add another level of filtering to ensure that data can only be presented at the time specified in ORR's publication timetable.

In addition, we have scheduled a workshop for 14 October 2011 to determine all possible scenarios where data could be prematurely released via the portal. This will lead to an action plan to mitigate these scenarios and significantly reduce the possibility of future breaches. We are happy to share this plan with you.

5 Any other relevant supporting material (including link to published statements about this breach)

None.