

## 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)

SET Statistics: Science, Engineering and Technology indicators 2010  
<http://www.bis.gov.uk/policies/science/science-funding/set-stats>

Name of Producer Organisation

Department for Business Innovation and Skills (BIS)

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

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30/11/2010

### 2 Circumstances of Breach

Relevant Principle/Protocol and Practice

Protocol 2: Release practices.  
Practice 4: Issue statistical releases at the standard time of 9.30am on a weekday, to maintain consistency and to permit time for users to understand and respond to the information during normal working hours,  
and  
Practice 8: Ensure that no indication of the substance of a statistical report is made public, or given to the media or any other party not recorded as eligible for access before publication. Report to the National Statistician immediately any accidental or wrongful release, and investigate the circumstances.

Date of occurrence

26/11/2010

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

SET Statistics are published annually on the BIS website. The breach concerned the 2010 publication, which had been pre-announced for 0930 on 26 November. The publication was passed to the BIS Web and Communications team the night before who then prepared an update to the web page, ready for release at 0930 the next morning. However, due to a web error the SET indicators were published approximately two and a half hours ahead of the pre-announced time.

Reasons for breach

The content management system (CMS) used by BIS allows users to create new versions of a web page. Accordingly, in preparation for the 0930 publication the next day, the Communications team created a new version of the SET Statistics page with a link to the latest data. This version was not submitted to the CMS workflow and was not published until the next morning when the BIS Web and Communications team made it live at 0930. However, the link to the new SET Statistics data was somehow picked up by the previous version and made live during the 0700 scheduled (site-wide) update.

### **3 Reactions and Impact**

No known impact.

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

By the time the error was spotted it was already nearly 0930 and so the link to the new data was not removed and the correct version of the SET statistics went live at 0930.

To ensure that this doesn't happen again, the BIS Web and Communications have raised this issue with the Department's web services supplier. It has been assigned to a technician and we are awaiting updates.

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

None.