DRAFT GUIDELINES FOR STATISTICAL STORYTELLING

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1. Definition
To tell a statistical story is to use text, speech, figures or tables to put statistical data in to a context, thus giving added meaning to the data and making it easier to understand their significance.

The hierarchy of statistical information:
Data, tables, databanks, daily releases, statistical stories

2. Reasons for telling statistical stories:
To give statistics the attention and understanding that it deserves.
The story should be told by those who know the data
More interesting working-situation for statisticians
Higher visibility for statistical agencies
Democracy: Figures not only for experts

3. How to write or tell a statistical story.

a) Learn to think more like a journalist:
Use their tools in order to get attention.
Adopt their way of thinking when looking for the news in a text or a set of data (news criteria)
Use references to everyday life and experiences

b) Find a better context: Longer timeseries, actuality

c) Use better writing techniques:
Avoid "elevator statistics"
Avoid technical terms
Avoid too many figures
Do not look at the tables while writing

d) Have a broader scope of interest:
Keep updated in your field of statistics, so you are able to write a good story at the right time
Take interest in other fields of statistics that might affect your field and your presentations

e) Build new cultures by training, recruiting and rewarding the statisticians