# The Selection and Vetting of Statistical Stories

Conference of European Statisticians

Work Session on Dissemination of Statistical Commentary

Submitted by: Statistics Canada

Presentation Plan

- ✍ Define scope of "popular" statistical stories
- ✍ Why statistical offices tell these stories
- ✍ The selection pyramid
- ✍ Introducing the actors
- ✍ Selection principles at Statistics Canada
- ✍ Generating story ideas
- ✍ Maintaining institutional values
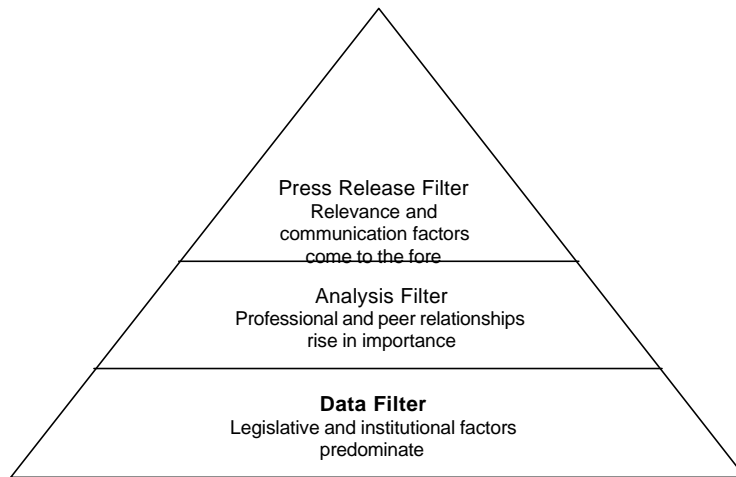- ✍ Generalizing lessons

What are popular statistical stories?

Statistical Office

Data

In-depth reports

Specialists

Flagships

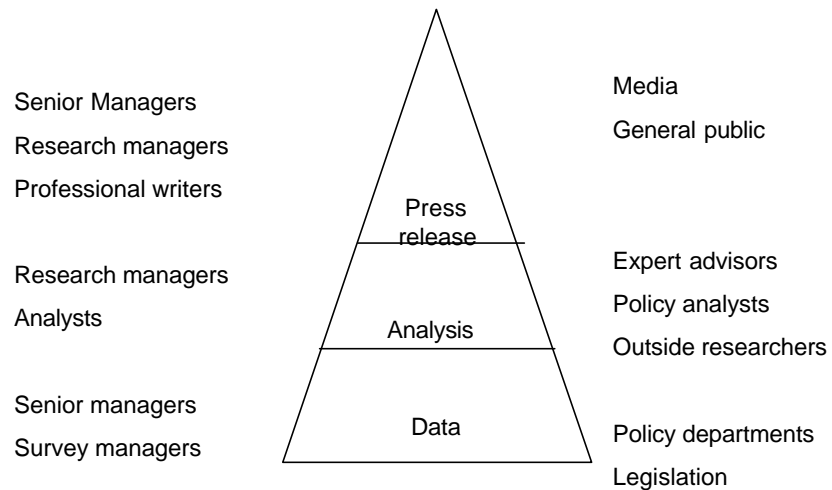Press release

Media

General public
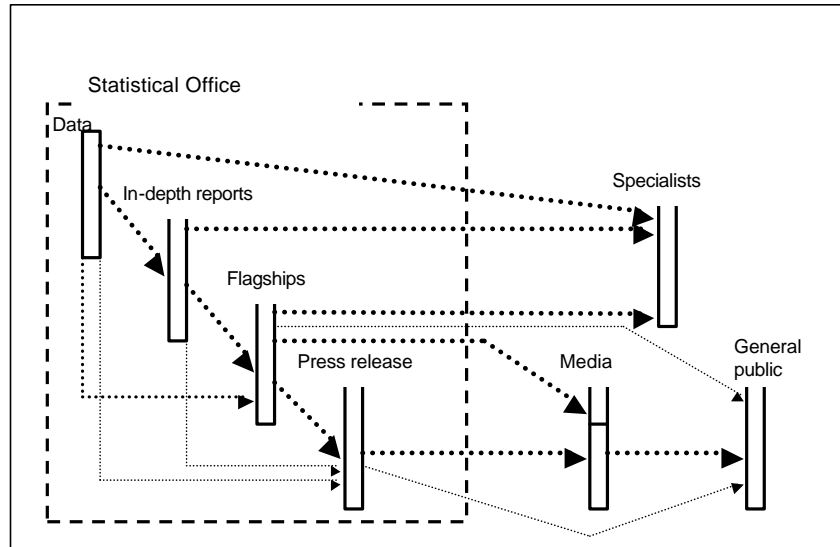
Why produce statistical stories?

- ✎ Contribute to the democratic process – relevance (increasingly educated population is ready)
- ✎ Why us (statistical offices)?
- ✎ Enhancing relationships with policy departments and respondents
- ✎ Positive effects on employees

The story selection pyramid

Press Release Filter
Relevance and
communication factors
come to the fore

Analysis Filter
Professional and peer relationships
rise in importance

Data Filter
Legislative and institutional factors
predominate

Actors involved in the selection process

Senior Managers

Research managers

Professional writers

Media

General public

Press
release

Research managers

Analysts

Expert advisors

Policy analysts

Outside researchers

Analysis

Senior managers

Survey managers

Data

Policy departments

Legislation

Story Selection Principles at Statistics Canada

- ✍ "Sunshine" policy with *The Daily* as its main instrument

- ✍ Key role of research managers
  - ✍ Planning agenda
  - ✍ Proposal review
  - ✍ Publication gatekeepers

Generating story ideas

- ✍ Survey presentations
- ✍ Brainstorming sessions
- ✍ Visiting lectures
- ✍ Conference attendance
- ✍ Advisory / subject matter committees
- ✍ Interactions with policy departments
- ✍ Media surveillance

Management tools

- Inventory of accepted proposals

- Work in progress database (under development)

Maintaining institutional values: Relevance, quality and impartiality

- Peer review

- Institutional review

- Engagement of senior officers

Applicability to other statistical offices?

- Relevance, quality and impartiality are essential traits of statistical stories
- Data, analysis and press release filters are generally applicable
- Analysts need internal community and external contacts to generate interesting agenda
- Clear responsibility for published output is required, although structure may vary