

Statistical Excellence Award Winners

2016



RSS Statistical Excellence Award in Official Statistics

With support from the UK Statistics Authority

Winner

Department for Transport

for

Road safety statistics

Commendation

For an excellent understanding of user needs, thoughtful and innovative methodology and for clear and highly engaging communication including the communication of statistical uncertainty.

Highly commended

Oxford Consultants for Social Inclusion (OCSI)
Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG)

for

The English Indices of Deprivation 2015 (ID2015)

Commendation

For exemplary user engagement, excellent quality assurance,
clear communication of the results including their strengths and limitations.

RSS Statistical Excellence Awards in Journalism

Explaining the Facts – Winner

Alberto Nardelli – The Guardian

for

The government's intention of reducing net migration to the "tens of thousands" is directly at odds with its fiscal target

Commendation

The judges felt that this was a clear and impartial presentation of a high profile issue which underpins current public policy debates. The author is to be commended for the manner in which he presents the evidence based on independent analyses of the data underlying two policy choices: that of deficit reduction and a reduction in net migration. The work contributes to the public understanding of the complexity of the issue and explains how data and evidence draw attention to conflicts that can arise in achieving targets in different policy areas.

Investigative Journalism – Winner

Tom Bateman – Today Programme, BBC Radio 4

for

2,000 schools 'missing' from exam help data

Commendation

This is a well-grounded piece of journalism highlighting concerns that the current UK examination system is not a level playing field and that there may be evidence of 'gaming' in terms of the amount of help that pupils in different schools get in their GCSE and A level examinations. In addition to this potential for gaming, there is also the wider issue that some schools may not be taking advantage of the extra help that pupils with specific learning disabilities are entitled to. Tom Bateman has very competently highlighted these concerns and has achieved a very satisfactory outcome with Ofqual in terms of making the underlying data available to the general public. His work has made a direct impact. In addition he has highlighted areas where further work needs to be done to break down the data between private and state schools in order to gain a fuller picture of what is happening and the potential reasons for it.

Regional Journalism – Winner

Kathryn Torney – The Detail

for

Abortion exported: the women travelling for terminations

Commendation

Abortion is an emotive subject. In this article Kathryn Torney and the team at The Detail are once again to be commended for producing a powerful piece of journalism showing how effectively used statistics can add to a debate. The article presented some simple statistics to illustrate how, in spite of the restrictions on abortion in both the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland, women are still accessing legal abortions on the UK mainland. In doing so, abortion becomes not merely an issue of conscience but also one of based on the ability to pay for access. The authors dealt with this difficult subject matter in a non-emotive way to dispassionately reveal the scale of the issue. Regional journalism needs champions such as those at The Detail who use data to shed fresh light on matters of local importance and the judges are pleased to see statistics being used in this way.

Data Visualisation - Winner

John Burn-Murdoch & Pilita Clark – The Financial Times

for

Climate Change Calculator

Commendation

The judges felt that this was a very good visualisation illustrating the impact of a variety of climate change scenarios. It condensed a vast amount of numerical information into a very simple tool, and did so without compromising on the representation of uncertainty. The separation of the effects of different countries reducing emissions was good and the limited text supported the tool without hindering understanding. It was engaging and drew the reader into realising the scale of the challenge of climate change through inviting them to explore different possible future scenarios. John Burn-Murdoch and Pilita Clark are to be commended for their work in gathering together a great deal of data and synthesizing it to highlight an important issue.

Data Visualisation – Highly commended

Mona Chalabi – The Guardian USA

for

Data Sketch @ Instagram

Commendation

Mona Chalabi is to be commended for her fresh approach to data visualisation. Her deceptively simple graphs are fun and accessible for those with limited knowledge of statistics and data. By hand-drawing her graphs using backgrounds and images pertinent to the subject matter, she has demonstrated that it is not always necessary to have sophisticated graphics packages or specialist programming knowledge in order to visualise data and tell a story.

Statistical Excellence Award for the Pharmaceutical Industry

Awarded by PSI Statisticians in the Pharmaceutical Industry
and the Royal Statistical Society

Winner

Dr Richard Nixon

Statistical Methodology and Consulting Group, Novartis, Basel, Switzerland

for

Enhancing decision-making in drug development
using quantitative approaches

Commendation

For a significant contribution to better decision making at Novartis. The quantitative methods developed and implemented have reduced the risk of failed drug development programs, ultimately increasing the chances of bringing efficacious and safe medicines to patients in need.



To find out more about our Statistical Excellence Awards, please contact our Press and Policy Officer, Magdalen Wiley (m.wiley@rss.org.uk).

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