

The Portal Service of Statistics for the Decentralized System in Korea

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1. Introduction

Korea has adopted the decentralized statistical system, under which 134 agencies are responsible for producing 414 kinds of statistics, as of May 2001. As a disadvantage, the decentralized system of statistics has often caused users to face difficulties in accessing statistics they want to use.

Therefore, the National Statistical Office(NSO) has been operating an online statistical database system of KOSIS since 1991, by which major statistical data of about ten million series, produced by the NSO and other statistical agencies at home and abroad, are provided for users. However, the statistical data on KOSIS are composed of mainly those statistics produced by NSO, since collection of the data from other agencies and operation of KOSIS cannot be done with timeliness and accuracy, due to lack of personnel in NSO.

In order to cope with such problems, NSO has conducted the Stat-Korea system project, which aims to provide one-stop data service of the statistical data from many agencies. The environment for Web service at many agencies enables NSO to develop this system.

2. Stat-Korea system in Korea

2.1 Building Stat-Korea web-site for the portal service of statistics

Stat-Korea(www.stat.go.kr), as a portal website, has a statistics locator server which all the statistical key-words at home pages or database systems of statistical agencies are linked to. NSO built an index system (using Altavista system) where all the statistical key-words at web-pages or database systems of statistical institutes are registered. The statistical data and basic information on statistical agencies, surveys, statistics laws, statistical standard classifications, etc are stored and managed by each relevant agency. Users can obtain the statistical data from various agencies by one-stop access(click) to the statistics locator server on the Web, which provides a direct connection to each agency's server where the target data and basic information are stored.

2.2 Providing Standard DB system to statistical institutes

In building Stat-Korea, NSO developed Standard DB System, which provides cost-effectiveness and convenience for the statistical agencies to develop their own system. It enables the database of statistical agencies to be linked to Stat-Korea system and thereby users to access, by one-stop, to the target data and/or information from various agencies.

The standard DB system is composed of three sub-systems, as follows;

(1) The data input system, which provides various entry forms for excel data, tapes and diskettes.

(2) The Web-based retrieving system, which is developed to meet the rapid change in the internet use. The users can access to the data by various methods; by subject group, by statistical survey group, and by keyword, etc.

(3) The "electric statistical book service" system, which provides effective ways of searching serial data with a specific table form. For this system, NSO develops an auto-publishing system of statistical tables, converting DB data into statistical tables of Excel sheets or MS-word documents.

3. Current status and future development

Stat-Korea development project initiated in September 1998 and started operating in November 1999. For the project, NSO spent a budget of 1.1 billion Won, equivalent to about US\$ 1 million, including 0.7 billion Won assisted by the National Computerization Agency(NCA) and set up a comprehensive working committee, in which NSO, a computer system development company, NCA and the relevant statistical agencies. NSO and the company were responsible for developing the system, and the NCA for resource mobilization and auditing, and other agencies were responsible for building their DB, using the standard data base system. At present, 20 statistical agencies participate in the project, among which 11 agencies have already disseminated their data bases on the Web.

Although NSO has made great efforts to build the system, there are still challenges to cope with. Improvements can be made in the near future, as follows;

(1) The list index of statistical data in the statistics locator server needs to be arranged by the order of frequency in use or by type of statistical survey group to provide users with convenience and effectiveness.

(2) The list of statistical data bases, built by non-standard data base system, needs to be available on the statistics locator server of Stat-Korea system to make the service comprehensive.

(3) The advanced web-based system for retrieving data base (for example, an user-friendly system), using new Information Technology such as JSP and Web boric, needs to be considered for further development, since the current web service using CGI-method has many limitations in searching database upon users' request.

Concluding remarks

Stat-Korea system has not been fully spread yet and served only in Korean. Nevertheless, I hope this paper will be able to give you an idea on how to build one-stop data dissemination system for users.