Dealing with the increasing demand for output checking

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Roadmap

I. Challenges

II. Ideas to tackle our challenges

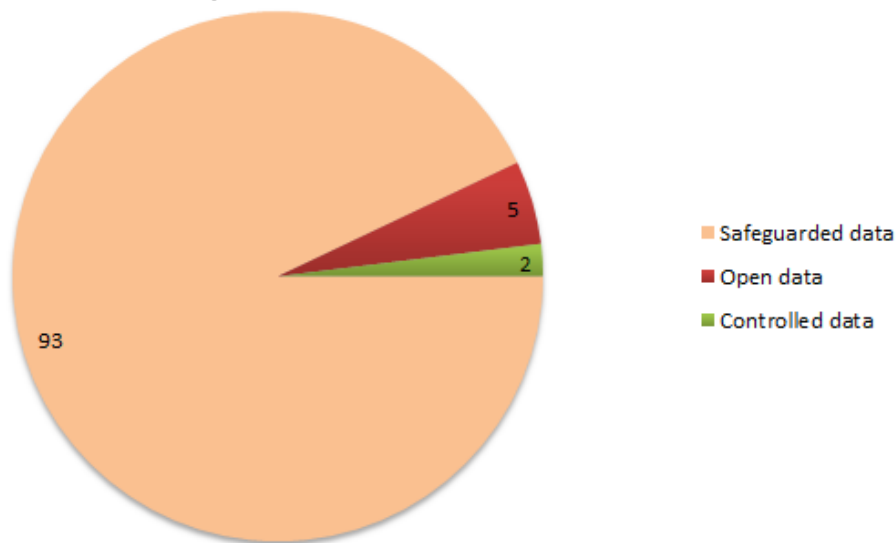III. Summary and discussion

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I.   Challenges

Support and resources

- Video tutorials/ webinars
- Case studies
- Guides (dataset ~, topic ~, methods and software ~, guides to exploring online)
- Themes
- Advice on managing and sharing data
- Teaching data and resources
- Helpdesk, individual user support

Support for non Secure Lab data

- Enquiries

Secure Lab Support

- Import requests
- Output requests
- Enquiries
- Linkage requests
- Technical queries
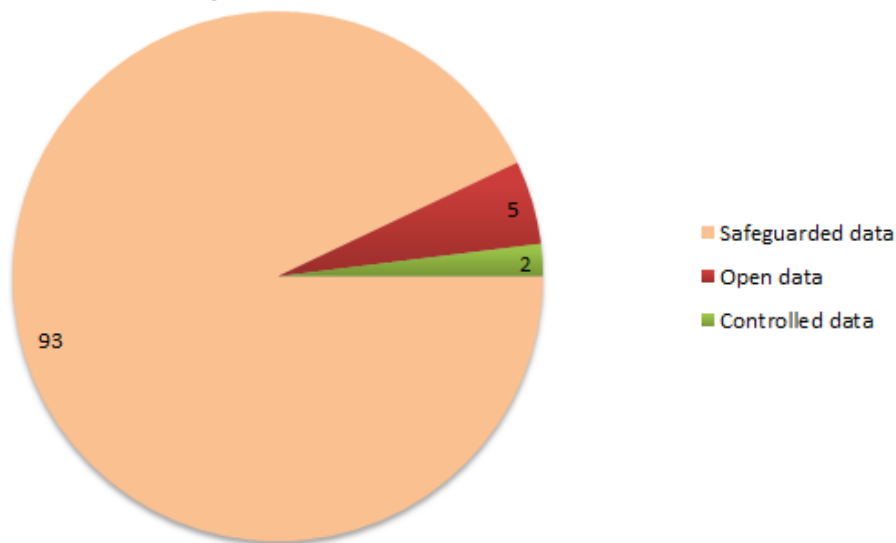
Data collections

1) Safeguarded data (5859)

2) Open data (321)

3) Controlled data (124)

Percentage data collections

- Safeguarded data
- Open data
- Controlled data

93
5
2

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Support and resources

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Secure Lab Support

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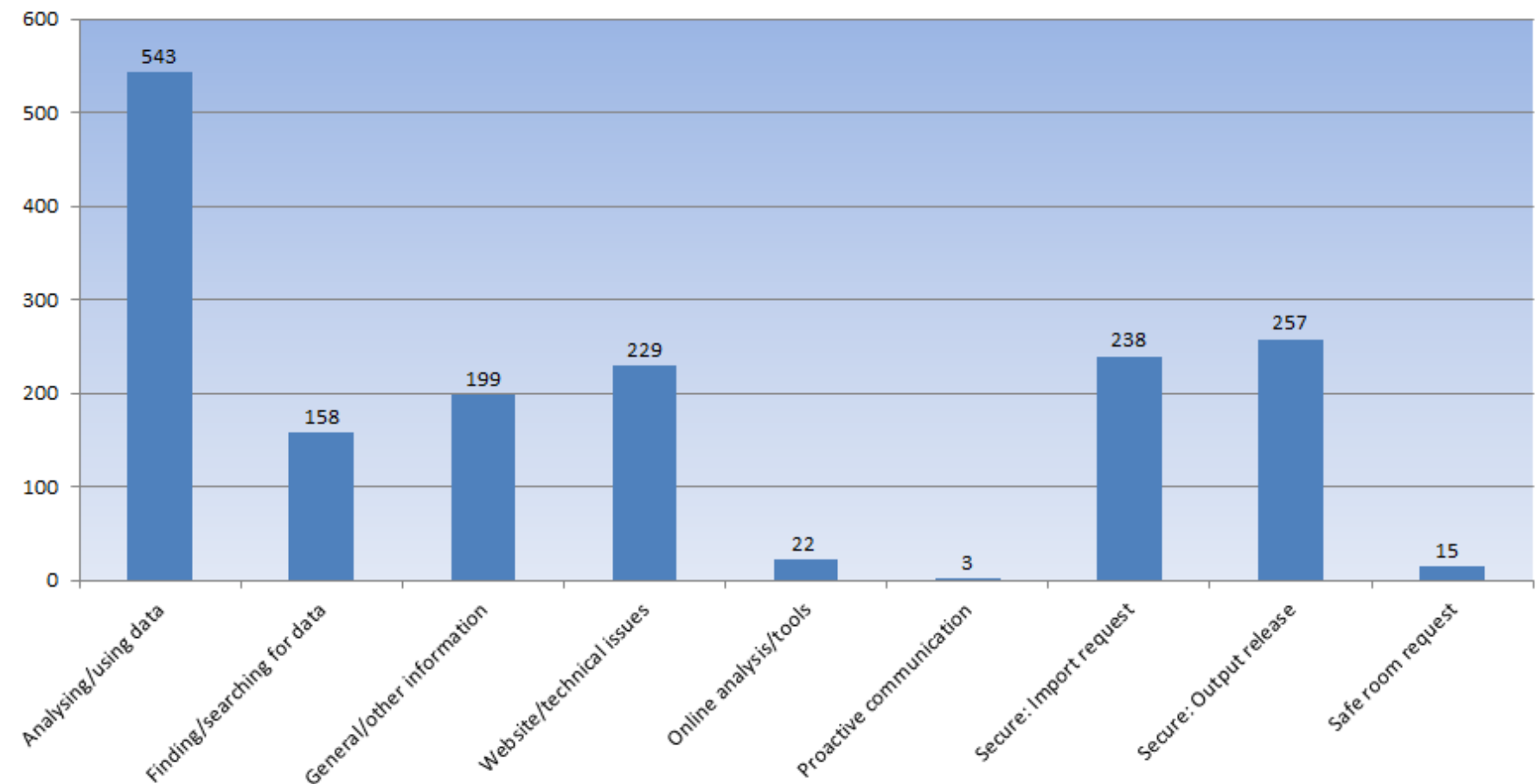
- Technical queries

Data collections

1) Safeguarded data (5859)

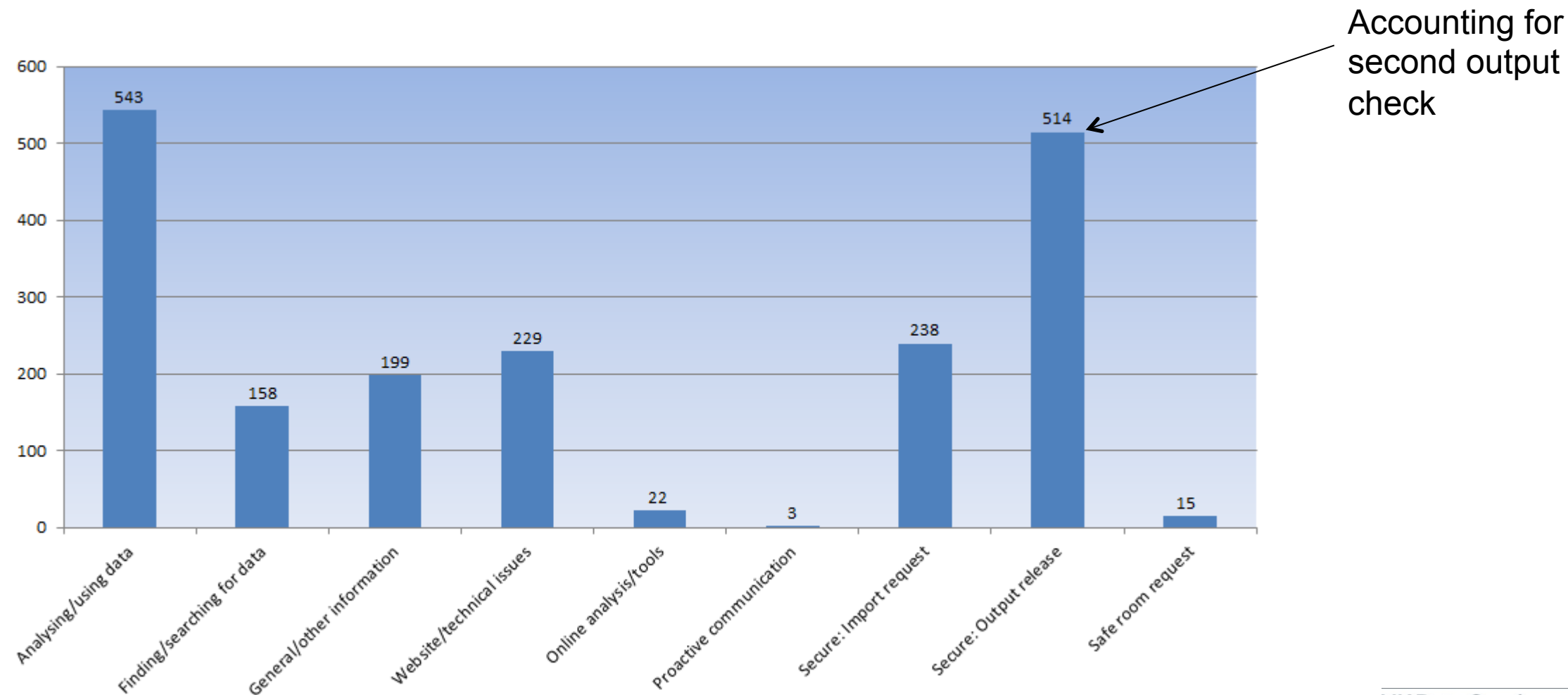2) Open data (321)

3) Controlled data (124)

~210 former SL ONS datasets

Percentage data collections

- Safeguarded data
- Open data
- Controlled data

93

5

2

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Support queries October 2016 - March 2017

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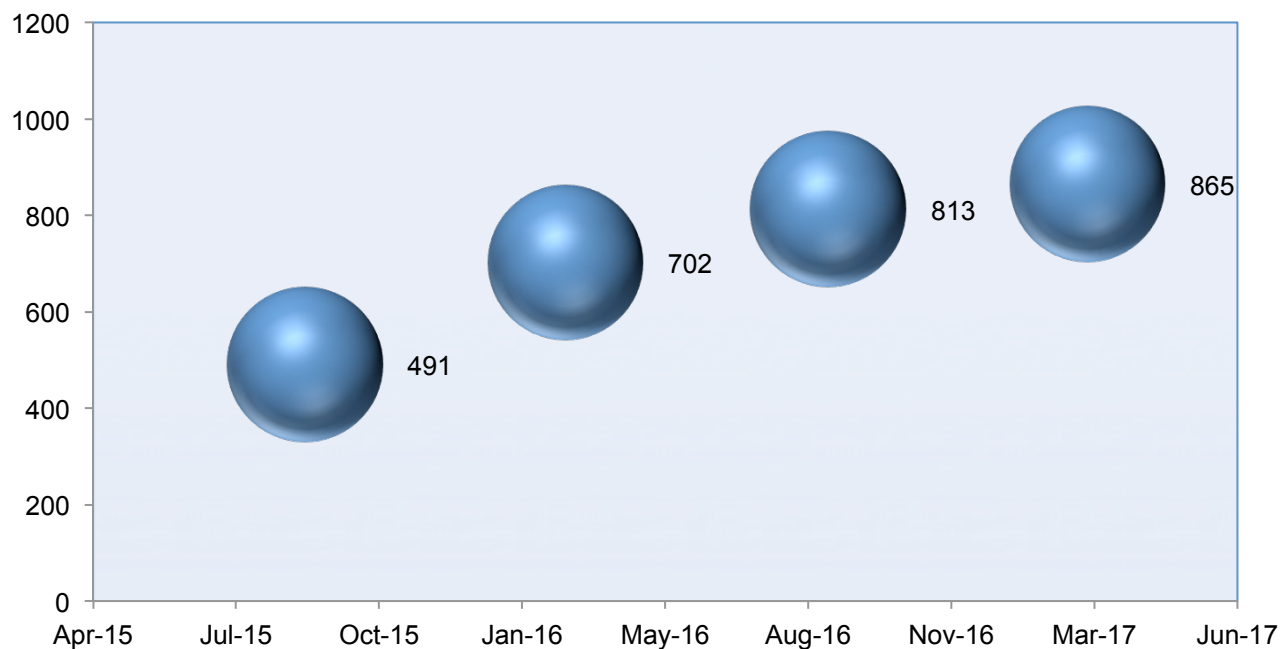# Support queries October 2016 - March 2017

Secure Lab Support

Remote access via Secure Lab: 115 datasets

On-site access via Safe Room: 9 datasets

Number of Secure Lab users

- ➢ Since October 2014 number of researchers trained has doubled

- ➢ Frequency of our training has increased to twice/ month

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Summary challenges re outputs/Secure Lab

Resources needed for increasing demand in Secure Lab Support

- high/increasing number of output requests

- time consuming output checking procedures for an increasing number of users of an increasing number of datasets

- increase in SURE training requirements

[…and other Secure Lab User Support aspects such as import request, linkage requests, enquiries, technical queries]

…while facing a decline in resources

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II. Ideas
to tackle our challenges

Addressing our Secure Lab challenges

Secure Lab Support takes up a significant proportion of our time, big changes have to happen here as we need to manage increasing workloads with fewer people

We consider the following:

a) adding information in Jira to enable monitoring/evaluation of improvements

b) introducing limitations to output requests

c) introducing changes to our output checking procedure

d) stop linking datasets (it can be done at ONS) or introduce charges

e) creating SDC guidelines to be placed on webpage for easy reference

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Addressing our Secure Lab challenges

a) **improve what we record in JIRA before we start implementing changes so we can monitor and evaluate the improvements properly**

We could consider adding the following pieces of information into Jira

- number of pages the output consists of

- number of files the output consists of and how many of which type

- number of emails exchanged for clarification

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Addressing our Secure Lab challenges

b) **Consider limitations to output requests**, such as

- only allowing 1 output request at a time

- specifying the number of files the requested output can have

- limiting the types of outputs that can be requested

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Addressing our Secure Lab challenges

c) **Consider changes to output checking procedure**, such as

- changing the processing time from 3 to 5 working days

- rejecting output requests that do not fulfil our requirements

- introducing a semi-automated check prior to manual output checking

- locking the SDC files for the user as soon as the online form is submitted

- number of output checkers

- output checkers to start making changes to output files

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Addressing our Secure Lab challenges

d) **Stop linking datasets that can be done elsewhere and introduce charges for those that cannot**

- introduce charges to cover the time spent on linking

- Virtual Microdata Laboratory (VML) also provides ONS data made available via Secure Lab and offers paid linking services

e) **create SDC guidelines to be placed on webpage for clarity and easy reference**

III. Summary and discussion

Summary

With a combination of an increase in demand and a decrease in resources available to carry out Statistical Disclosure Control checks (and to provide all other aspects of the Secure Lab support and all other Support and Training), the challenge is to find solutions that are trying to balance continuous high quality user support and high user satisfaction with statistical disclosure control procedures that ensure safe outputs.

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Discussion

We would like to hear from you how you tackle those common challenges all Research Data Centres face, and what your experiences are, e.g.:

a) Which information proofed useful to monitor/evaluate changes re. handling outputs?

b) What are the experiences with introducing limitations to output requests (user response, overall impact on output load)?

c) Which changes to output checking procedures have been successful and which ones haven't?

d) Is linking an issue at your RDC? How do you handle those?

e) Have SDC guidelines on the webpage reduced the need for individual discussions with the researcher why certain outputs cannot be released?

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