

9. ADP equipment would also be used to provide service agencies with large-scale adjustment and reconciliation tasks (which is already being done by some agencies) in the production of standard series and to assist in the creation of new series through the reconciliation, adjustment and transformation of standard series.

*B. Character and organization of the data in a Federal Statistical Data Center*

1. Principles must be developed for the initial selection and future accession of data to be included in the Center's collection; they should reflect a broad range of uses and full utilization of basic information rather than a codification of present uses, present practices, and present compromises.

2. Methodology and principles must be developed for the conversion of present files and production data to suitable archive form and quality, and their maintenance in proper form and quality, supported by codebooks, manuals, etc.

(a) The principles established for archives must presume that data will be transferred from the collecting agency to the Center in full available detail.

(b) The principles established for archives must provide for the systematic completion of all corrections and adjustments to all data affected and all levels of detail, resulting in a fully reconciled and consistent body of data.

(c) The principles established for archives must provide for data to be transferred to the Center without screening for confidentiality; all confidentiality audits and checks would be applied to the formats and information content of the output of the Center.

(d) The principles established for archives must provide for the preservation of the identity of the reporting unit and the association of all information about the unit without regard to the agency or manner of the collection of the information; the rules and the economics of matching of existing records will be very different from those intended for future production of data.

3. Standards must be developed for definition, coding, classification and aggregation with the intent of maximizing the ability to use different kinds of data in the same analysis and of minimizing the loss of information.

4. Standards must be developed for formats in order to facilitate the management, housekeeping and retrieval of records and to avoid the loss of information.

5. Standards must be developed for quality of data (consistency of definition, error rates, etc.) and for means of assuring maintenance of quality.

6. Automatic data processing (ADP) equipment and systems must be available to the Center to provide economy, timeliness, and flexibility of access to the information in the records.

(a) ADP must be available

(1) to compute statistics that are inherently computable from the records,

(2) To provide answers in the required form, and

(3) To avoid unnecessary withholding of information as a result of using inefficient and redundant disclosure criteria.

(b) ADP must be available for the conduct of confidentiality and other disclosure audits, such rules and procedures to be applied to the data in the form and content intended for release from the Center.

7. Criteria must be developed for assuring that the Center is established, and is maintained, in a manner that is responsive to a broad base of potential users, rather than in a manner which seems to suit the present habitual users at any time.

8. Criteria must be devised for periodic review of the value of the data contained in the archive followed by a selective purging of the data whose retention is no longer justified.

DESCRIPTION OF A FEDERAL STATISTICAL DATA CENTER

*Introduction—Federal statistics and the computer*

The statistical services of the Federal Government were initially created in response to a variety of unrelated needs. The census of population, in its early simple form, arose in response to a specific constitutional provision. The first census of manufacturers was a purposeful study of the existing status and likely potential economic development of the young Nation. Other collections of data were directed at a continuing study of the operation of the economy: prices,