information & the state

gathering and distributing

concepts of information
March 9, 2010
Persons
Questions about the description of the persons, age, sex, color/race, children, birthday.

Birth/Citizenship
Questions about the country of origin of the person or their mother and father. Whether or not they have citizenship.

Occupation
Trade or profession, nature of the industry, employee or employer.

Education
School attended, can read/write?

Language
Mother tongue (often asked w/ birth/citizenship).

Military
Veteran of wars, benefits.

Household
Number in the family, relationship to the head of the family.

Health
Mental, disabilities.
Representatives and direct Taxes shall be apportioned among the several States which may be included within this Union, ... The actual Enumeration shall be made within three Years after the first Meeting of the Congress of the United States, and within every subsequent Term of ten Years.
beyond gathering?

producing/manufacturing/making?

"An immense amount of physical and intellectual work is needed to create even the most simple statistical fact--indeed, the simpler a fact is, the more refinement, and therefore the more effort, is necessary. This aspect was noticed early on in the history of statistics, not least by Charles Babbage: facts have to be manufactured"


or finding/gathering?

"a basic resource"

Anthony Ottinger, "Information resources," 1980
production: rival views

centralization
the 'organization of knowledge'
useful information

open source
"information wants to be free"
Stewart Brand

Graham's law
"People just produce whatever they want;
the good stuff spreads, and
the bad gets ignored"
Paul Graham, 2005
"By the early 1680s, monopolists had begun to turn to the Court of Chancery seeking injunctions to restrain interference with rights conferred...

The first case, in 1681, related to ... Stationers for the sole right to print statutes .... LC [Nottingham] granted injunction ... "the printing of the laws was a matter of state" in which accuracy was essential, but as far as concerned any other books .. he refused and injunction."

Norma Dawson, "English Trade Mark Law," 2003
laws to law reports

from market to hierarchy

"It has long been considered a practicable scheme for any barrister and bookseller who unite together with a view to notoriety or profit, to add to the existing list of law reports."

"... indiscriminately reporting cases ... the enormous mass of constantly accumulating materials ... these evils .. attributable to .. the multiplication of contemporaneous Reports .. has arisen from applying the principle of competition to correct the evils of prolixity, delay, and expense incident to the system of authorized reporting. ... new evils created .. confusion and uncertainty in the law producing perplexity in the administration of justice.

-- W.T.S. Daniel, History and Origin of Law Reports, 1884
contrasting freedoms?

"Our most practical check upon existing abuses; and small is the error of giving too much information, in comparison of the guilt of withholding any."

-- *Times*, 1828

"The public cannot have too much information."

-- *Times*, 1882

"It was not wise to give too much information with regard to the business they had in hand, as it might not be to the advantage of the company."

-- *Times*, 1867
market & hierarchy

Philip II
1527-1598
el rey papelero

double-entry bookkeeping

Jean-Baptiste Colbert
1619-1683
erudition d'état
information & the state

overview

thematic issues:
- government's role
- 'gathering' information—'legible' state
- distributing information—'legible' government

historical developments"

17-18th century, Staatkunde

18th - 19th century
- government information, statistical societies
- blue books & "moral statistics"
An act concerning...

1. public archive
2. state printer
3. pilots for SF
4. comptroller
5. treasurer
6. Sec. of state
8. translator
11. AG
14. Supreme Court
30. incorporation of cities
36. commissioner of deeds
41. notaries
49. lawful fences

48. incorporation of towns
53. weights & measures
55. limited partners
59. recorder's office
64. officers of health
67. surveyors
69. librarian
72. register of wills
89. marks & brands
90. reporter
93. conveyances
95. common law
117. incorp. of colleges
123. assayer

Statutes of California, 1849-50
"This boy must be put through a few preliminary paces.

Name, Jo. Nothing else he knows on. Don't know that everybody has two names. Never heerd of such a think. Don't know that Jo is short for a longer name. Thinks it long enough for him. ... Spell it? No. ... Never been to school. ... What's home?

" ... 'This won't do, gentlemen!' says the Coroner."

Charles Dickens, *Bleak House*, 1853
making legible

illegible to the state
(and to the researcher)
from Pondicherry or Tamilnadu?
backward caste or scheduled caste
below or above poverty line
landowning or not

conquest of illegibility
64 evidence
caste certificate
BPL certificate
patta/land certificate
"sailors ... trace their family ... names upon the wrist ... If it were possible for such a practice to become universal ... Who are you? ... no room for prevarication in the answer ... men were thus held as it were by an invisible chain."

Jeremy Bentham, Principles of Penal Law [1843]
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STATES AND TERRITORIES</th>
<th>CENSUS OF 1880</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Whites</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maine</td>
<td>581,413</td>
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<tr>
<td>New Hampshire</td>
<td>643,660</td>
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<tr>
<td>Massachusetts</td>
<td>378,618</td>
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<td>Rhode Island</td>
<td>405,873</td>
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<td>Connecticut</td>
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<td>Indiana</td>
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<td>Mississippi</td>
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<td>District of Columbia</td>
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<td>Alabama</td>
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<td>Florida</td>
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<td>Wisconsin</td>
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<td>Iowa</td>
<td>160,500</td>
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<td>Texas</td>
<td>250,946</td>
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<tr>
<td>California</td>
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<td>Minnesota Territory</td>
<td>203,856</td>
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<td>Utah Territory</td>
<td>143,100</td>
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Aggregate: 15,823,204, 454,085, 2,984,213, 18,261,502
"And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be taxed. ... And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the City of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the City of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house of David:) to be taxed with his espoused wife, being great with child."

Luke, 2, 4-5
registration

births, marriages, deaths
bills of mortality

1603: regular bills of mortality

1611: incorporation of parish clerks
counting by "searchers"

1629: other deaths

1728: age of deceased

1837: last bills/regulation act
"His Majesty gave this particular charge to His Society, that if they found any more such Tradesmen, they should be sure to admit them all, without any more ado."

--Pratt
political arithmetic

politics and population

William Petty, RS
surveyor
Political Arithmetic of Ireland

velocity of circulation
natural vs market price
economic surplus
population change

William Petty
1623–1687
competitive counts
counting against the French
counting against 'declinists'
slave vs free states

"Where there is room for more people they will alway arise, even without naturalization bills"

"On the Populousness of Ancient Nations"
David Hume, 1742
"In Britain, however, the first census was taken, not out of a constitutional requirement, but as a way of resolving the Malthusian population controversy ... The 1800 Census Act was designed principally to determine whether or not the population was actually increasing."

Martin Campbell-Kelly, "Change in the British Census," 1996
registration:property

tax rolls: Domesday 1086

maps/addresses

national

naval

transnational

cadastres

Portugal, 1756

France

Napa
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inventions or discoveries</th>
<th>Patents</th>
<th>Residence</th>
<th>When issued</th>
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<td>Bee-hives</td>
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<td>Bee-hives</td>
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<td>Bee-hives</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Beeing grain</td>
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<tr>
<td>Samuel C. Myers</td>
<td></td>
<td>Mount Pleasant, N.</td>
<td>July 22</td>
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<tr>
<td>John Sholes</td>
<td></td>
<td>New York</td>
<td>November 29</td>
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<tr>
<td>William M. Hall</td>
<td></td>
<td>Wallingford, N.</td>
<td>December 27</td>
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<tr>
<td>Israel Keyes</td>
<td></td>
<td>Putney, Vt.</td>
<td>July 17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Patent Number</td>
<td>Inventor</td>
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<td>00-00</td>
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<tr>
<td>00-00</td>
<td>Patents</td>
<td>00-00</td>
<td>Jane Doe</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Property:** IP

- Patents
- Copyrights
- Trade marks
"Apprehension of the wrong balance of trade, appears of such a nature, that it discovers itself wherever one is out of humour with the ministry, or is in low spirits."

--David Hume, "Of the balance of trade," 1758
internationalization

government conventions

\textit{time}
Greenwich, 1852; Meridian, 1884

\textit{distance}

\textit{IP}
Paris, 1883; Berne, 1886; Madrid, 1891

\textit{weather}

"Brussels convention [1853] on naval meteorology had created a widely used standard meteorological logbook for ships at sea .. the oldest continuous quasi-global meteorological record" -- Paul Edwards, Meteorology as
a century of statistics

government

civil society

"useful knowledge"

agricultural improvement:

"May commons be uncommon"

"Mr Burke reprobated the Ministry for having refused to lay before the House the papers which had been required; and objected to Major Scott, a gentleman in the army, giving any official information to that House, which, he thought, would have been more proper for the Chairman of the Committee, or from some of the Directors themselves" 1785
"the public at large remain without information and without interest ... or if they have any knowledge of them, it is but a dilettante knowledge, like that which people have of the mechanical arts who have never handled a tool.

John Stuart Mill
Considerations on Representative Government, 1862

a century of statistics

the "incontinent printer"
Parliamentary Commissions & Blue Books

wars, colonies, trade

"moral statistics"
poor law
child labour
factories acts
mines
sanitary conditions
Welsh education ...

Cof10-- State  28
"the provincial editor is in some sort a schoolmaster; granted: but who will guarantee his capacity? It is idle to say that in the competition of the market he who supplies the best information on national affairs will have the most customers. Experience proves the contrary: the statistics of journalism show the fact to be otherwise. A thorough knowledge .. can only be obtained through a study of the opinions held, and of the facts collected, by those who have given them time and thought. These facts and opinions are only to be found .. in ... those fifty or sixty annual volumes of Parliamentary Blue Books. A writer may doubtless pick up a good deal of general information ... but a full and accurate comprehension .. is not to be gathered sat second-hand"

Lord Stanley, What Shall We Do with Our Blue Books?
what was learned?

"Leonard Horner was one of the Factory Inquiry Commissioners in 1833, and Inspector, or rather Censor of Factories till 1859. He rendered undying service to the English working class. He carried on a life-long contest, not only with the embittered manufacturers, but also with the Cabinet, to whom the number of votes given by the masters in the Lower House, was a matter of far greater importance than the number of hours worked by the 'hands' in the mills."
US publications

**early 19th century**

gathering
discoveries, explorations, mapping
expeditions ....

distribution
government patronage

civil war

Owen, Howe, McKay

*American Freedman's Inquiry Commission*

1863–
"If the parties who act contrary to their interest had a proper knowledge of that interest, they would act well."

Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1824

"A more general diffusion of accurate knowledge regarding the state of public affairs would tend to check that excitement and party spirit which has often been created by misrepresentation or exaggeration, and has produced an annoyance to the government and at least a temporary disaffection of the public mind."

William Jacob, "Observations and Suggestions," 1832
rival gatherings

amateur ethnography

Royal Statistical Society, 1833

"the first and most essential rule of its conduct to exclude all opinions" -- Richard Jones, 1833

battling opinions

London SS v Manchester SS
urbanization v industrialization

The Moral and Physical Condition
of the Working Classes
Social Science Association, 1857

"volunteer legislators of Great Britain ..
brings together persons of all opinions
consistent with the profession of a desire
for social improvement" --J.S. Mill

"to take up the raw materials of social
legislation, and by the help of
statistics ... to reduce the 'hard facts'
to the condition of manageable matter"

Telegraph
Babbage, Kelvin, Hollerith, Burroughs

Telegraphs

"Telegraphs are machines for conveying information ... generally been established for the purpose of transmitting information during war"

Charles Babbage, *On the economy of machinery and manufactures*, 1832

typewriters, telephones, punch cards ...
government categories

enemies
aliens
deviants
criminals
anti-social

"the government of our Fürher
... is statistics friendly"

--Frederick Zahn
President of the Bavarian statistical office