



***Looking for Data Directions?  
Ask a Data Librarian –  
a UK perspective***

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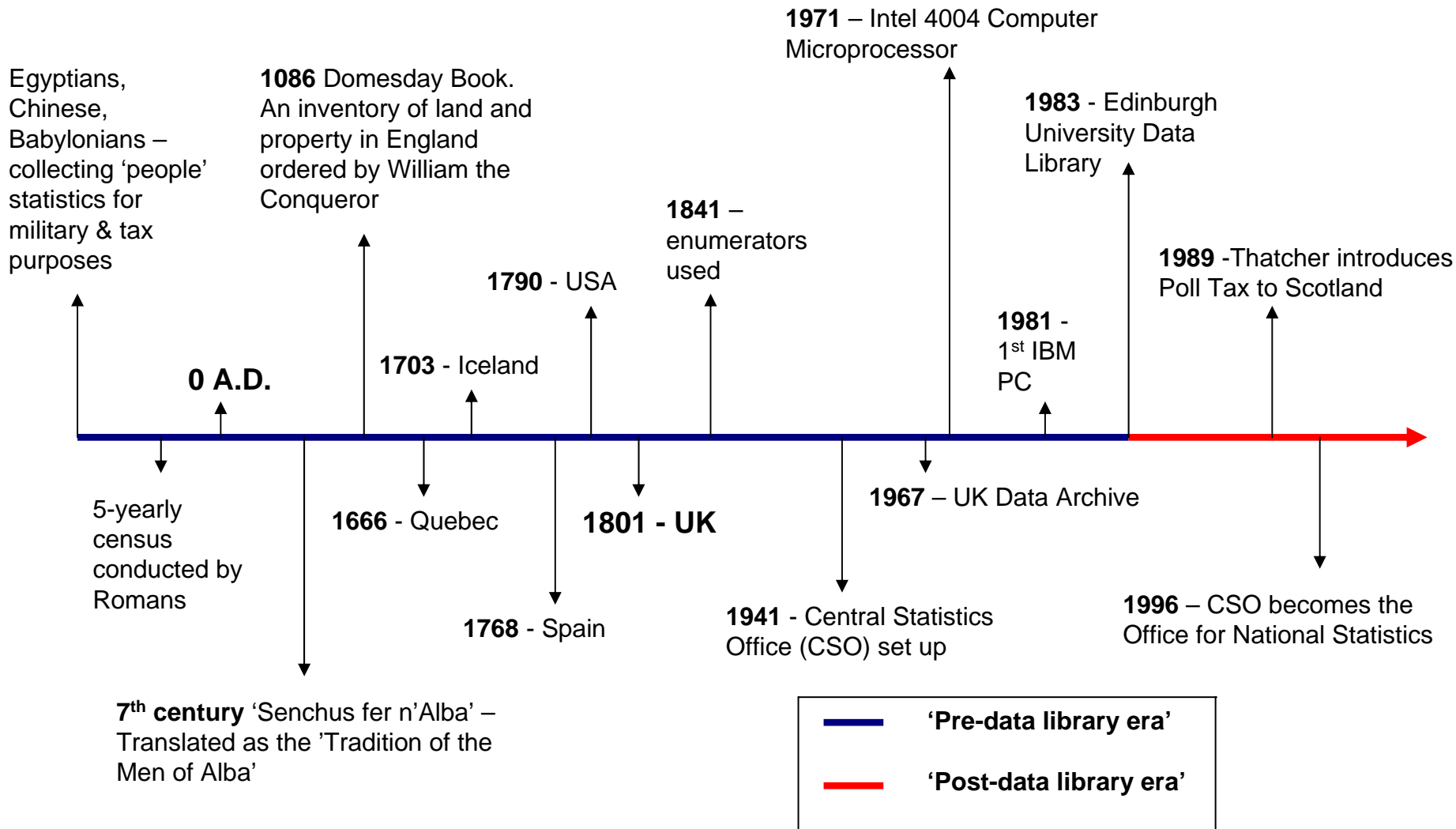
Q. What did the Romans ever do for us?

A. Built walls to separate purportedly uncivilised people from the purportedly civilised

Collected information about people as a means to collect taxes - an idea carried out by Chinese and Egyptians in earlier eras



### Lights, Sound...and action





### **Office of National Statistics (ONS)**

- Government department that provides UK statistical services.
- ONS is responsible for producing a wide range of key economic and social statistics which are used by policy making.

### **General Register Office for Scotland (GROS)**

- Similar role as ONS in Scotland
- responsible for the registration of births, marriages, deaths, divorces, and adoptions in Scotland in addition to the Scottish Census
- In addition to GROS the Scottish Executive provides statistical information, that meets the needs of government, business and the people of Scotland.

### **Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency**

### **Statistics for Wales – National Assembly for Wales**



## JISC-funded UK Data Centres

**EDINA** - hosted by Edinburgh University Data Library

- Offering networked access to a library of data, information and research resources e.g.
  - Geospatial
  - Multimedia
  - Bibliographic

**MIMAS** – run by Manchester Computing at the University of Manchester

- Providing access to networked access to key data and information resources to support teaching, learning and research e.g.
  - Bibliographic
  - Census Dissemination Unit
  - International Databanks
  - Satellite Imagery



## JISC-funded UK Data Centres .....cont'd

**UK Data Archive** – based at University of Essex

- National repository for social sciences datasets
- Responsible for the Census Registration Service

### **The Economic and Social Data Service, ESDS**

- Distributed service based on collaboration between:
  - UKDA
  - ISER
  - MIMAS
  - CCSR
- Consisting in four main subdivisions
  - Longitudinal
  - Government
  - Qualidata
  - International

### **Arts and Humanities Data Services**

- distributed service hosted by a number of HE institutions
- discovery, creation and preservation of digital resources in arts and humanities.



# Local Support Data Services

Institutions provide support for the national data services in different ways.

- Data Libraries,
- University Libraries,
- Computing Centres,
- Research Offices and
- Academic Departments.

Data Libraries go beyond the support of national data centres:

- Act a repository of data
- Reference service
- Train users to access and handle data resources



## UK Data Libraries

**Edinburgh University Data Library** - first such service in the UK, started in 1983.

- Collection covering Large scale government surveys ;Macroeconomic time series  
Financial time series; Population and agricultural census data ; Geospatial data.
- Specialised in data for Scotland and GIS
- Data consultancy service

**Oxford University Data Library** – started in 1988.

- Collection comprises survey micro datasets from UK and elsewhere; Ad hoc repeated cross section and panel/cohort academic surveys
- Areas of expertise includes
  - Subsets of variables from main government surveys
  - Questionnaire design
  - Coding Structures





## UK Data Libraries....cont'd

**London School of Economics Data Library** – started in 1997.

- Collection including microdata with government surveys and international opinion polls; wide range of aggregated databases from IGOs; GIS resources; financial databases.
- Expertise moving towards finance data

**RLab Data Service** – started in 1999 providing support to LSE's research laboratory.

- The centre piece of the collection is social survey data with some financial, geographical and medical data. Both micro and macro from individual countries throughout the world
- ESRC review of International Data resources and needs



# Data Information Specialist Committee – UK



In September 2003 the previous data libraries formed this support group. Meeting 4 times per year to compare issues and solutions arising from their daily work and it aims are as following :

- Foster understanding between data users and providers
- Raise awareness of the value of data support in Universities
- Share information and resources among local data support staff

Next step for the group is to plan and coordinate the necessary resources to act as a broker between member institutions and national data centres.



# Accidental Data Librarian

Not only do we come from different disciplinary backgrounds, the institutions that we represent have strengths and weakness in the disciplines that they cover. The skills required to deal with data management can be summarised as an amalgamation of three core areas :

- Computing
- Statistics
- Librarianship

Those skills can only be gained through day to day exposure to the world of data in an academic environment.