

# Removal of the FedStats Website and Reduction in Access to Statistical Methods Reports, Including Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Resources, on the Federal Committee on Statistical Methodology Website

Access Assessment Report March 1, 2018

#### **Sunlight Foundation's Web Integrity Project**

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See WIP's Report Production Protocol for details of our review process

#### Classification of Web content alterations and changes in access to Web resources:

Classification	Changed in this report?
Altering or removing text and non-text content	
2. Altering or removing links	Yes
3. Moving an entire webpage or collection of webpages or establishing redirects	Yes
4. Altering or removing an entire pertinent section of a webpage or collection of webpages	
5. Removing an entire webpage or document	Yes
6. Overhauling or removing an entire website	Yes
7. Altering or removing search engines and open data platforms	
8. Altering, removing, or deleting datasets	

The Sunlight Foundation's Web Integrity Project does not intend to assess any government agency's intentions in presenting the changes to webpages or other Web content that appear in this report.

The format of this report and the methodology used to generate it are based on those developed during 2017 by the Environmental Data & Governance Initiative's Website Monitoring Team, which our co-founders helped lead

## Removal of the FedStats Website and Reduction in Access to Statistical Methods Reports, Including Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Resources, on the Federal Committee on Statistical Methodology Website

#### Overview

The FedStats website aggregated statistical resources across the federal government. In February 2018, the website appears to have been removed entirely from the federal government's Web domain. The website for the Federal Committee on Statistical Methodology (FCSM) was also removed from the usa.gov domain, where it was previously hosted, and relaunched on a National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) Web domain. Both the FedStats website and the previous FCSM website URLs currently redirect to the NCES FCSM homepage. Statistical resources that were previously accessible from the websites are now inaccessible from the current FCSM website. These resources have not been made accessible elsewhere on the federal government's Web domain. These newly inaccessible resources include statistical policy working papers that were linked from both websites and reports on "Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity" that were linked on the FCSM website.

#### Background

<u>FedStats website details</u>: The <u>FedStats website</u> was established in 1997 as an aggregator of federal statistical information. It has historically included reports and links to various federal agency and non-federal statistical data websites.

<u>Federal Committee on Statistical Methodology (FCSM) details</u>: <u>FCSM</u>, created by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), is a federal interagency committee whose mission is to improve the quality of federal statistics through statistical and methodological technical guidance and to inform and advise OMB on issues related to statistical policy.

Communications about website changes: As of February 21, 2018, a notice was posted on the FCSM website stating "Please Note: The FCSM website and FedStats website have a new URL address, https://nces.ed.gov/FCSM/index.asp. The FedStats content is under construction. In the meantime, users may find www.data.gov helpful." As of February 28, 2018, an addition was made to the notice directing users to the Office of Management and Budget's Statistical and Science Policy website. The agency has not, however, otherwise proactively communicated about or explained reductions in access to reports that were linked from the FedStats or FCSM websites, and currently inaccessible resources have not been found within the data.gov domain (Webpage 4). Known archives: No archives of the FedStats and FCSM websites have been identified.

#### **Description of Most Notable Changes**

 The <u>FedStats website</u> (<u>Webpage 1</u>) was removed and does not appear to be available anywhere on the federal government's Web domain at this time. All FedStats domain URLs now redirect to the homepage of the NCES version of the FCSM website at the URL <u>https://nces.ed.gov/FCSM/index.asp</u>.

- a. Fedstats pages that are no longer accessible included those with links to reports with data on statistical programs of the U.S. Government (February 1, 2018), links to statistical policy working papers prepared by the Federal Committee on Statistical Methodology (FCSM) and other federal agencies (May 5, 2017), lists of links to statistical websites for federal agencies and non-federal organizations (May 5, 2017), links to statistical data from federal agencies (May 5, 2017), and a list of agencies and organizations that participate in the FedStats task force (May 5, 2017). Many of these resources are not currently linked from or aggregated on the NCES version of the FCSM website. Some of the links on these pages lead to dead pages at the time of the website's removal.
- 2. The previous <u>FCSM website</u> (<u>Webpage 2</u>), hosted on the usa.gov domain, was relaunched at a Department of Education Web domain corresponding to the NCES website (<u>Webpage 4</u>). All previous FCSM domain URLs now redirect to the URL for the new FCSM website homepage, instead of to pages containing related content, significantly reducing accessibility. The content and format of the previous and current FCSM websites appears to be similar, however some differences resulting in significant access reductions have been identified.
- 3. The <u>current FCSM</u> website contains pages that aggregate links for relevant documents and resources. Many of those links lead to removed pages.
  - a. For example, on the "Interagency Reports" page (listed in Table 5.1 on Webpage 5), links to seven reports on topics related to "Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity" and topics related to the statistical use of administrative data all lead to a PDF with a notice stating "This page is currently under construction."
    - Reports such as "<u>Current Measures of Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity in Federal Surveys</u>" from 2016 and "<u>Data Quality Assessment Tool for Administrative Data</u>" from 2013 are thus not accessible from the current FCSM website.
  - b. The corresponding link URLs on the previous "Interagency Reports" page (Webpage 3) still lead to live PDFs. Because they have not been found linked from any other federal website, they appear to currently be available only at those corresponding URLs.

#### **Table of Contents**

Report Section	Webpage Title	URL
Webpage 1	FedStats (homepage, no longer live)	https://fedstats.sites.usa.gov/
Webpage 2	Federal Committee on Statistical Methodology (usa.gov domain homepage, no longer live)	https://fcsm.sites.usa.gov/
Webpage 3	Interagency Reports (usa.gov domain, no longer live)	https://fcsm.sites.usa.gov/reports/int eragency-reports/
Webpage 4	Federal Committee on Statistical Methodology (ed.gov domain homepage)	https://nces.ed.gov/FCSM/index.asp
Webpage 5	Interagency Reports (ed.gov domain)	https://nces.ed.gov/FCSM/interagen cy_reports.asp

#### **Detailed Description of Changes in Access**

**Note:** Throughout the entire report, links to the Internet Archive's Wayback Machine's (IAWM) versions of corresponding pages are provided for reference. IAWM displays time in GMT, but dates listed correspond to EST.

#### Webpage 1: FedStats (homepage, no longer live)

- URL: https://fedstats.sites.usa.gov/
  - URL redirects to: https://nces.ed.gov/FCSM/index.asp (Webpage 4)
- Page removed between <u>February 1, 2018</u> and <u>February 20, 2018</u>.

#### Webpage 1 Details:

- 1. The FedStats homepage was removed between <u>February 1, 2018</u> and <u>February 20, 2018</u>.
- 2. The URL <a href="https://fedstats.sites.usa.gov/">https://fedstats.sites.usa.gov/</a> currently redirects to <a href="https://nces.ed.gov/FCSM/index.asp">https://nces.ed.gov/FCSM/index.asp</a> (February 20, 2018).
- All URLs on the fedstats.sites.usa.gov/ subdomain redirect to https://nces.ed.gov/FCSM/index.asp. For example, the "Resources and Standards" page at the URL <a href="https://fedstats.sites.usa.gov/resources-standards/">https://fedstats.sites.usa.gov/resources-standards/</a> redirects to this new URL (February 21, 2018).
- 4. The FedStats website was an aggregator of official federal statistical information and resources (see <u>FedStats "About" page</u> for more information). Webpages that are no longer accessible included:
  - a. Links on the homepage to reports prepared by the Office of Management and Budget and released for recent fiscal years with data on statistical programs of the U.S. government (<u>February 1, 2018</u>);
  - b. Links to statistical policy working papers prepared by the Federal Committee on Statistical Methodology and other federal agencies (May 5, 2017);
  - c. A list of links to statistical websites for non-federal organizations (May 5, 2017);
  - d. Links to statistical data released by U.S. Departments of Commerce, Labor, Justice, Energy, and others (May 5, 2017);
  - e. A list of agencies and organizations that participate in the FedStats task force (May 5, 2017);

(**Note**: The above does not serve as a comprehensive list of the information and resources linked from the FedStats website. Because there is a sparse IAWM snapshot archive, some of the IAWM links for particular pages above are dated. Some of the links on the pages listed lead to dead pages at the time of the website's removal, such as those leading to Obama-era OMB resources.)

<u>Screenshot 1.1</u>: A representative portion of the <u>February 1, 2018</u> version of the FedStats homepage from the Internet Archive's Wayback Machine.



## Webpage 2: Federal Committee on Statistical Methodology (usa.gov domain homepage, no longer live)

- URL: <a href="https://fcsm.sites.usa.gov/">https://fcsm.sites.usa.gov/</a>
  - URL redirects to: <a href="https://nces.ed.gov/FCSM/index.asp">https://nces.ed.gov/FCSM/index.asp</a> (Webpage 4)
- Page removed between <u>February 1, 2017</u> and <u>February 22, 2018</u> (**Note**: The wide time window is due to the fact that the IAWM has a sparse snapshot archive of this page)

#### Webpage 2 Details:

- 1. The FCSM usa.gov homepage was removed between February 1, 2017 and February 22, 2018. (Note: See Webpage 4 for related resources that are live there. The content on the FCSM ed.gov website has not been comprehensively cross-referenced with the content of this FCSM usa.gov website.)
- The URL <a href="https://fcsm.sites.usa.gov/">https://fcsm.sites.usa.gov/</a> currently redirects to <a href="https://nces.ed.gov/FCSM/index.asp">https://nces.ed.gov/FCSM/index.asp</a>.
- All URLs on the fcsm.sites.usa.gov/ subdomain redirect to https://nces.ed.gov/FCSM/index.asp. For example, the "Proceedings and Reports" page at the URL <a href="https://fcsm.sites.usa.gov/reports/">https://fcsm.sites.usa.gov/reports/</a> redirects to this new URL (<a href="February 27">February 27</a>, 2018)
- 4. The FCSM website at the usa.gov domain was an aggregator of official federal statistical information and resources. The website included:
  - a. Proceedings from research conferences held by FCSM (<u>December 9, 2016</u>);
  - b. Agency statistical methodology reports (<u>December 9, 2016</u>);
  - c. Interagency "Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity" reports, as well as "Statistical Policy" working papers (<u>December 9, 2016</u>) (see <u>Webpage 3</u> below);
  - d. Government-wide and agency-specific statistical standards and guidelines (<u>December 7, 2016</u>).

(**Note**: The above does not serve as a comprehensive list of the information and resources on the FCSM website. Because there is a sparse IAWM snapshot archive, the IAWM links for particular pages above are dated.)

<u>Screenshot 2.1</u>: A representative portion of the <u>December 7, 2016</u> version of the FCSM homepage at the usa.gov domain from the Internet Archive's Wayback Machine.



#### Webpage 3: Interagency Reports (usa.gov domain, no longer live)

- URL: <a href="https://fcsm.sites.usa.gov/reports/interagency-reports/">https://fcsm.sites.usa.gov/reports/interagency-reports/</a>
  - URL redirects to: <a href="https://nces.ed.gov/FCSM/index.asp">https://nces.ed.gov/FCSM/index.asp</a> (Webpage 4)
- Page removed between <u>August 2, 2017</u> and <u>February 17, 2018</u> (**Note**: The wide time window is due to the fact that the IAWM has a sparse snapshot archive of this page).

#### Webpage 3 Details:

- 1. The FCSM usa.gov "Interagency Reports" page was removed between <u>August 2, 2017</u> and <u>February 17, 2018</u>. (**Note**: See <u>Webpage 5</u> for a related page that does not contain links to live resources from this page, rendering the resources listed below inaccessible)
- 2. The URL for the FCSM usa.gov "Interagency Reports" page <u>now redirects</u> to <a href="https://nces.ed.gov/FCSM/index.asp">https://nces.ed.gov/FCSM/index.asp</a>.
- 3. The page listed links to and descriptions of seven interagency reports, shown in Table 3.1 below.

<u>Table 3.1</u>: Assessment of Link and Corresponding Content Status on the FCSM usa.gov "Interagency Reports" Page. The following list details the links on the FCSM usa.gov "Interagency Reports" page on <u>August 2, 2017</u>, along with the status of the the PDF corresponding to each link URL.

Index	Link Text	Link URL	PDF Status
1	Toward a Research Agenda for Measuring Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity in Federal Surveys: Findings, Recommendations, and Next Steps	https://s3.amazonaws.co m/sitesusa/wp-content/up loads/sites/242/2014/04/ SOGI_Research_Agenda _Final_Report_20161020 .pdf	<u>Live</u> (2/22/18)
2	Evaluations of Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Survey Measures: What Have We Learned?	https://s3.amazonaws.co m/sitesusa/wp-content/up loads/sites/242/2014/04/ Evaluations_of_SOGI_Q uestions_20160923.pdf	<u>Live</u> (2/22/18)
3	Current Measures of Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity in Federal Surveys	https://s3.amazonaws.co m/sitesusa/wp-content/up loads/sites/242/2014/04/c urrent_measures_201608 12.pdf	<u>Live</u> (2/22/18)
4	Improved Measurement of Household Relationships in	https://s3.amazonaws.co m/sitesusa/wp-content/up	<u>Live</u> (2/22/18)

	Federal Surveys: Measuring Same-Sex Co-Residential Relationships	loads/sites/242/2014/04/ MRFHS_StatisticalPolicy WorkingPaper201408.pdf	
5	Data Quality Assessment Tool for Administrative Data	https://s3.amazonaws.co m/sitesusa/wp-content/up loads/sites/242/2014/04/ DataQualityAssessmentT ool.pdf	<u>Live</u> (2/22/18)
6	Profiles in Success of Statistical Uses of Administrative Data	https://s3.amazonaws.co m/sitesusa/wp-content/up loads/sites/242/2014/04/ StatisticalUsesofARData. pdf	<u>Live</u> (2/22/18)
7	Response Rate Summit: Summary Report	https://s3.amazonaws.co m/sitesusa/wp-content/up loads/sites/242/2014/04/s ummitreportfinal.pdf	<u>Live</u> (2/27/18)

**Screenshot 3.1**: A representative portion of the <u>August 2, 2017</u> version of the FCSM usa.gov "Interagency Reports" page from the Internet Archive's Wayback Machine.



### Webpage 4: Federal Committee on Statistical Methodology (ed.gov domain homepage)

- URL: <a href="https://nces.ed.gov/FCSM/index.asp">https://nces.ed.gov/FCSM/index.asp</a>
- Page is live; first capture of this page on the Internet Archive's Wayback Machine is on <u>February 14, 2018</u> (*Note: This site may have been live prior to this date*).

#### Webpage 4 Details:

- 1. The FCSM ed.gov homepage was live as early as <u>February 14, 2018</u>, but may have gone live prior to this date.
- 2. The URL for the FedStats homepage (<u>Webpage 1</u>) and all URLs at the fedstats.sites.usa.gov/ domain now direct to this FCSM ed.gov homepage.
- 3. The URLs for the pages corresponding to the FCSM homepage and Interagency Reports at the FCSM usa.gov domain (Webpages 2 and 3) and all other URLs at the fcsm.sites.usa.gov/ domain now direct to this FCSM ed.gov homepage.
- 4. Between February 20, 2018, 8:04 AM EST and February 21, 2018, 9:16 AM EST, a notice was posted on the FCSM ed.gov homepage stating: "Please Note: The FCSM website and FedStats website have a new URL address, <a href="https://nces.ed.gov/FCSM/index.asp">https://nces.ed.gov/FCSM/index.asp</a>. The FedStats content is under construction. In the meantime, users may find www.data.gov helpful."
- 5. Between February 27, 2018, 10:31 PM EST and February 28, 2018, 10:35 PM EST, an addition was made to the above notice posted on the FCSM ed.gov homepage stating: "The statistical policies and standards that were on FedStats are available on the Office of Management and Budget's Statistical and Science Policy website, which was recently brought back online:

  https://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/information-regulatory-affairs/statistical-programs-standards/."
- 6. The agency has not otherwise proactively communicated about or explained reductions in access to reports that were linked from the FedStats or FCSM websites.
  - a. Currently inaccessible resources have not been found within the data.gov domain.

**Note**: The content on the FCSM ed.gov website has not been comprehensively cross-referenced with the content on the FedStats website (<u>Webpage 1</u>) and the FCSM usa.gov website (<u>Webpage 2</u>).

<u>Screenshot 4.1</u>: A representative portion of the <u>February 28, 2018</u> version of the FCSM ed.gov homepage from the Internet Archive's Wayback Machine. See the <u>February 20, 2018</u> version of the homepage without the added note.



#### Webpage 5: Interagency Reports (ed.gov domain)

- URL: <a href="https://nces.ed.gov/FCSM/interagency\_reports.asp">https://nces.ed.gov/FCSM/interagency\_reports.asp</a>
- Page is live; first capture of this page on the Internet Archive's Wayback Machine is on <u>February 17, 2018</u> (*Note: This site may have been live prior to this date*).

#### Webpage 5 Details:

- 1. The "Interagency Reports" page on the FCSM ed.gov domain was live as early as February 17, 2018, but may have gone live prior to this date.
- 2. The page lists links to and descriptions of seven interagency reports, shown in Table 5.1 below. The link text and descriptions of reports linked from the FCSM ed.gov "Interagency Reports" page are the same as the link text and descriptions listed on the FCSM USA.gov "Interagency Reports" page (Webpage 3).
- 3. The link URLs on the FCSM ed.gov "Interagency Reports" page are **not** the same as the link URLs corresponding to the link URLs listed on the FCSM usa.gov "Interagency Reports" page (Webpage 3). (**Note**: The link URLs corresponding to links listed on the removed FCSM usa.gov "Interagency Reports" page still lead to live PDFs.)
- 4. The link URL for every link listed in the FCSM ed.gov "Interagency Reports" page is the same: <a href="https://nces.ed.gov/FCSM/pdf/construction.pdf">https://nces.ed.gov/FCSM/pdf/construction.pdf</a> (February 27, 2018). This URL leads to a PDF that says, "This page is currently under construction, modernization underway, thank you for your patience"

<u>Table 5.1</u>: Assessment of Links and Corresponding Content Status on the FCSM ed.gov "Interagency Reports" Page. The following list details the links on the FCSM ed.gov "Interagency Reports" page on <u>February 17, 2018</u>, along with the status of the PDF corresponding to each link URL.

Index	Link Text	Link URL	PDF Status
1	Toward a Research Agenda for Measuring Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity in Federal Surveys: Findings, Recommendations, and Next Steps	https://nces.ed.gov/FCS M/pdf/construction.pdf	Page under construction (2/17/18)
2	Evaluations of Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Survey Measures: What Have We Learned?	https://nces.ed.gov/FCS M/pdf/construction.pdf	Page under construction (2/17/18)

3	Current Measures of Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity in Federal Surveys	https://nces.ed.gov/FCS M/pdf/construction.pdf	Page under construction (2/17/18)
4	Improved Measurement of Household Relationships in Federal Surveys: Measuring Same-Sex Co-Residential Relationships	https://nces.ed.gov/FCS M/pdf/construction.pdf	Page under construction (2/17/18)
5	Data Quality Assessment Tool for Administrative Data	https://nces.ed.gov/FCS M/pdf/construction.pdf	Page under construction (2/17/18)
6	Profiles in Success of Statistical Uses of Administrative Data	https://nces.ed.gov/FCS M/pdf/construction.pdf	Page under construction (2/17/18)
7	Response Rate Summit: Summary Report	https://nces.ed.gov/FCS M/pdf/construction.pdf	Page under construction (2/17/18)

**Screenshot 5.1**: A representative portion of the February 17, 2018 version of the FCSM ed.gov "Interagency Reports" page from the Internet Archive's Wayback Machine.

