

# Black Country Observatory

## Black Country Knowledge User Guide

**October 2008**



## Black Country Knowledge

### Introduction

A new and improved version of Black Country Knowledge is now live and available to use online at <http://www.blackcountryknowledge.co.uk>


This updated version includes the following new features that will be explored in further detail in this document

- The ability to **export** data tables to pdf format
- The opening of data tables direct in Microsoft **Office**
- The ability to perform **calculations** within a table data table
- New charts

Black Country Knowledge is still an easy to use web based system with tools for analysing and presenting data in tables, charts, graphs and thematic maps.

Within a standard web browser users are able to **access, search, locate, browse, analyse, edit** and **download** data and metadata.

These Help pages are designed to guide you through the main components of Black Country Knowledge and enable you to take full advantage of the functions that are available.

An additional help guide can be accessed at any time whilst using Black Country Knowledge by clicking on this symbol<sup>1</sup> 

These pages are context sensitive so if you click on the Help link when performing tabulation, you are taken to the relevant page within this Help System. You can also use the menu on the left to jump to any page or you can view pages in sequence using the 'next' and 'previous' buttons found at the top and bottom of each page.

### How to use Black Country Knowledge:

What follows is a user guide for the functionalities of the Black Country Knowledge data tables

#### 1. Getting Started

##### 1.1 Requirements

To use Black Country Knowledge, you need to use one of the following browsers:

- Microsoft Internet Explorer 5.0 or above
- Mozilla Firefox 1.0 or above

The new version of Black Country Knowledge doesn't require any software installations. To view maps, you need a web browser that is java-enabled.

##### 1.2 Accessing Black Country Knowledge

To begin, open your web-browser, go to <http://www.blackcountryobservatory.co.uk> and click on the symbol as shown below (found in the centre of the page)



<sup>1</sup> Within the online help system you may find that the term 'Cube' is used. A 'Cube' simply means a data table.



### 1.3 Themes

Black Country Knowledge is home to over 100 datasets, 49 of which have their time series updated on a regular basis. These datasets are now categorised into the following different themes along with a range of Reports and Maps

Figure 1.3.1

Theme	Category	Sub-categories
<b>BC Headline Indicators</b>	A list of the headline indicators that measure performance in the Black Country	
<b>People</b>	Data	Health, Learning, Population, Crime
	Reports	A range of reports from the Black Country and 4 local authorities relevant to the <b>People</b> theme
	Maps	A range of maps relevant to the <b>People</b> theme
<b>Place</b>	Data	Environment, Walsall
	Reports	A range of reports from the Black Country and 4 local authorities relevant to the <b>Place</b> theme
	Maps	A range of maps relevant to the <b>Place</b> theme
<b>Business</b>	Data	Economy (Business Development, Exports, Labour Market, Wealth & Investment, Knowledge Economy)
	Reports	A range of reports from the Black Country and 4 local authorities relevant to the <b>Business</b> theme
	Maps	A range of maps relevant to the <b>Business</b> theme
<b>Archive</b>	A list of indicators that are no longer updated but may be useful for future reference	

A full list of available indicators and their corresponding numbers is updated regularly and can be downloaded from <http://www.blackcountryobservatory.co.uk/knowledge.asp>. Scroll down the page and click on the link for 'Indicator List for October 2008' (or whatever the date may be). There is also a link to this file on the home page of Black Country Knowledge.

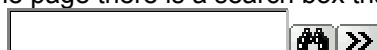
## 2. Using Black Country Knowledge


### 2.1 Searching

There are several ways to search for information in Black Country Knowledge;


#### i. Use the Search Function

At the top left-hand corner of the page there is a search box that looks like the one below;



To use this simply type a keyword into the box (e.g. **employment**) or, if you have looked at the 'Indicator List' and know the indicator number (e.g. **BC32a**) you wish to view then type it into the box and click on the  symbol. A list of appropriate information should then be forthcoming.




#### ii. Use the Advanced Search Function

This function allows users to search specific 'Metadata' fields. To use this, click on the  symbol and a new box will appear. Select the metadata field in which you wish to search from the first drop-down box. A further three fields can be chosen by selecting 'More'. The middle




box should state 'Contains.' Enter a keyword relating to the information you wish to access in the final box and click 'Search'.

### iii. Browse the Themes

By clicking on the  symbol next to each theme users can access all the indicators within that theme. Some themes have sub-themes within. For example, clicking on the  symbol next to **Economy** will lead to four further themes opening including 'Business Development', 'Exports' and 'Labour Market'. Simply click on the  symbol next to these sub-themes again to access the indicators.

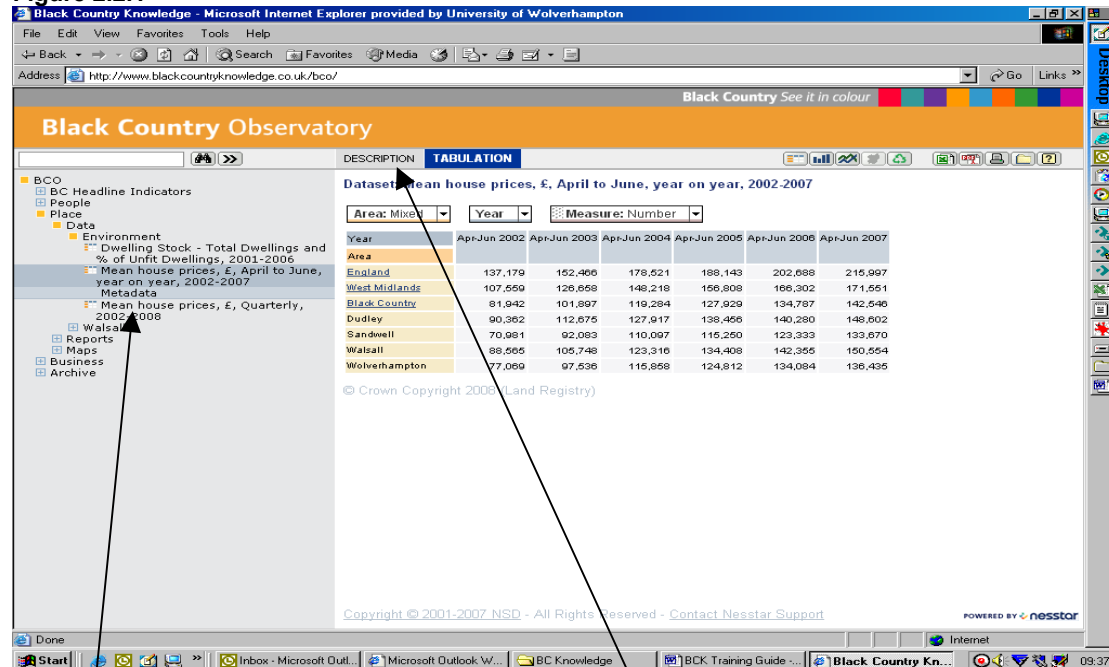
## 2.2 Viewing the Data

Within each theme, datasets are displayed next to a  symbol. For example the following indicator is located within the **Place** theme by clicking on the **Data** category and the **Environment** sub-category.

### Mean house prices, £, April to June, year on year, 2002-2007

To access the data simply click on the title of the indicator. A data table will then appear as shown below.

Figure 2.2.1



Each Indicator also comes with a set of metadata. There are two ways to access this information. Above the data table click on the word **DESCRIPTION** and a new page of text will appear. Alternatively, once the title of the Indicator has been clicked on the word '**Metadata**' will appear underneath. Simply click on the word to access the information. The metadata will look like this;

Figure 2.2.2

**Black Country Observatory**

**DESCRIPTION** TABULATION

**Dataset:** Mean house prices, £, April to June, year on year, 2002-2007

**Title:** Mean house prices, £, April to June, year on year, 2002-2007

**Abstract:** Last updated 1st August 2007

The data in this table refers to all privately owned properties that have been sold in the time period stated. The published data are simple averages. No weighting or adjustment is applied to reflect any seasonal changes or any other factors. The data is now taken from the Communities and Local Government website. All data for previous years has been amended to be consistent with the new source.

All commercial transactions, transfer, conveyances, assignments or leases at a premium with nominal rent are excluded from the figures shown above

**Coverage - Temporal:** Start: 2002 End: 2007

**Coverage - Spatial:**

- Dudley, Sandwell, Walsall, Wolverhampton, Black Country, West Midlands, England and Wales

**Date - Available:** 08/2007

**Next version due:** Aug 2008

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### 2.3 Editing the Data

A brand new feature of Black Country Knowledge is the 'Insert Calculation' function. This allows users to edit the data tables as they appear on the screen to include new rows and columns. To use this function;

- Select a variable, open the drop down list and select 'Insert Calculation' as shown below;

Figure 2.3.1

**Black Country Observatory**

**DESCRIPTION** **TABULATION**

**Dataset:** Mean house prices, £, April to June, year on year, 2002-2007

Area: Mixed Year: Measure: Number

Year	Apr-Jun 2005	Apr-Jun 2006	Apr-Jun 2007
England	188,143	202,688	215,997
West Midlands	166,808	166,302	171,551
Black Country	127,929	134,787	142,548
Dudley	138,456	140,280	148,802
Sandwell	70,981	92,083	110,097
Walsall	88,665	105,748	123,316
Wolverhampton	77,069	97,536	115,858


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ii. There are different types of calculations that can be performed. Users can add, aggregate, subtract, multiply, divide, calculate percentages, averages and rates of growth. The worked example to the right shows how to complete the form to create a new column showing the total for all years.

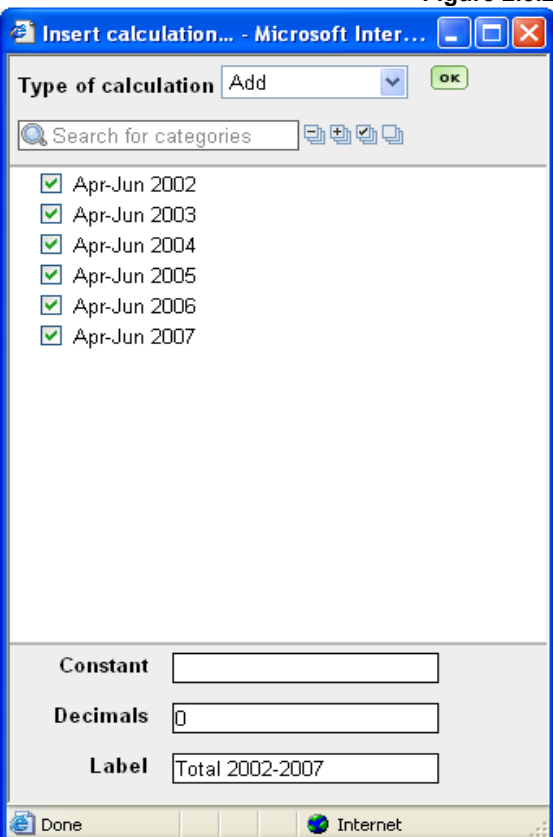
**Add** is selected from the drop down list and the required years are checked in the tick-box. In this case, all the years are selected. The number of **Decimal** points that are required is entered into the relevant box and next to **Label** simply enter the what the new column is to be called.

By clicking  the screen will refresh itself with the new column.


This process is also applicable if a new row needs to be created. Using the example shown here the user would simply need to select **Insert Calculation** from the 'Area' variable as opposed to the 'Year'. This would then allow calculations to be made between different areas.


You can revert back to the original table by clicking the  symbol

**Figure 2.3.2**



## 2.4 Editing the Tables

i. As well as the content of tables now being editable, users of Black Country Knowledge are still able to edit the format and layout of the tables as they appear on the screen. To move a variable to a column or a row open the drop down list as shown in **Figure 2.3.1** and select **Move to row** or **Move to column**. Please note, whilst this function can be useful it can have the effect of making the data more difficult to read. If your changes don't have the desired effect you can revert to the original table by clicking the  symbol


ii. Users can now use the variables as a filter. To do this, open the drop down list for the variable as shown in **Figure 2.3.1** and select **Use as Filter**. The table will then default to showing one row or column of data depending on which variable has been selected. For example, if the **Year** variable has been chosen to **Use as Filter** the table will default to only showing the most recent year's data. Users can then access data for previous years by opening the drop down list for the variable and hovering over the word **Filter**. Data for each year can now be clicked on individually. You can revert to the original table by clicking the  symbol




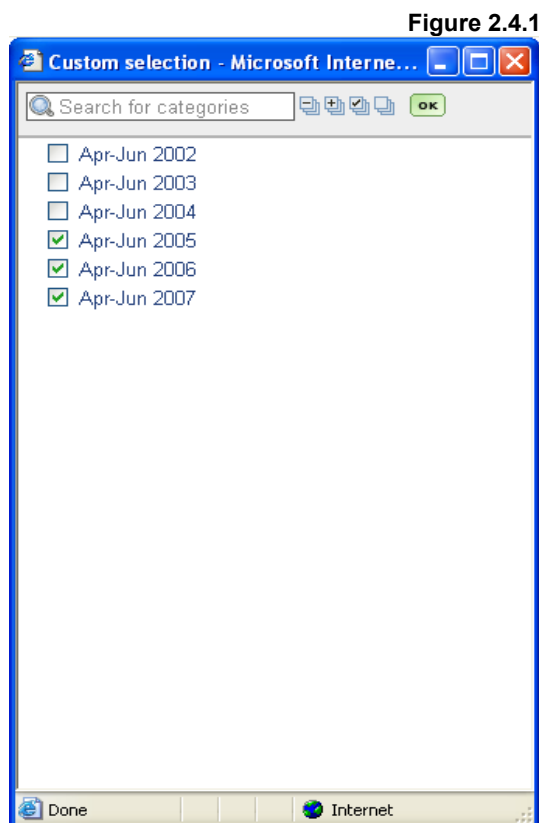
iii. The table-editing function that was previously called **Choose Categories** is still available but is now known as **Custom Selection**.

This function allows users to specifically view whatever data they wish to and to remove from view anything they don't need.

To access this, open the drop down list for a variable as shown in **Figure 2.3.1** and select **Custom Selection**. Uncheck the data that is not required. For example, if the variable is **Year** and the only data needed was from the last three years then users could uncheck all other data as shown in **Figure 2.4.1**.

By clicking  the screen will refresh itself with the requested information.




You can revert back to the original table by clicking the  symbol



## 2.5 Data Applications

When using Black Country Knowledge users are not restricted to simply displaying data in tabular form. There are a number of applications that are available which enable the datasets to be turned from a tabular format into a graphic at the touch of a button.


### i. Bar Charts


Once an indicator has been selected users can then convert the data table into a bar chart by clicking on the  symbol found at the top of the page just right of centre. Users will immediately be presented with the option of a horizontal  or vertical  chart. Simply click on the preferred choice and the screen will refresh turning the data table into a chart. The start and end points of the scale can be altered by changing the values in the two boxes in the bottom left hand corner of the page as shown below

**Figure 2.5.1**




### ii. Time Series Graphs

A time series graph can be created for any dataset by clicking on the  symbol found at the top of the page just right of centre. The start and end points of the scale can be altered by changing the values in the two boxes in the bottom left hand corner of the page.


Please note, users can return to the table view at any time by clicking on the  symbol found at the top of the page just right of centre.

## 2.6 Exporting Data


### i. Exporting to Microsoft Excel

Previous versions of Black Country Knowledge have exported data into a web-based version of excel. The new version improves on this by exporting data straight into Microsoft Excel, thereby making it easier to manipulate the data with functions and formulae. To export to excel, click on the  symbol in the top right hand side of the screen. Please note, only data tables can be exported in this way.


## ii. Exporting to PDF

This is a new feature of Black Country Knowledge. Users can now export data tables into pdf format by clicking on the  symbol in the top right hand side of the screen.

## 2.7 Printing the Data

The data tables and metadata can be printed straight from the screen. Simply click on the  symbol in the top right hand corner of the screen. A preview screen will then pop up and users should select their printer and click on 'Print'.

## 2.8 Create a Bookmark

It is possible to create a bookmark to a table that you have specific interest in. The bookmark allows yourself and whoever else you pass it to, to view the table directly without having to recreate it or search for it. Simply select the indicator you wish to bookmark and click on the  symbol in the top right hand corner of the page. You can then select an appropriate name for the bookmark and it will be saved in the 'Favourites' list of your web browser.

