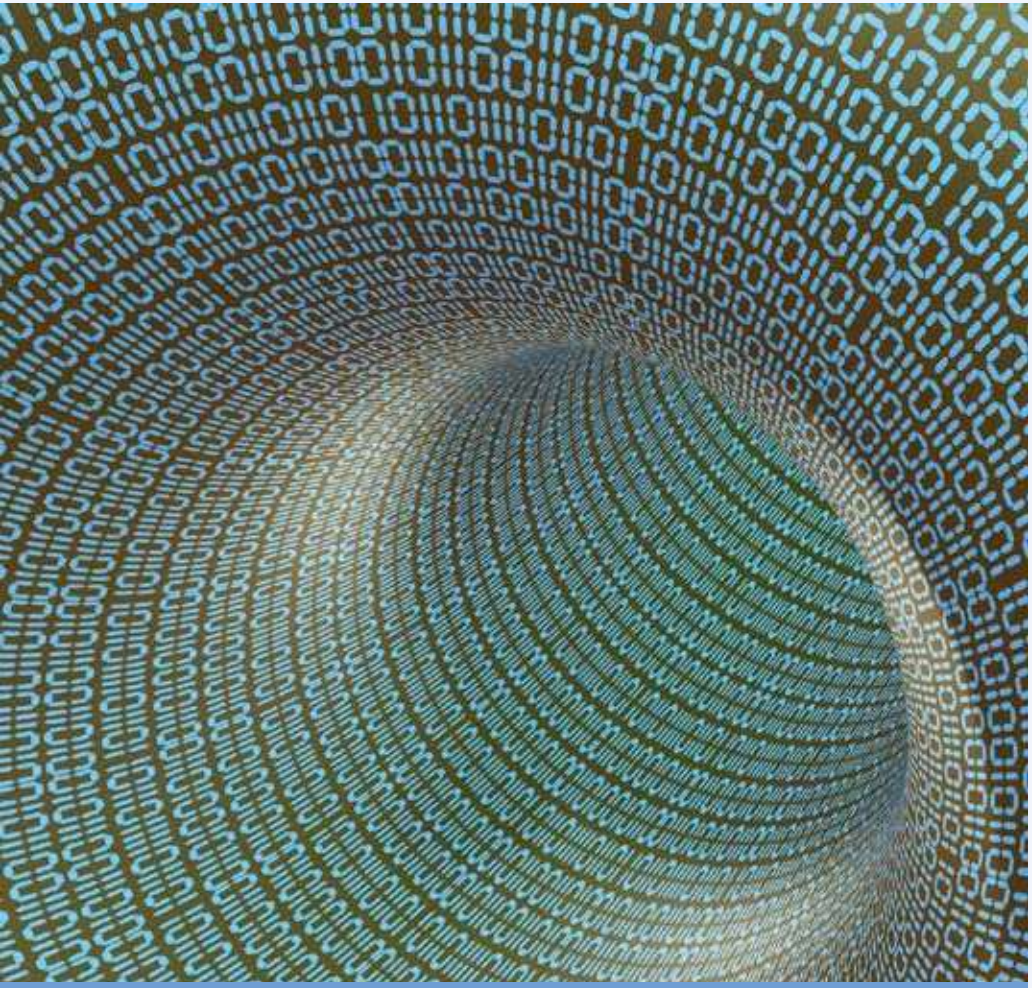
ve data systems

olanning in South Africa



build a credible institutional mechanism for skills planning
evaluate existing datasets and information systems. What
nicro-data available for the analysis of supply and demand in
bour market? What is the state of 'usability' of skills-related
xist across government departments? *Lynne Woolfrey*

Micro-data provide critical evidence to inform skills planning. An early LMIP study mapped the wide range of labour market and skills planning-related data maintained by government, research, education and NGO institutions, available in the public domain and on the world-wide web. To be as comprehensive and relevant as possible, the study included data sources from 1993 to February 2013.

Survey data sources

Labour market survey micro-data can be obtained from two sources: data producers and dedicated data distributors. National data distributors are part of data support networks in many countries. National statistics offices and research organisations provide the institutional capacity for national data management, including the sharing of national data for research purposes. These include national survey data archives and university-based research data centres.

Producers of South African skills-relevant micro-data include Statistics South Africa (StatsSA), government bodies, survey projects of South African and other universities and research institutes, as well as international donor organisations collecting data for project development and monitoring. In general, survey data in South Africa are available within the public domain. One exception is private sector organisations that conduct surveys for paying clients, so that the data are generally not freely available for reuse.

Data producers who also distribute their data include StatsSA, university-based survey projects and the Human Sciences Research Council (HRSC). The data is available from the two dedicated data distributors in the country, the South African Data Archive (SADA) and DataFirst.

Administrative data sources

Government departments and other entities collect administrative data in the course of their administrative functions. These functions are often regulated by national laws or regulations to generate all data necessary for administrative processes, including data on people, events and transactions. Computerised administrative systems allow for automated collection and collation of records at unit record level, and in theory should expedite the sharing of data within government and with academia.

In South Africa, administrative records at micro level are not automatically made available to researchers or government entities. Instead, aggregated data is published in annual reports, other publications and websites. Requests for data from administrative databases are either declined or handled on a case-by-case basis. Decisions are justified by confidentiality concerns aligned with the Protection of Personal Information Act.

The need for open and effective data management systems

Onerous requirements for data access restrict usage and limit the benefits of knowledge utilisation. Such barriers waste scarce national resources: they prevent reuse of data by researchers for policy analysis to aid skills planning,

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South Africa lacks a large enoug
researchers with the quantitative
data and who could constitute a
more open data access.