

BLS Data Dissemination

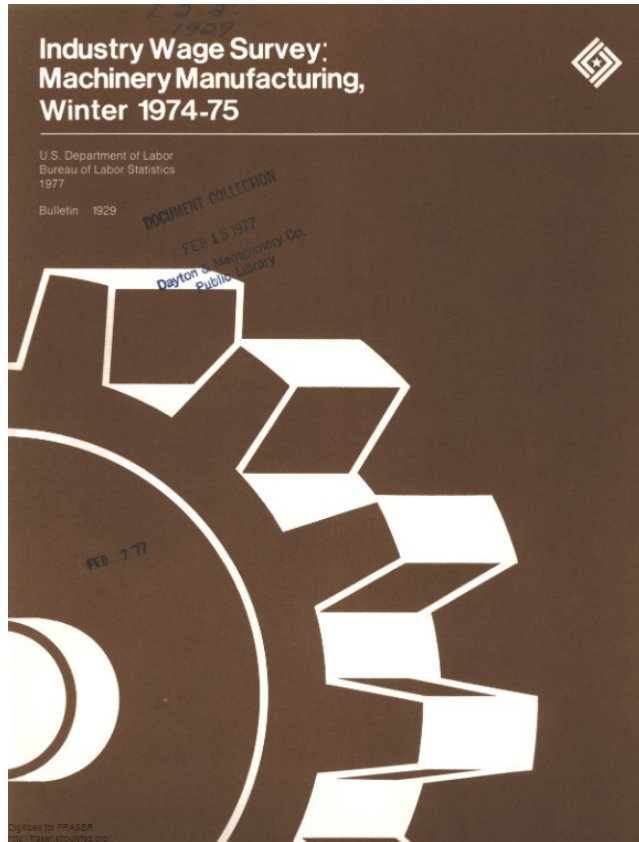
Emily Liddel


FESAC

8 December 2023



Paging through history: Compendiums





Employment and Earnings

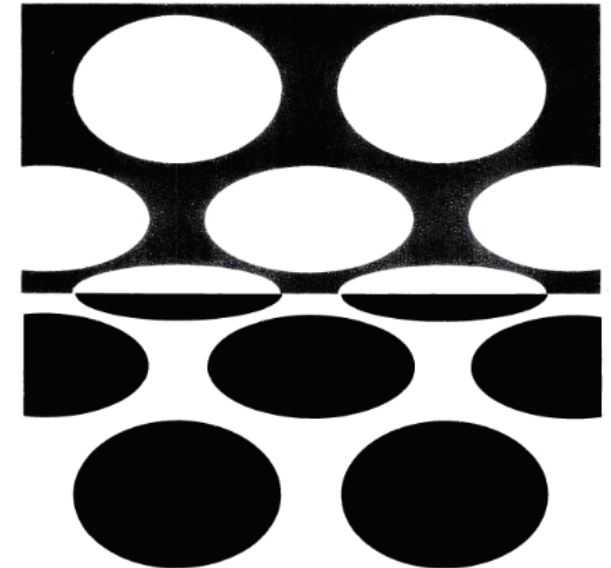
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Producer Prices and Price Indexes Data for March 1978

Formerly Wholesale Prices and Price Indexes

U.S. Department of Labor
Bureau of Labor Statistics



1995: public use databases

The screenshot shows the 'Bureau of Labor Statistics Data' website. At the top, the title 'Bureau of Labor Statistics Data' is displayed in a large, white, serif font against a dark blue background. To the right of the title is the BLS logo, which consists of the letters 'BLS' inside a white circle. Below the title, there are six white rectangular buttons arranged in two rows of three. Each button contains a small icon of a line graph with a red line and a yellow line on a blue grid. The buttons are labeled as follows: 'Most Requested Series', 'Selective Access', 'News Releases', 'Series Report', 'Gopher', and 'Economy at a Glance'.

Our data store and toolkit has grown



67 databases



Multiple
access tools



Mapping apps

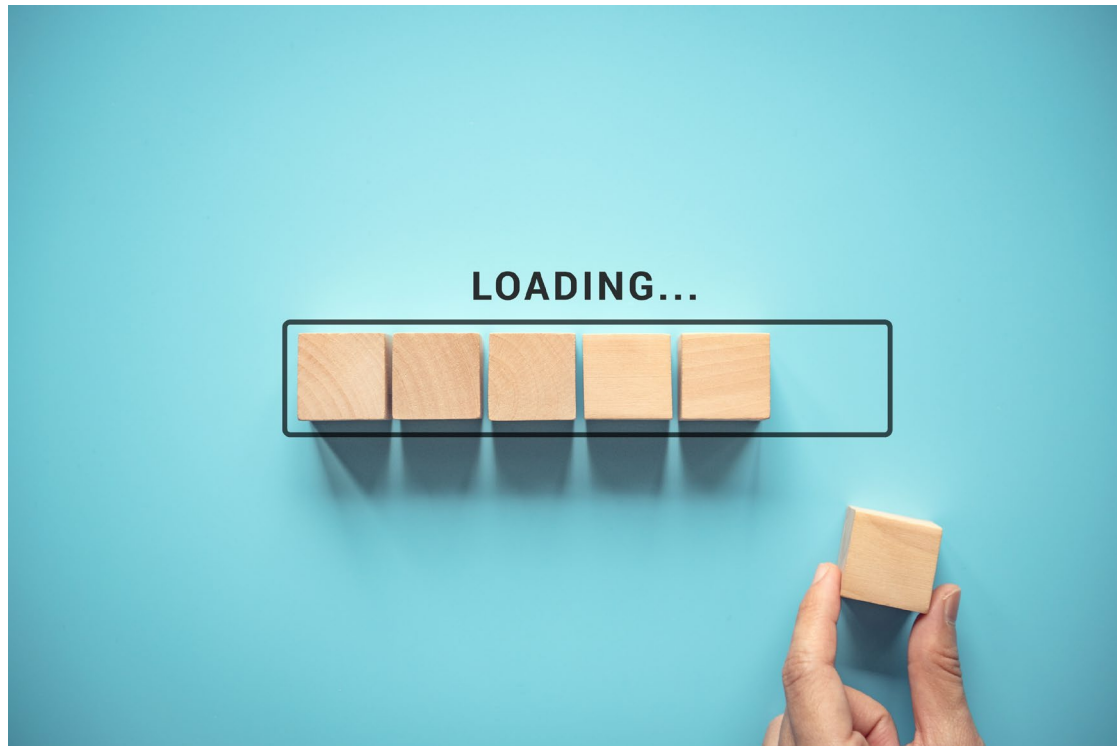


CPI calculator



API

Some of our challenges



- Not everything is in a database
- 67 SEPARATE databases
- Cross-sectional data vs. time series data

Despite modernizing...



One database to rule them all (circa 2012)

The screenshot displays the BLS Beta Labs website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for 'Home', 'Subject Areas', 'Databases & Tools', 'Publications', 'Economic Releases', and 'Beta'. Below this is the 'BLS Data Finder' section. On the left, there are filters for 'Topics' (Area, Demographics, Industry, Occupation) and 'Measures' (Employment, Labor Force). The main search area shows a search for 'Demographics' with 40303 results. A red arrow points to the 'Male' filter under the 'Gender' category. The search results list includes 'Wages' and 'Wages and hourly earnings data from the Current Population Survey'.



The data retrieval journey



Data access limitations

- Must have prior knowledge of BLS offerings
- Not built for exploration
- Hard to get data from multiple program areas at once
- Getting a little vs. download it all



What would have the biggest impact?

- Cleaner metadata
- Better interface tools
- Customized table builders
- Prioritizing database completeness
- Better display/download options
- Something else?



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