Case Study

Race Disparity
Ethnicity Facts and Figures

Challenge

More than **100 sensitive datasets** from across **12 government departments**, lack of clarity on how the data would be published.

The RDU had little experience of delivering digital projects.

The political sensitivity around the project and interest from high-profile stakeholders meant the team had to devote a lot of time to stakeholder engagement.

Why was Methods selected?

• Extensive technical expertise within data management, data visualisation and data publication.

• Experience in executing large scale data science projects for organisations like the ONS.

• Track record of passing GDS assessments.

• Approach based on user needs and extensive suite of data science and machine learning techniques for gathering insights.

Background

The Prime Minister called for an audit of all government data on ethnicity. The purpose of the audit was to

"identify and publish information showing how outcomes differ for people of different backgrounds [..] to reveal racial disparities and help end the burning injustices many people experience across Britain."
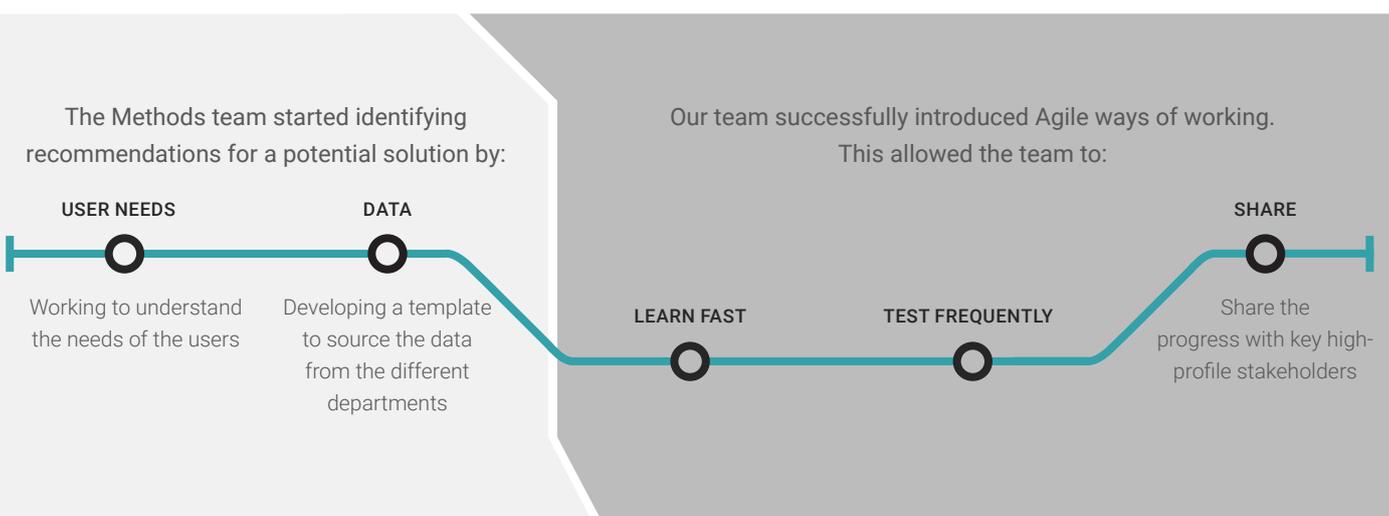
Approach

Methods' multidisciplinary team co-located with the existing Cabinet Office team of civil servants.

The Methods team started identifying recommendations for a potential solution by:

Our team successfully introduced Agile ways of working. This allowed the team to:

USER NEEDS
Working to understand the needs of the users

DATA
Developing a template to source the data from the different departments

LEARN FAST

TEST FREQUENTLY

SHARE
Share the progress with key high-profile stakeholders
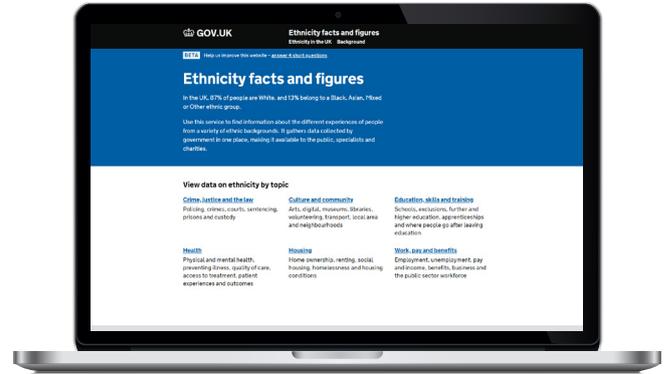
Race Disparity
Ethnicity Facts and Figures

Race Disparity Unit

methods

Solution

Methods challenge was to consolidate data from a wide range of disparate sources and present it as a website that could be easily interrogated and would be accessible and meaningful to users.

Our data scientists worked with the client to work through the various data challenges and to construct the outputs in a uniform style. The agile approach allowed us to test many different options and iterations, including maps and other more interactive data visualizations tools.

The democratisation of the data enables people to check how ethnicity affects the way they experience public services, and this transparency can help government organisations improve services and reduce disparity.

Results

On October 10th 2017 the Ethnicity facts and figures website launched with more than 100 datasets showing how different ethnicities have different outcomes across topics including education, work and crime. Methods were able to navigate through the sensitive nature of the data and the associated analysis along with the complexity of the issues involved to deliver an exemplar output. This was the first time that cross departmental data has been audited collected and presented in a uniform and simple way, allowing the public as well as expert users to find and understand data.

Looking back, we ascribe this achievement to our user focused cadence of development which always revolved around testing, learning and iterating.

The website has been recognised by industry experts as:…

"A model for how all statistics should be developed. An exemplar".

Ed Humpherson, Head of the UK Statistics Authority

"Extraordinary website"
The Washington Post

"Clear and user-friendly"
Damian Green
First Secretary of State

"We welcome the audit as ground breaking"
WESC

Next steps

Since the launch of the website, the team of civil servants has taken on the agile approach and the RDU is recognised as an innovative and collaborative team in the Cabinet Office. The RDU, has been nominated for the Digital Leaders Team of the Year award.

Sources:

https://www.gov.uk/government/news/prime-minister-orders-government-audit-to-tackle-racial-disparities-in-public-service-outcomes | https://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/ethnicity-facts-and-figures/ | https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/europe/britain-releases-massive-report-on-disparities-between-nations-races/2017/10/10/58aab1c8-adc8-11e7-9b93-b97043e57a22_story.html?utm_term=.668f7d9d5ae4#comments | https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2017-10-10/debates/4BB04020-2D72-4BAB-BE01-B9424C4DA6F4/RaceDisparityAudit | https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201719/cmselect/cmwomeq/562/56202.htm