

# Data Links

TriUniversity Data Resources

tdr.tug-libraries.on.ca

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Editor: Shabiran Rahman [srahman@library.uwaterloo.ca](mailto:srahman@library.uwaterloo.ca)

## GOVERNANCE OF TRIUNIVERSITY DATA RESOURCES

UNIVERSITY OF GUELPH (UG), UNIVERSITY OF WATERLOO (UW), AND WILFRID LAURIER UNIVERSITY (WLU)

The data services of the TriUniversity Group of Libraries have undergone significant changes in the recent past. While the appearance of the Web site and the services offered appear much the same, things have changed behind the scenes. In the spring of 2000 the three university libraries and UG's Computing and Communications Services completed an agreement formalizing the joint administration and funding of this service. While the three institutions have been sharing this service for some time, this agreement makes the relationship official and creates a new management structure. The day-to-day functioning of the service, the integration of the service into the libraries, and communication with users is now the responsibility of an Operational Management Group. This group is chaired by Doug Horne (UG), with representatives from the three institutions including Richard Pinnell (UW), Helene LeBlanc (WLU), and Bo Wandschneider (UG, Computing and Communication Services). Overseeing the operation and dealing with planning and budgetary issues is the TDR Steering Committee, composed of library directors or designates and the chair of the Operational Management Group. Working together, these two groups hope to continue to build the profile and functionality of this service.

Doug Horne, Chair, TDR Steering Committee, [dhorne@uoguelph.ca](mailto:dhorne@uoguelph.ca)

## News

### CONTENTS

- Governance of TriUniversity Data Resources
- TDR Staff Participate in DLI Training Session
- Data Resources Center at University of Guelph Gets Representation on ICPSR Council
- A Testimonial
- UW-EDS - A Brief History
- A Report on Geospatial Data
- Resources for Helping Students and Researchers Analyze Statistical Data
- New High Security Research Centre at UW Will Serve Three Universities

## TDR STAFF PARTICIPATE IN DLI TRAINING SESSION

The University of Guelph recently hosted a DLI training session. Data providers /librarians from across Ontario and Quebec, along with representatives from Statistics Canada, gathered for 3 days of presentations, workshops, and discussion sessions. Topics covered included updates on several CFI proposals, SLID, the new Survey of Household Spending, SPSS, and Beyond 2020. Having representation from all but one of the universities from Ontario allowed for some stimulating interaction and rewarding discussion of potential joint ventures. Ideas from these sessions were brought forward at the annual meeting of the Canadian Public Data Users in Edmonton. It looks like the next few years are going to be exciting times for empirical researchers in Canada. Funding for this training was provided by the DLI program through Statistics Canada. For more information please see: [stats.uoguelph.ca/DRC/DATA/dli](http://stats.uoguelph.ca/DRC/DATA/dli)

## DATA RESOURCE CENTRE AT UNIVERSITY OF GUELPH GETS REPRESENTATION ON ICPSR COUNCIL

Bo Wandschneider, UG Data Resource Centre, was recently elected to a four-year term on the Council of the Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR) based at the University of Michigan. The Official Representatives of the ICPSR voted Wandschneider to the Council to represent the diverse interests within ICPSR's member institutions. ICPSR is the world's largest archive of computerized social science data, with training facilities for the study of quantitative social analysis techniques and resources for social scientists using advanced computer technologies. The appointment was largely based on work done in the UG Data Resource Centre and the reputation that it has developed. For more information on the Council, please refer to: [www.icpsr.umich.edu/contents.html](http://www.icpsr.umich.edu/contents.html)

Bo Wandschneider, [bo@uoguelph.ca](mailto:bo@uoguelph.ca)

## A TESTIMONIAL

"Data provided in this way is of great assistance to researchers. It is available quickly and, of course, at no charge. Having the data in electronic form is of tremendous benefit; . . . can be quickly transferred to the researcher's computer." - Dr. Millerd

Dr. Frank Millerd, from WLU's School of Business and Economics, is a frequent user of the Canadian Census data from 1986 and 1996. He works with the data to examine the characteristics and determinants of economic change in the rural areas of Canada during this ten-year spread. Data from the 1986 and 1996 Censuses (chiefly, the "Profiles" of census divisions and subdivisions) give the detailed socio-economic characteristics he needs.

## UPDATE

### Data sets on tape previously held by UW Data Resources Centre

An ad hoc committee, including Dr. John Wilson, Dr. Ron Lambert, Jack Cooper (IST), and Shabiran Rahman (UW-EDS), was set up to investigate the transfer of data sets stored on tape at UW. This was necessary as the computer software used to read and write on tape was in the process of being discontinued. The committee began by identifying data sets that were of interest to the researchers. They then proceeded to find out if these data sets were available elsewhere for downloading or archiving. The committee is happy to report that most of these data sets are available at other sites such as York University and ICPSR. A few of these datasets will be downloaded and archived at UW.

## UNIVERSITY OF WATERLOO ELECTRONIC DATA SERVICE [UW-EDS] - A BRIEF HISTORY

In March 1994, the UW-EDS Working Group was established to develop and implement a system to access and deliver electronic data to faculty, students, and staff at UW. With the campus backbone in place and most campus buildings wired, access and delivery was made available through the campus network. It was the mission of this group to develop and promote the use of electronic data resources and services to our user community.

Initially our goals were:

1. to implement a service with emphasis on the access to and delivery of Canadian Census, General Social Surveys, and CANSIM data
2. to develop an effective user interface so that data could be accessed and retrieved

3. to establish an acquisition process to obtain the required electronic data sets or documents
4. to design and propose an effective administrative organization for the continuing operation of UW-EDS.

During the past six years data service at UW has come a long way. To meet the challenge of distributed access to data over the Web, we partnered with UG and WLU to develop TriUniversity Data Resources [TDR]. The use of TDR retrieval systems has made access and use of data much more accessible.

UW is a member of two consortia, the DLI (Data Liberation Initiative) and ICPSR (Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research). Our office, located in room 524 of the Dana Porter Library, is

## YOUR CONTACTS FOR DATA SERVICE AT OUR THREE LOCATIONS

University of Guelph  
Bo Wandschneider  
bo@uoguelph.ca  
519-824-4120 x6410

Wilfrid Laurier University  
Helene LeBlanc  
hleblanc@wlu.ca  
519-884-0710 x3743

University of Waterloo  
Susan Moskal  
srmoskal@library.uwaterloo.ca  
519-888-4567 x2890

Shabiran Rahman  
srahman@library.uwaterloo.ca  
519-888-4567 x2882

equipped with several workstations for our users and reference materials.

An Advisory Committee was established that included representation from faculty and staff user groups across campus. Advisory Committee members and UW-EDS members have co-operated on a number of projects, including the rationalization of data tapes stored on campus.

Use of data by faculty and students has increased significantly during the past six years. Innovative research has been conducted by faculty and graduate students in departments across campus – from Sociology, History, and Political Science to Health Studies, Planning, Geography, and Management Science. Undergraduate students have used data for lab assignments and term papers.

UW Electronic Data Service Group  
uweds@library.uwaterloo.ca

## A REPORT ON GEOSPATIAL DATA

Canadian libraries, working consorcially or collaboratively, have become increasingly proactive in their efforts to negotiate better access to Canadian geospatial data. The demand at UW, WLU, and UG for access to geospatial data is much greater than it was a few years ago. Topographic data supplied by Natural Resources Canada (NRCan) ([www.ccg.rncan.gc.ca/ext/html/english/products/ntdb/ntdb.html](http://www.ccg.rncan.gc.ca/ext/html/english/products/ntdb/ntdb.html)) is costly, with prices ranging from \$450 to over \$1,000 per tile (i.e., map sheet), and licensing restrictions are considerable. The good news is that educational institutions in Canada are now eligible for a 50% discount on geospatial data supplied by Statistics Canada. Two relatively new federal initiatives include the GeoGratis site ([geogratis.cgdi.gc.ca/frames.html](http://geogratis.cgdi.gc.ca/frames.html)), sponsored by the Canada Centre for Remote Sensing, and the National Atlas of Canada ([atlas.gc.ca](http://atlas.gc.ca)). GeoGratis is an excellent source of Canada Land Inventory data and Land Classification data and is one of many GIS-related programs funded by the GeoConnections project.

So far the focus of these consorcial initiatives has been on access to national or provincial geospatial data sets. Few, if any, consorcial efforts have been made to improve access to local data sets such as those supplied by city or regional municipalities. In the future our three universities will have to work together to negotiate such licenses consorcially and to describe adequately data sets that TUG partners purchase or license. One such initiative is that of the faculty and staff in the Geography Department at WLU. They are currently studying the feasibility of converting records from MARC to FGDC format and then opening up their catalogue database via the Web to external search software such as NRCan's CEONet ([ceonet.cgdi.gc.ca/cs/en/index.html](http://ceonet.cgdi.gc.ca/cs/en/index.html)). We will all benefit from this endeavor. Effort is still needed to enhance the user interface to the data so that users can specify an area of interest, a data type (raster, vector, tabular), a theme or topic, and a date or date range. One promising development for TUG partners is the decision by Endeavor Information Systems to incorporate a geospatial search module into their Voyager library management software; this would enable TRELIS users to find and retrieve geospatial data held by the TUG Libraries.

The issues surrounding the purchase and access to geospatial data are many and complex. We are confident that if our three universities continue to work together we will be able to provide better and extensive access to our users.

Richard Pinnell, [rhpinell@library.uwaterloo.ca](mailto:rhpinell@library.uwaterloo.ca)

## NEW HIGH SECURITY RESEARCH CENTRE AT UW WILL SERVE THREE UNIVERSITIES

A new high-security research data centre at UW will allow "approved" researchers at UW, WLU, and UG to have access to otherwise confidential federal government databases.

As part of a national consortium with funding from the Canada Foundation for Innovation (CFI) and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC), UW has been selected as the site for the Southwestern Ontario Research Data Centre. Other new centres will be located at the University of British Columbia, University of Toronto, University of Calgary, Dalhousie University, the Université de Montréal, and McMaster University.

The University of Waterloo has recently purchased or negotiated license agreements for the following geospatial data sets:

Digital orthophotos:

- Regional Municipality of Waterloo, 1993 (.tif and GeoMap formats)
- Greater Toronto Area and Golden Horseshoe, 1995 (.tif)
- City of Kitchener, 1997 (.img)
- City of Toronto, 1997 (.tif)
- National Capital Region (Ottawa), 1994 and 1998 (.jpg)

Tabular (georeferenced) data:

- Grand River Conservation Authority data

Vector data:

- POLARIS cadastral data for Regional Municipality of Waterloo, from Teranet (.dxf)
- NRCan NTDB data at 1:50k for 40P and 30M tiles (mid/mif converted to .e00)
- NRCan CDED (DEM) data at 1:250k for tiles in Quebec & Ontario (USGS asc)
- MNR OTDB data (OBM) at 1:10k for Regional Municipality of Waterloo (.e00)
- University of Waterloo campus data (.dxf and .dwg)
- Soils polygons at 1:20k for Regional Municipality of Waterloo from Canada Agriculture (.e00)

The Centre is expected to be operational by the spring of 2001. One thousand three-hundred and twelve square feet of space in the Psychology, Sociology, and Anthropology building will be renovated for the Centre. It will provide a locked lab with 10 secure computers not connected to the outside world. These will be available for use by approved researchers – UW, WLU, and UG faculty and graduate students who have had their research proposals vetted by Statistics Canada. The resources at the Centre will be available to approved researchers all over Canada, particularly neighbouring universities like the University of Western Ontario and the University of Windsor. Researchers will have access to such information as birth dates from non-census and longitudinal surveys. This will allow them to follow anonymous individuals over time. This information is currently not available on the data released by Statistics Canada through DLI.

An employee seconded from Statistics Canada, along with a management committee will manage the Centre. Currently a steering committee is in place with representatives from WLU, UG, and UW. These include Roy Cameron (UW Health Studies and Gerontology), Mary Thompson (UW Statistics and Actuarial Science), Sandra Burt (UW Political Science), Keith Warriner (UW Sociology), Andrew Barker (UW Office of Research), John Goyder (UW Sociology), Shabiran Rahman (UW Library), Bo Wandschneider (UG Data Resource Centre) and Bruce Arai (WLU Sociology).

John Goyder  
jgoyder@watarts.uwaterloo.ca

## Resources for Helping Students and Researchers Analyze Statistical Data

The analysis of statistical data is a very important task for many consumers of data. Where can researchers, staff, and students go for help with the analysis of data or the use of statistical software? Here is a summary of the resources available:

### University of Guelph

- The department of Computing and Communications Services (CCS) has staff that provides advice and support for using supported statistical software. They also give workshops on using the software. They can be reached at extension 8002 or by e-mail at [sas\\_spss@uoguelph.ca](mailto:sas_spss@uoguelph.ca)
- The Ashton Statistical Lab is connected to the Department of Mathematics and Statistics, and has personnel who can provide more detailed assistance with the analysis of data and design of experiments. For information on how to contact them, visit their Web page at [www.mathstat.uoguelph.ca/ashton/asl1.html](http://www.mathstat.uoguelph.ca/ashton/asl1.html)

### Wilfrid Laurier University

- Support is available from the specific faculty and TAs who utilize the software in courses.

### University of Waterloo

- the department of Information Systems and Technology (IST) has staff that provides specific assistance with using supported statistical software across campus. IST regularly holds workshops on using statistical software. The statistical software specialist can be reached at extension 6710 or by visiting the Web page at [www.ist.uwaterloo.ca/ew/software/statistics.html](http://www.ist.uwaterloo.ca/ew/software/statistics.html)
- The department of Statistics houses a statistical consulting department that provides extensive assistance with the analysis of data and design of experiments. For more information, visit their Web page at [www.stats.uwaterloo.ca/Stats\\_Dept/consulting/consulting.html](http://www.stats.uwaterloo.ca/Stats_Dept/consulting/consulting.html)
- The Statistics and Sociology departments are also connected to the Survey Research Centre, a platform of communication for those working on surveys and survey methodologies. For information, visit their Web page at [www.stats.uwaterloo.ca/Stats\\_Dept/SRN/index.html](http://www.stats.uwaterloo.ca/Stats_Dept/SRN/index.html)
- The individual faculties have dedicated computing staff who can assist with some of the more general types of questions about installing and using statistical software. Contact your faculty computing office for more information.

Jack Cooper, [jack@ist.uwaterloo.ca](mailto:jack@ist.uwaterloo.ca)

## ANNOUNCEMENT

Fall 2000 issue of Data Links is the last issue that is being made available both on the Web as well as in hardcopy.

Winter 2001 will only be published in electronic format and available from the TriUniversity Data Resources Web Site at [tdr.tug-libraries.on.ca](http://tdr.tug-libraries.on.ca). Please click on News to read Data Links.

Shabiran Rahman, Editor, Data Links, [srahman@library.uwaterloo.ca](mailto:srahman@library.uwaterloo.ca)