

DATA LINKS

TriUniversity Data Resources

<http://tdr.tug-libraries.on.ca>

Fall 2004

Vol 7 Issue 2

DATA LIBERATION INITIATIVE TRAINING

The Data Liberation Initiative (DLI) once again provided three days of training to staff from data service centres at Ontario universities. This year's session was hosted by Queen's University, Kingston in early April. The training was preceded by a full day orientation to DLI for new members. These training sessions are jointly prepared by DLI members from university data centres as well as from Statistics Canada's DLI department. Sessions included hands-on workshops and seminar presentations. This year's half-day workshops included "GIS resources for non-specialists", presented by Barb Znamirovski (Trent University) and Nancy Lemay (University of Ottawa), and "Synthetic data" by Bo Wandscheider (University of Guelph).

Guest speakers this year were Maryanne Webber and Francois Nault from Culture, Tourism and Centre for Education Statistics, Statistics Canada, discussing "Education research: Issues, sources, tools". Mike Sivyver, recently appointed Chief, DLI, Statistics Canada, presented a lively, graphic look at the departmental structure of Statistics Canada. Seminar sessions covered topics such as the DLI licence, its restrictions and interpretation, and an introduction to Research Data Centres (RDCs). Presentations also included an overview of how to bring data to the classroom and an introduction to the process of marking up metadata.

The final day consisted of an open forum on DLI issues such as the future of public use microdata files, training and collaborative projects. New initiatives tabled include a collective approach to requesting access to data from other government departments and ministries. Sharing of training materials was arranged with these materials now available to DLI members from a single download site. This forum provides university data centres with an opportunity to bring forward common concerns directly to the department responsible for servicing the community. The event closed with planning for future training events as well as initiating several new collaborative projects between DLI members which will be developed over the coming year.

Carol Perry - University of Guelph

CONTENTS

| | |
|--|---|
| DATALIBERATION INITIATIVE TRAINING..... | 1 |
| CANADIAN TRAVEL SURVEY..... | 1 |
| TDR Nesstar PROJECT UPDATE..... | 2 |
| CONFERENCE ROUND-UP..... | 2 |
| DATALIBERATION INITIATIVE AND RESEARCH DATA CENTRES..... | 3 |
| WEB SURVEYS | 4 |
| NEWS..... | 4 |

*Editor: Carol Perry
carolp@uoguelph.ca*

Data Links is published by TDR every Fall & Winter to inform researchers of the latest news on our products and services

For previous issues see:<http://tdr.tug-libraries.on.ca/NEWS/mainnews.htm#dl>

CANADIAN TRAVEL SURVEY

The Canadian Travel Survey (CTS), a supplement of the Labour Force Survey and conducted by Statistics Canada, is a major source of data for assessing Canada's tourism industry. First conducted in 1979, it was developed to measure the characteristics and economic impact of domestic travel. Data are collected on over 30 variables covering a variety of socio-economic and trip characteristics, such as origin and destination, nights away from home, type of transportation, purpose of trip, and expenditures. Three criteria are used to define travel in the CTS, namely, length of stay, distance, and completion date. Geographic coverage extends to Canada, the provinces, and selected Census Metropolitan Areas (CMAs).

The survey data are made available in a series of microdata files. The TDR houses data from 1992 to 2002 and these files, along with the documentation for using them, are accessible through the TDR website. Several tables are available through CANSIM (<http://dc2.chass.utoronto.ca/cansim2/index.jsp>) and two summary tables are freely available

Continued on page 2

to the public at the Statistics Canada website. Results of the survey are published in *Canadian Travel Survey: Domestic Travel* (<http://dsp-psd.pwgsc.gc.ca/Collection-R/Statcan/87-212-XIE/87-212-XIE.html>). Customized tabulations are also available from Statistics Canada (please contact your local data representatives for details).

Major users of the data are the Canadian Tourism Commission, provincial governments, tourism boards, the media, businesses, consultants, and researchers.

At the University of Waterloo, the CTS is used in research, teaching, and faculty speeches. A Master's thesis in Recreation and Leisure Studies from 2000 used CTS data to examine patterns of non-travel, that is, regional variations in the lack of travel activity across Canada, and to correlate these patterns with socio-economic data. Currently, a student is studying seasonal variations in inter- and intra-provincial travel and will look at the net economic impact of these flows. Professor Stephen Smith, also from the Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies, relates that the CTS is a very useful resource for tourism courses at both the undergraduate and graduate level, since it offers relatively current statistics on domestic tourism patterns. Professor Smith also uses CTS data when called upon to give speeches to community groups and regional marketing bodies on topics such as the importance of tourism in various regions, popularity of activities, and modes of travel and accommodation.

For further information, please contact your university's data representatives listed on page 4 of this newsletter.

Sandra Keys - University of Waterloo

TDR Nesstar PROJECT UPDATE

Earlier this summer, a new server was purchased to house the TDR Nesstar product which will provide the new web interface for TDR data. Vigorous testing took place throughout the summer and the movement of TDR data to the new server has begun. This process, which will continue throughout the fall and into the winter semester, involves the marking up of metadata for each survey available. The TDR community will be notified once the TDR Nesstar server is available for viewing. See previous issue for details of the Nesstar project. For questions regarding this project, please contact either Carol Perry (carolp@uoguelph.ca) or Michelle Edwards (edwardsm@uoguelph.ca).

Michelle Edwards - University of Guelph

CONFERENCE ROUND-UP

Each year, members of TDR attend conferences to gain new skills, make contact with others in the field and to bring back valuable product information to improve our services. The following reports highlight some of the events attended during the past year.

Joint CAPDU/ACMLA Conference Report

The Canadian Association of Public Data Users (CAPDU) and the Association of Canadian Map Libraries and Archives (ACMLA) held a joint conference in conjunction with the Congress of the Social Sciences at the University of Manitoba in Winnipeg from May 30 to June 4, 2004.

The week began with the the CAPDU Conference, followed by a joint day with ACMLA, and ended with the ACMLA Conference. In addition to the Annual General Meetings of the Associations, various workshops, panel discussions, and presentations were made.

CAPDU sessions included a workshop on the variety of issues that are associated with dealing with historical census aggregate data, such as changes to census geography, changes in units of observation, and changes in variable collection, coding, and definitions; a presentation on the Resource Data Centres housed at various universities across Canada; and a demonstration of the various microdata interfaces used by Canadian universities.

As in past years, the focus of the ACMLA conference was on geospatial data and GIS technology. The presentation on The Manitoba Land Initiative (<http://web2.gov.mb.ca/mli/>) introduced participants to this ambitious effort which enables access to geospatial information from "the Government of Manitoba to the desktop."

Panel discussions dealt with the topics of "How Much is Too Much? Offering GIS and Data Services to the Untrained User" and "Data Consortium and Local Data". In the first of these sessions, panel members talked about the dilemma we face in attempting to provide exceptional customer service with limited staff and other resources. The second session provided revealing insights into the differences across Canada in terms of access by our post-secondary students to provincial and municipal datasets. The Manitoba Land Initiative was held up as an example of visionary thinking in this regard.

The joint CAPDU/ACMLA Day included the opportunity to participate in a Census 2006 Consultation as well as GIS-related

Continued on page 3

presentations on data reference services and dissemination methods. "Data Education at McGill" by Rosa Orlandini (McGill University) focussed on data outreach at McGill which includes presentations for introductory courses, data reserves and presentations for specialized courses, and long-term research support. "Online GIS: Web solutions for Geospatial Data Dissemination" by Marcel Fortin (University of Toronto) dealt with software solutions for enabling online data delivery. His presentation is available at: http://prod.library.utoronto.ca:8090/maplib/fortin/Online_GIS.ppt.

Sandra Keys & Richard Pinnell - University of Waterloo

IASSIST

Data providers from around the world gather annually at the International Association for Social Science Information Service and Technology (IASSIST) conference. Intense half day workshops precede the three day conference, held this year in Madison, Wisconsin.

Speakers from national data archives mingle with colleagues from national statistical agencies and university data services. This provides for an extraordinary opportunity to compare notes on shared problems, to exchange information on data products and to share training materials and methods. It also allows data service providers to meet directly with major data producers. Each year representatives from universities in developing nations are sponsored to attend the conference. During the past 8 years IASSIST International Outreach has provided financial assistance to 37 conference participants from around the world.

Carol Perry - University of Guelph

DATA LIBERATION INITIATIVE and RESEARCH DATA CENTRES: A Continuum of Access

Data Liberation Initiative (DLI) and Research Data Centres (RDC) are two points on a continuum of access to data (Chuck Humphrey). Locally these initiatives are represented by TriUniversity Data Resources (TDR) and Southwestern Ontario Research Data Centre (SWORDC) respectively. Both of these initiatives serve different needs and it is imperative that they exist side by side and collaborate to provide the user with the level of data needed for research.

Through the efforts of the DLI External Advisory Committee more attention is being paid to building relations between RDC Analysts and DLI Contacts. At TDR we have been fortunate to have two members, Bo Wandschneider and Shabiran Rahman, associated with SWORDC since its inception and serving on the SWORDC board. A task group has recently been formed to improve dialogue and to streamline referrals between the two services. Members of

TDR NEW ACQUISITIONS

Census of Population - 2001

- B2020 files for Place of Work & Commuting to Work - CSD/CT geographic level

Adult Education and Training Survey - 2003

Annual Estimates of Employment, Earnings and Hours 1991-2003

- Excel files

Canadian Community Health Survey

- Cycle 1.2 - 2002

Canadian Travel Survey 2002

Canadian Tobacco Use Monitoring Survey 2003

- Annual file and Cycle 2 file

Survey of Household Spending 2002

Criminal Justice Statistics 2002

- B2020 files

Information and Communications Technologies in Schools Survey 2003

Postal Code Conversion File

- Census 2001 - Dec /03 file

Postal Code Federal Riding File

- Census 2001 - Dec /03 file

this group are Dr Michelle Edwards, University of Guelph; Helene LeBlanc, Wilfrid Laurier University; Dr Pat Newcombe-Welch, Statistics Canada Analyst; Shabiran Rahman, University of Waterloo Library; and Dr John Goyder, Co-Chair SWORDC.

On October 7th, 2004 a successful joint programme was held at University of Waterloo. Bo Wandschneider, University of Guelph, provided information about data available through DLI, and Dr Goyder discussed when and how to use data available through SWORDC.

The next joint event, being planned for November 19th, is to be held at Wilfrid Laurier University. Data users will talk about their experiences initially using DLI public use microdata files (PUMF's) and later accessing confidential data from the same survey through SWORDC.

Shabiran Rahman – University of Waterloo

NEW SERVICE OFFERED BY IST FOR THE CREATION AND DEPLOYMENT of WEB SURVEYS

Over the years, many researchers and administrative staff have sought guidance from our department at the University of Waterloo about ways of creating and deploying surveys over the web. There has not, up to this point, been a standard tool that we could recommend. However, after preliminary investigation into commercial and open source solutions which might be appropriate for campus-wide use, we now support a solution based on the open-source phpESP software. As the name implies, phpESP is built on a combination of php code and a back-end mysql database.

phpESP is accessed through a web interface that allows the creation and administration of web surveys. Some of the features include the ability to add several question types (including likert scale groups), the ability to create survey sections and section heading text, the capability of designating specific questions as 'required', and the ability to restrict access to surveys using a Userid/Password combination. It is also possible to apply different formatting themes based on Cascading Style Sheets or to modify the Style Sheets and create a customized theme. The survey results are collected and can be exported to a comma-delimited file for further statistical analysis.

phpESP will probably satisfy the large majority of web survey projects. As we gain more experience managing web surveys, we will become more knowledgeable about what other kinds of advanced features would be desirable and perhaps re-investigate the acquisition of a more sophisticated commercial solution for campus-wide use.

In order to use phpESP, an account must be set up for accessing the web interface. More information about how to request an account and how to use phpESP can be obtained from the following web page: <http://www.ist.uwaterloo.ca/ew/software/websurvey.htm>. IST is also offering instructional courses on phpESP. For more information, visit the course registration page at: http://ist.uwaterloo.ca/cs/Course_Registration/welcome.html

Jack Cooper – University of Waterloo

NEWS Christy Branston

Christy Branston is the newest member of the University of Waterloo's Electronic Data Service Group. Earlier this year, Christy became the Government Information and Economics Librarian after a completing a contract as the Liaison Librarian for Philosophy, Anthropology, Classical Studies, and Religious Studies. A graduate of Wilfrid Laurier University and the University of Western Ontario, she has worked as a reference librarian at the University of Saskatchewan, as an information specialist at an environmental consulting firm, and as an information analyst at the Toronto Stock Exchange.

Sandra Keys - University of Waterloo

YOUR CONTACTS FOR DATA SERVICE AT OUR THREE LOCATIONS

UNIVERSITY OF GUELPH
Michelle Edwards
edwardsm@uoguelph.ca
519-824-4120 x4539

UNIVERSITY OF WATERLOO
Sandra Keys
skeys@uwaterloo.ca
519-888-4567 x2279

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

WILFRID LAURIER UNIVERSITY
Helene LeBlanc
hleblanc@wlu.ca
519-884-0710 x3743

NOTES

ICPSR Direct has initiated a new user account system of registration. IP address restrictions are still being used to limit access to authorized members of TDR, however, users must now create individual accounts using a login and password which will be required each time data is downloaded. Instructions for use are available from the ICPSR Direct home page at: <http://www.icpsr.umich.edu/or-public/direct-access.html>