



WSS NEWS

WASHINGTON
STATISTICAL
SOCIETY

October 2004

Congratulations

The balloting results are in and the following people were elected to the Board of Directors of the Washington Statistical Society:

President-elect
Clyde Tucker

Treasurer
John Finamore

Methodology Program Chair
Jonaki Bose

Representatives at Large
Michael Sinclair
Leslie Wallace

A round of applause goes to the following individuals who were recently elected Fellows of the American Statistical Society (ASA). This honor goes to:

R. Raymond Bosecker, National Agricultural Statistics Service, USDA
Jai Won Choi, National Center for Health Statistics
Michael P. Cohen, Bureau of Transportation Statistics
Trena Ezzati-Rice, Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality
Susan Hinkins, NORC
Partha Lahiri, University of Maryland
David Marker, Westat
Tom Petska, Statistics of Income Division, IRS
Eric Slud, University of Maryland
Mike Stoto, RAND Corporation

WSS and Other Seminars (All events are open to any interested persons)	
October	
14	Thurs. Microdata Confidentiality Methods
19	Tues. From Controlled Experiment to Production Environment: Refusal Aversion Training Adoption and Considerations for Future Use and Research
20	Wed. Purchasing Power Parities – Statistics to Describe the World
27	Wed. Measuring Disclosure Risk for Microdata Using Probabilistic Models
November	
16	Tues. Data Quality and Record Linkage: A Broad Survey of Applications and Techniques
17	Wed. <i>Morris Hansen Lecture: Bridging the Gap: NCHS's Experience Transitioning to the 1997 Standards for Collecting Data on Race and Ethnicity</i>

Also available on the World Wide Web at the following URL: <http://www.science.gmu.edu/~wss>

Announcements

The 2004 Morris Hansen Lecture

The Morris Hansen Lecture will occur from 3:30 to 5:30 p.m. on Wednesday, November 17, 2004 at the Jefferson Auditorium in the South Building of the Department of Agriculture. The title of this year's lecture is "Bridging the Gap: NCHS's Experience Transitioning to the 1997 Standards for Collecting Data on Race and Ethnicity." The speaker is Jennifer Madans of the National Center for Health Statistics. The discussants are Clyde Tucker of the Bureau of Labor Statistics and Robert Hill of Westat, Inc. The contact is Roger Tourangeau at 301-314-7984 or email at "RTourang@Survey.umd.edu". Further details on the lecture will appear in the November issue of the WSS NEWS.

Reminder to Paper Newsletter Recipients

As announced in our April newsletter, the WSS is working toward eliminating hard copy newsletters except for those members who do not have access to email or who express a preference to continue the hard copy version. Fewer than a dozen members have expressed a preference for the hard copy version, but we continue to mail several hundred copies each month at a cost of about a dollar per copy. You can help speed the conversion by sending a note to Vince Massimini (svm@mitre.org), our electronic newsletter distributor, with your email address and ASA member number, which appears in the upper left corner of your WSS newsletter mailing label. The electronic newsletter is sent in the text of an email and as a pdf attachment. Joining the electronic distribution list will also give you access to time-sensitive announcements that are not available to hard copy newsletter recipients. Be assured that the WSS does not share its email list. If you wish to continue receiving the newsletter in hard copy, please contact our secretary, Courtney Stapleton, at 301-763-4142.

SIGSTAT Topics for Fall 2004

October 13, 2004: R for the non-S Experts (<http://www.r-project.org/>)

With the rise in popularity of Linux, there has occurred a concurrent rise in popularity of free software. This popularity arises not necessarily because the software is free, but because of the free software's usually unsurpassed reliability and utility. R is recognized for the same reasons. Its popularity comes from the highly successful S language which it emulates and from a very active international community of accomplished statisticians who develop R for the statistical analyst, in fact, the developer of S, John Chambers a fellow at Bell Labs, is a core developer of R. This presentation will explain how R can be installed and will offer a brief tutorial on getting started with emphasis on demonstrating the ease of making graphs of data. Mike Fleming will be the speaker.

November 10, 2004: ODS Statistical Graphics (<http://support.sas.com/rnd/base/topics/statgraph>)

On an experimental basis in SAS 9.1, a number of SAS/STAT procedures support an extension to the Output Delivery System (ODS) to create statistical graphics as automatically as tables. This facility is referred to as ODS Statistical Graphics (or ODS Graphics for short). With ODS Graphics, a procedure creates the graphs that are most commonly needed for a particular analysis. Using ODS Graphics eliminates the need to save numerical results in an output data set, manipulate them with a DATA step program, and display them with a graphics procedure. Linda Atkinson will be the speaker.

December 8, 2004: PROC MIXED - Part 7: Generalized Linear Mixed Models (<http://www.sas.com>)

We continue with the topic begun in October 2003. In the June 2004 meeting, the difference between general linear models and models using generalized estimating equations (GEE's) was covered. The available correlation structures in PROC GENMOD were

discussed and GENMOD was used to fit a longitudinal data model. To wrap up this topic, the concepts behind generalized linear mixed models are discussed and a longitudinal data model is fit using the GLIMMIX macro.

SIGSTAT is the Special Interest Group in Statistics for the **CPCUG**, the Capital PC User Group, and **WINFORMS**, the Washington Institute for Operations Research Service and Management Science. All meetings are in Room S3031, 1800 M St, NW from 12:30 to 1:30. Enter the South Tower & take the elevator to the 3rd floor to check in at the guard's desk. First-time attendees should contact Charlie Hallahan, 202-694-5051, hallahan@ers.usda.gov, and leave their name. Directions to the building & many links of statistical interest can be found at the **SIGSTAT** website, <http://www.cpcug.org/user/sigstat/>.

Note from the WSS NEWS Editor

Items for publication in the December 2004 WSS NEWS should be submitted no later than October 26, 2004. E-mail items to Michael Feil at michael.feil@usda.gov.

Program Announcement

- Title:** Microdata Confidentiality Methods
- Speaker:** William E. Winkler, U.S. Census Bureau (william.e.winkler@census.gov)
- Discussant:** Arthur Kennickell, Federal Reserve Board
- Chair:** Barry Johnson, IRS Statistics of Income Division
- Date/Time:** Thursday, October 14, 2004/12:30 - 2:00 p.m.
- Location:** BLS Conference Center , Room 3. To be placed on the seminar list attendance list at the Bureau of Labor Statistics you need to e-mail your name, affiliation, and seminar name to wss_seminar@bls.gov (underscore after 'wss') by noon at least 2 days in advance of the seminar or call 202-691-7524 and leave a message. Bring a photo ID to the seminar. BLS is located at 2 Massachusetts Avenue, NE. Use the Red Line to Union Station.
- Sponsor:** WSS Methodology Section
- Abstract:** The data in files of statistical agencies is a valuable resource for the evaluation of processes. The data are often obtained via surveys or by combining files into data warehouses. Because of the increased analytic skills of many potential users of data, individuals want public-use microdata that can be analyzed in a variety of ways. Fuller (1993 JOS) and Lambert (1993 JOS) have indicated that public-use files should be suitable for statistical analyses while still preserving confidentiality of the individual data. This talk provides an overview of current methods (Winkler 2004).

Mid-Atlantic Regional Probability & Statistics Day - November 13, 2004

This year's Mid-Atlantic Regional Probability and Statistics Day will be held Saturday, November 13, 2004, at the Johns Hopkins University, Applied Physics Laboratory, located approximately midway between Baltimore, MD and Washington, DC. This informal meeting provides an opportunity for professionals in academia, government, business and industry to meet and communicate recent findings and discuss common interests. Informal talks on all aspects of probability and statistics are invited, including discussions of preliminary and on-going work. Participation by graduate students is also encouraged. For more information, contact: Joseph D. Warfield, The Johns Hopkins University/ Applied Physics Laboratory, Room 24-E135, Laurel, MD 20723-6099; [phone: (240) 228-5580/Washington; (443) 778-5580/Baltimore; e-mail: joseph.warfield@jhuapl.edu; fax: (240) 228-8240]. The website is <http://www.jhuapl.edu/ProbStatDay04/index.htm>.

Program Announcement

- Title:** **From Controlled Experiment to Production Environment: Refusal Aversion Training Adoption and Considerations for Future Use and Research**
- Speakers:** Eileen M. O'Brien, Center for Survey Methods Research, U.S. Census Bureau
- Chair:** Jonaki Bose, Bureau of Transportation Statistics
- Date/Time:** Tuesday, October 19, 2004/12:30 - 2:00 p.m.
- Location:** Bureau of Labor Statistics, Conference Center Room 2. To be placed on the seminar list attendance list at the Bureau of Labor Statistics you need to e-mail your name, affiliation, and seminar name to wss_seminar@bls.gov (underscore after 'wss') by noon at least 2 days in advance of the seminar or call 202-691-7524 and leave a message. Bring a photo ID to the seminar. BLS is located at 2 Massachusetts Avenue, NE. Use the Red Line to Union Station.
- Sponsor:** Methodology Section, WSS
- Abstract:** Initial interviewer-respondent interactions bear considerable influence on survey participation and response quality. Previous research shows that individual interviewer survey cooperation rates can improve with progressive, realistic practice of discrete steps in addressing respondents' initial concerns. Though this theory-guided training method developed by Groves and McGonagle (2001) has proved valid across survey organizations, topics and modes in experimental settings, evidence is needed on its migration to the production setting. This work reports on the adoption of the refusal aversion training protocol in two large-scale demographic surveys conducted by the United States Census Bureau, modifications made for practical and administrative reasons, and considerations for future use and research.

Program Announcement

- Title:** Purchasing Power Parities – Statistics to Describe the World
- Speaker:** Fred Vogel, World Bank
- Discussant:** Kimberly Zieschang, International Monetary Fund
- Chair:** Linda Atkinson, Economic Research Service, USDA
- Date/Time:** Wednesday, October 20, 2004 / 12:30 PM – 2:00 PM
- Location:** BLS Conference Center Room 7. To be placed on the seminar attendance list at the Bureau of Labor Statistics you need to e-mail your name, affiliation, and seminar name to wss_seminar@bls.gov (underscore after 'wss') by noon at least 2 days in advance of the seminar or call 202-691-7524 and leave a message. Bring a photo ID to the seminar. BLS is located at 2 Massachusetts Avenue, NE. Use the Red Line to Union Station.
- Sponsor:** WSS Economics Section
- Abstract:** The International Comparison Program is a coordinated global survey of prices used to compute Purchasing Power Parities which remove the distortions caused when using exchange rates to compare the relative sizes of economies and measure poverty levels between countries. The methodology used to determine the basket of items to price, prepare the sampling and survey framework, and estimate the Purchasing Power Parities will be presented. Alternative methods of estimation will be presented along with new methodology being developed. The issues faced when coordinating this effort across countries with differing capabilities will also be discussed.

Program Announcement

- Title:** Measuring Disclosure Risk for Microdata Using Probabilistic Models
- Speakers:** Natalie Shlomo, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, University of Southampton
- Chair:** Neil Russell, Bureau of Transportation Statistics
- Date:** Wednesday, October 27, 2004/ 12:30 - 2:00 p.m.
- Location:** Bureau of Labor Statistics, Conference Center Room 8. To be placed on the seminar list attendance list at the Bureau of Labor Statistics you need to e-mail your name, affiliation, and seminar name to wss_seminar@bls.gov (underscore after 'wss') by noon at least 2 days in advance of the seminar or call 202-691-7524 and leave a message. Bring a photo ID to the seminar.
- Sponsor:** Methodology Section, WSS
- Abstract:** Disclosure risk occurs when there is a high probability that an intruder can reidentify an individual in released microdata and confidential information may be obtained. The talk will focus on measuring the disclosure risk based on probabilistic methods for microdata containing records from samples. In general, the population from which the sample is drawn is considered unknown, although there may be partial information about the population through marginal distributions obtained from censuses and administrative data. These distributions are generally used by Statistical Agencies to benchmark the sample data and reduce biases due to non-response through sophisticated estimation procedures for calculating sampling weights.

The disclosure risk is a function of both the population and the sample, and in particular the cell count for the contingency table defined by the combinations of identifying discreet key variables. In order to estimate the necessary parameters for the disclosure risk based on samples, we will use the structure of the table and the relationship among the variables to model the data using a Bayesian approach. By assuming a prior distribution, we can reduce the large number of parameters into a few hyperparameters. We consider global risk measures for the entire file, such as the number of sample uniques that are population uniques and the expected number of correct matches to external files, as well as individual risk measures for subsets of the population or for each cell of the key.

In this talk, we will start with a natural model proposed by Bethlehem, Keller and Pannekoek (1990) based on the Poisson-Gamma distributions. The model is the basis for most of the current research being carried out in this area of statistical disclosure control. In addition, we will connect the model to the individual risk methodology currently being implemented in the European CASC project's ARGUS software for disclosure control (Benedetti, Capobianchi and Franconi (1998), Rinott (2003)) and show how the methodology can be improved and goodness-of-fit tests carried out prior to applying the models. The methods will be demonstrated on both simulated data and real data sets from the Israel Central Bureau of Statistics. In addition, the general framework of the risk measure can be expanded to take into account continuous key variables and the introduction of measurement errors by connecting it to record linkage theory.

Program Announcement

- Title:** **Data Quality and Record Linkage: A Broad Survey of Applications and Techniques**
- Speaker:** Thomas Herzog, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
- Discussant:** William Winkler, U.S. Census Bureau
- Chair:** Fritz Scheuren, NORC
- Date/Time:** Tuesday, November 16, 2004/12:30 - 2:00 p.m.
- Location:** BLS Conference Center , Room 1. To be placed on the seminar list attendance list at the Bureau of Labor Statistics you need to e-mail your name, affiliation, and seminar name to wss_seminar@bls.gov (underscore after 'wss') by noon at least 2 days in advance of the seminar or call 202-691-7524 and leave a message. Bring a photo ID to the seminar. BLS is located at 2 Massachusetts Avenue, NE. Use the Red Line to Union Station.
- Sponsor:** WSS Methodology Section
- Abstract:** As the cost of computing continues to drop, and more practitioners have access to large data warehouses, the importance of data quality continues to increase commensurately. With this in mind, the speaker will briefly describe some of the key methodological issues dealing with data quality and record linkage. He will present a wide range of applications including (1) Biomedical and Genetic Studies, (2) Transportation Studies, (3) Sample Surveys and Censuses, (4) Federal Tax Policy, (5) Social Insurance, and (6) Cargo Shipments. A wide variety of references to the literature will be provided for those interested in delving further into these topics.

2003-04 Year In Review

Being President of the WSS this last year has been a wonderful experience. We had a very busy and successful year, which could not have been accomplished without the great number of volunteers, especially the members of the Board of Directors.

The WSS held 30 sessions, 4 quantitative literacy activities, and 5 special events. The sessions included 14 sponsored by Methodology, 4 by Economics, 3 by Agriculture and Natural Resources, and the others by Quality Assurance, Short Courses, Public Health and Biostatistics, and Statistical Computing. Paul Biemer of RTI gave the Hansen Lecture. The two short courses were “Privacy, Confidentiality, and the Protection of Health Data: A Statistical Perspective on the HIPPA Privacy Rule” and “Analysis of Complex Survey Data.”

The annual dinner was a great success, with Alan Zaslavsky of Harvard University giving the keynote speech and receiving the Gertrude M. Cox award. Jeri Mulrow was the recipient of the WSS’ ASA Chapter Service Award, which is only presented every third year.

In the September 2003 newsletter I said my hope for the year was to “Expand our Influence.” We had 5 special events that focused on this theme. In October, we had “The Role of Statistics in Achieving the Dream, 40 years since Dr. Martin Luther King’s speech.” In December we held the 6th WSS QA in Government Symposia. In April we presented the first WSS Special Award for Excellence in Reporting Statistics to John Berry. In May we held a panel discussion of “The Role of Statistics in Desegregation” on the 50th anniversary of the Brown v. Board of Education Supreme Court decision. Finally in June, the President’s Invited Session featured Andrew Kohut of the Pew Center for the People and the Press. I look forward to the WSS continuing to reach out and share our expertise on issues that will arise in the future.

Over 1,100 (non-unique) people attended WSS sessions during the year!

We also took the lead in supporting bills in Congress to establish a Bureau of Environmental Statistics within the EPA, getting the ASA and the ASA Section on Statistics and the Environment to write additional letters of support.

We took a hard look at our expenses and found we could lower dues by \$2 per year. We also re-examined electronic newsletter distribution and found that if we can eliminate paper newsletters to all but those who really have no other option, we can lower dues much more. We began the process of switching to electronic elections, which will hopefully be in place for our elections next spring.

Finally, the WSS was honored to have 11 of the 56 people who were named Fellows of the ASA in 2004. Congratulations to all, and thanks again to everyone who helped make this a great year for the WSS.

David Marker

JPSM Courses Announcement

The Joint Program in Survey Methodology is offering another course.

The title of the course is *A PRACTICAL INTRODUCTION TO DISCRETE AND LIMITED DEPENDENT VARIABLES* on November 16, 2004. This course is a one-day introduction to multivariate statistical analyses of discrete outcomes which are commonplace in behavioral and health sciences. The course will provide an intuitive understanding of how discrete data models differ from the more standard multivariate regression model and when it is appropriate to use them, show how the models can be implemented using standard statistical packages, and explain how to interpret the resulting coefficient estimates. The course will begin with a brief review of the multivariate regression model, then outline the different types of discrete and limited dependent variable models. Discrete data models to be discussed include logistic regressions and probits, ordered probits, count data models, multi-choice models such as the multinomial logistic regression, and hazard models. For each model, participants will be provided with sample programs in STATA and SAS and a web address where data sets and programs can be downloaded for later use. The course will have a heavy emphasis on practical examples from published research. The instructor is William N. Evans, who is a professor in the Department of Economics at the University of Maryland, a member of the Maryland Population Research Center and a Research Associate of the National Bureau of Economic Research. Online registration is required. Confirmation of registration and further instructions will be sent after the registration form has been processed. Registration is not firm until you receive a confirmation letter. Payment by credit card is required. Payment may be made online following receipt of the confirmation letter using the student's confirmation number. Please note your confirmation number. **The registration deadline is November 1, 2004.** Payment is required by November 1, 2004 or the registration will be cancelled. The registration fee is \$400. Full-time university students (with a supervising faculty advisor's signature) and employees of JPSM sponsor/affiliate organizations are eligible for a reduced fee of \$300. Lunch and refreshments are included in the fee. Participants will be provided with a notebook containing detailed course notes. The course will be held at the Sheraton Crystal City Hotel, 1800 Jefferson Davis Highway, Arlington, Virginia. The Sheraton Crystal City Hotel is located in the "Crystal City" business district of Arlington, with nearby access to the Crystal City Metro Stop. Located at the intersection of 18th and Eads Street the hotel is 1 mile from Ronald Reagan National Airport. For room reservations call the hotel at (703) 486-1111 or 1-800-862-ROOM. Information, directions, and times will be sent with your confirmation email.

Employment

As a service to local statisticians, WSS News provides notification of employment opportunities and description of those seeking employment here in the Washington, DC, area. Readers are encouraged to take advantage of this feature of the newsletter. The deadline for inserting notices is five (5) weeks before the publication date. Those interested should email or call Anne Peterson, at apeterson@insightpolicy.com or (703) 387-3032.

Tenure Track Assistant Professor

The Department of Mathematics and Statistics in the College of Arts and Sciences at American University has an opening for one tenure track assistant professor in statistics for Fall 2005.

Qualifications: earned doctorate in Statistics or in Mathematics with a specialty in Statistics by Fall 2005, as well as evidence of effective teaching and either a record of or the potential for continuing productive scholarship. Responsibilities: Teaching undergraduate and graduate level statistics courses; conducting research, advising and mentoring students, with particular sensitivity to women and minority students; institutional service.

Application review will begin November 15, 2004, and continue until the positions are filled. Submit letter of application and vitae to Search Committee, Department of Mathematics and Statistics, American University, 4400 Massachusetts Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20016-8050. Have transcripts and three letters of reference sent directly to the department. At least one letter should specifically mention teaching experience.

All applicants are strongly advised to review full application instructions, available at www.mathstat.american.edu/positions, or from the department at (202) 885-3120. American University is an Equal Employment Opportunity / Affirmative Action employer, committed to diverse faculty, staff, and student body. Women and minority

candidates are strongly encouraged to apply.

**Chief Mathematical Statistician
(GS-1529-15, \$100,231 - \$130,305)
Social Security Administration
Office of Policy
Office of Research, Evaluation, and
Statistics**

The Office of Research, Evaluation, and Statistics (ORES) is one of three offices under the Deputy Commissioner for Policy - the principal advisor to the Commissioner of Social Security on major policy issues. Through a continuing research agenda, ORES provides information on the effects on individuals and the economy of programs operated by the Social Security Administration (SSA) and the interactions among these programs, other tax and income-transfer programs, and economic, social and demographic forces. ORES disseminates a broad range of analytic reports and statistics derived from SSA's administrative data files, special-purpose surveys conducted by SSA, and surveys conducted by other Federal Agencies or outside organizations that are linked to SSA's administrative data.

SSA is seeking a Chief Mathematical Statistician at its headquarters in Baltimore, Maryland. The incumbent serves as the senior advisor on statistical matters to ORES. The Chief Mathematical Statistician develops and implements statistical policies, assures that appropriate methodologies and practices are used, provides technical consultation to staff and management, and acts as the spokesperson and cognizant official on statistical matters within the Agency and on high-level inter-agency workgroups. Key areas of current interest include designing and implementing statistical disclosure avoidance procedures for microdata files and statistical tables, developing methods for expanding access by outside researchers to administrative data, and designing statistical data files of survey data linked to administrative data.

This is a non-supervisory position.

Educational requirements: a Ph.D. or equivalent in Statistics, Mathematics, or a related discipline. United States citizenship is required. SSA is an equal opportunity employer. To obtain additional information about the position, contact Brian Greenberg at brian.v.greenberg@ssa.gov. For information on applying for the position, contact Eleanor Cooper at eleanor.l.cooper@ssa.gov.

Applied Demographer / Gerontologist

Decision Demographics seeks an applied social scientist with an interest in gerontology. This is an excellent opportunity for an entrepreneurial researcher to manage a Small Business Innovation Research project funded by the National Institute on Aging.

Job responsibilities: Work with potential clients of a system for profiling the needs of the older population; refine focus and content of a survey of the older population; supervise fielding of the survey; analyze results and integrate them with small-area demographic data; establish a reporting system using existing or new software; contribute to a broad range of other projects for business, government, and associations; and write reports in plain language.

Skills and interests desired: strong interest in aging and commercial consulting; creativity in developing new measures of product and service demand; experience with demographic estimates and projections; SAS, GIS, and large database skills; MA/PhD in demography, gerontology or related field.

Details: Timing: Start ASAP; Salary to match qualifications; Send cover letter and resume to: Stephen J. Tordella, Decision Demographics, 5510 Columbia Pike, Suite 204, Arlington, VA 22204, or Stordella@Decision-Demographics.com.

PROGRAMMER

Small, downtown, professional, yet outwardly informal biostatistical firm involved in medical studies seeks a programmer with 2 years experience. Strong SAS programming skills, including data steps, macros, and graphics. Position requires a BS or MS in statistics, math, computer science, or life sciences. Fax cover letter, resume, sample SAS programs, and references to (202)

429-9268 or email to office@statcollab.com. Use Ref WSPR

(BIO)STATISTICIAN

Small, downtown, professional, yet outwardly informal biostatistical firm involved in medical research & consulting seeks a (bio)statistician; attention to detail, accuracy, initiative & excellent communication skills are essential. Must be able to juggle several complex projects simultaneously, including project coordination, data analysis, SAS programming, data management for medical studies & technical writing. MS in (bio)statistics required. Fax cover letter, resume, sample SAS programs and references to (202) 429-9268 or email to office@statcollab.com. Use Ref WSBS

RESEARCH ASSISTANT/ JR. PROGRAMMER

Small, downtown, professional, yet outwardly informal biostatistical firm involved in medical research/consulting seeks a research assistant to support study team in compiling reports, word processing, correspondence and documentation. Attention to detail, accuracy, initiative, and excellent communication skills essential. Opportunity for professional growth through introduction to SAS programming & statistical methods used to analyze data from clinical trials. Proficiency in MS Word helpful. Fax cover letter, resume, and references to (202) 429-9268 or email to office@statcollab.com. Use Ref WSRA



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