WSS NEWS
WASHINGTON STATISTICAL SOCIETY

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

WHAT'S NEW WITH WSS?

WSS Web Page Has A New Webmaster And A New Look!

After maintaining the WSS Web Page (http://www.washstat.org) since August 1996, **Dan Jacobs** has retired as the WSS Webmaster and is taking a well-deserved rest. Many thanks to Dan for 18 years of tireless work! Our current WSS Student Rep, **Tim Allen,** has stepped into Dan's (large) shoes.

Tim jumped right in and made some design changes to the site including emphasizing current content and moving historical information to deeper links, adding photos of WSS events, and creating a webmaster email at washstat.webmaster@gmail.com. Please visit the site and let Tim know what you think about the design and content. Also, send him new information of interest to our members to post.

WASHINGTON STATISTICAL SOCIETY

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Welcome to the Washington Statistical Society

If you work with statistics in the metropolitan Washington DC area, you owe it to yourself to belong to the Washington Statistical Society (WSS).

Former WSS President Nancy Bates with 2014 Gertrude Cox Award

Statistics Education Program Committee

At its June meeting the WSS Board approved the creation of a program committee for Statistics Education. It also approved Carol Joyce Blumberg (U.S. Energy Information Administration –retired, cblumberg@gmail.com) and Elizabeth Johnson (George Mason University, Department of Statistics, ejohns40@gmu.edu) as co-chairs.

Purpose
Provide a wide variety of seminars and other activities related to statistics education to both WSS members and teachers of statistics at the elementary, secondary and post-secondary (i.e., technical colleges, community colleges, four-year colleges, and universities that grant master's and/or doctoral degrees) levels.

Relationship to Present WSS Quantitative Literacy Activities
The present quantitative literacy (QL) activities include the regional Science Fair awards, poster competitions, Curtis Jacobs competition for projects, specialized workshops, and helping out ASA as needed with activities held in the greater DC area (e.g., the ASA booth at the U.S. Science and Engineering Festival in odd-number years). The plan is to have the Statistics Education program committee work closely with the QL committee in order to help the WSS membership, teachers and others become more aware of the QL activities and encourage more people to be involved in the QL activities. For questions about QL activities contact Dhuly Chowdhury at dchowdhury@rti.org.

Planned Activities for 2014-2015 Time Period
- Seminar--Statistics Education as Part of the Common Core: What, Why, and How?

    Date/Time: October 8, 2014   3:45– 5:00 p.m., with an informal reception from 3:15 – 3:45 p.m.
    Speaker: Douglas Tyson, Central York High School, York, PA

    Location: Bureau of Labor Statistics Conference Center, Room 1

    More details are found elsewhere in this newsletter

- Seminar—Introductory Statistics at the College Level—How it Has Changed to Adapt to New Technology and Evolving Needs of Society
  Will be held (probably at BLS) in February, 2015 featuring a panel of instructors of the course at community colleges and universities in the DC area

- Mock AP Examination
  Will be held at George Mason University in the late April, 2015 and will include a dinner with pizza. The dual purpose is to have students DC area students have a chance to take a practice AP examination and to allow AP teachers to meet each other and area statisticians. WSS members will help with the grading of the examinations. Both the mock examination and the grading will follow the practices used with actual AP examinations.

Ideas for the Future
While the co-chairs have ideas for the future, it is important to them to provide seminars and other activities that WSS members have suggested. If you have any ideas for the future, please send them to cblumberg@gmail.edu.

SEMINARS

PLEASE FORWARD THIS ANNOUNCEMENT TO TEACHERS AND OTHERS WHO MIGHT BE INTERESTED IN THE TOPIC!

Title: Statistics Education as Part of the Common Core:
                What, Why, and How?

Dates/Time: October 8, 2014
                3:45 pm – 5:00 pm
                 informal reception from 3:15 pm – 3:45 pm

Speaker: Douglas Tyson, Central York High School, York, PA

Chair: Elizabeth Johnson, George Mason University

Sponsor: WSS Statistics Education program

Location: Bureau of Labor Statistics Conference Center, Room 1

                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 across from Union Station.
                Use the Red Line to Union Station. Take the elevator or escalator at the
                north end of the tracks up to the Mezzanine level. Once you exit the
                Metrorail portion of the station, go past the ticket machines and down
                the ramp. The entrance to BLS will be directly across the street.

                Parking in the area of BLS is available at Union Station. For parking
                information see http://www.unionstationdc.com/parking. No validation
                is available from BLS for reduced parking rates.

Abstract: Schools need to teach statistical literacy as a part of a core mission to
                develop educated and informed citizens. Statistics, as an academic
                discipline, involves reasoning in the face of uncertainty and
                understanding random processes. This talk will address the broad
                questions of what statistics we should teach in secondary schools, why we
                should teach it, and how we should teach it.

In particular, the Common Core State Standards for Statistics are an attempt to address the need for statistical literacy in our society. This presentation will reveal the statistics and probability content in the Common Core standards and how they answer questions of what, why, and how. Activities that can be used to address the Common Core standards will be demonstrated.

POC e-mail: Carol Joyce Blumberg, cblumberg@gmail.com

Remote Attendance via WebEx:

To start or join the online meeting go to https://dol.webex.com/dol/j.php?MTID=mf81c6c52fcad06e99e78e381d805d76d.

Call-in numbers: 866-747-9048 or 517-233-2139
Attendee access code: 938 454 2

For assistance go to https://dol.webex.com/dol/mc and on the left navigation bar, click "Support".

To check ahead of time whether you have the appropriate players installed for UCF (Universal Communications Format) rich media files, go to https://dol.webex.com/dol/systemdiagnosis.php.

Title:	**Propensity score methods in the context of covariate measurement error**
Dates/Time:	**October 14, 2014** **2:00 pm - 3:30 pm**
Speaker:	Elizabeth Stuart, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health
Sponsor:	RAND Corporation This event is free and open to the public.
Location:	RAND Corporation Room w4204, 1200 South Hayes Street, Arlington, VA 22202 http://www.rand.org/about/locations/washington

Abstract: Propensity score methods are commonly used to estimate causal effects in non-experimental studies. Existing propensity score methods assume that covariates are measured without error but covariate measurement error is likely common. This talk will discuss the implications of measurement error in the covariates on the estimation of causal effects using propensity score methods and investigates Multiple Imputation using External Calibration (MIEC) to account for covariate measurement error in propensity score estimation. MIEC uses a main study sample and a calibration dataset that includes observations of the true covariate (X) as well as the version measured with error (W). MIEC creates multiple imputations of X in the main study sample, using information on the joint distribution of X, W, other covariates, and the outcome of interest, from both the calibration and the main data. In simulation studies we found that MIEC estimates the treatment effect almost as well as if the true covariate X were available. We also found that the outcome must be used in the imputation process, a finding related to the idea of congeniality in the multiple imputation literature. We illustrate MIEC using an example estimating the effect of neighborhood disadvantage on the mental health of adolescents, where the method accounts for measurement error in the adolescents' report of their mothers' age when they (the adolescents) were born.

POC e-mail:	Natalia Weil, nweil@rand.org
RSVP:	Natalia Weil (nweil@rand.org). by **October 10, 2014** and include your full name, affiliation, and citizenship.

Title: On Information Quality (InfoQ) of Official and Establishment Statistics

Dates/Times: November 3, 2014
12:30 - 1:30 pm

Speaker: Ron S. Kenett, KPA Ltd.,
Raanana, Israel and University of Turin, Turin, ItalY

Chair: Yulei He

Sponsor: Methodology Section

Location: Bureau of Labor Statistics Conference Center
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 .

Abstract: In a recent paper in the Journal of the Royal Statistical Society (Series A), Kenett and Shmueli define the concept of Information Quality (InfoQ) as the potential of a dataset to achieve a specific (scientific or practical) goal using a given empirical analysis method. InfoQ is different from data quality and analysis quality, but is dependent on these components and on the relationship between them. Eight dimensions are used to deconstruct InfoQ and thereby provide an approach for assessing it: *Data Resolution, Data Structure, Data Integration, Temporal Relevance, Generalizability, Chronology of Data and Goal, Operationalization* and *Communication*. The talk will demonstrate the concept of InfoQ, its components (what it is) and assessment (how it is achieved) through several case studies including a survey conducted by an industrial association in the North of Italy and student test reports produced by school systems in the US. The talk will compare and contrast the InfoQ dimensions with those typically used by statistical agencies to assess the quality of their products. As noted by Paul Biemer and Lars Lyberg in a 2014 JSM invited session, InfoQ provides a general framework applicable to data analysis in a broader sense than product quality and is a step away from the one-size-fits-all frameworks., The talk will also discuss how the InfoQ approach can be used to optimize integrated data analysis combining official data with administrative and organizational data, an important area with significant research opportunities.

POC e-mail: ron@kpa-group.com

WebEx:

      https://dol.webex.com/dol/j.php?MTID=m0e6043056bf607dff2a501ab6d30a0ce

Audio: Call-in toll-free number (Verizon):

            Attendee access code: 1-866-747-9048 (US) Call-in number (Verizon):

            1-517-233-2139 (US) Attendee access code: 938 454 2

Note: Particular computer configurations might not be compatible with

            WebEx.

Title:	**Bayesian Estimation of Trends in Population-Level Health Metrics Using Disparate Data Sources**
Dates/Time:	**November 12, 2014** **12:30 pm – 2:00 pm**
Speaker:	Mariel Finucane, Mathematica Policy Research
Discussant:	Daniell Toth, Bureau of Labor Statistics
Chair:	Donsig Jang
Sponsor:	WSS Methodology Section and WSS Public Health and Biostatistics Section
Location:	Bureau of Labor Statistics Conference Center #9

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.

Abstract: Rational priority setting in global health requires rigorous quantification of worldwide, population-level trends in health status. Because global-level surveys are not available, however, researchers are forced to rely on country-level and local data that are often sparse, fragmentary, or unreliable. We present a Bayesian model that addresses this problem by systematically combining data from disparate sources to make country-level estimates of trends in important health metrics for all nations. The model uses Markov random field methods to allow for nonlinear trends and a hierarchical structure to borrow strength within and across regional country clusters. MCMC sampling facilitates inference in a high-dimensional, constrained parameter space, while providing posterior draws that enable straightforward inference on the wide variety of functionals of interest. Throughout, the Bayesian approach accounts for uncertainty resulting from data missingness, as well as sampling and parameter uncertainty.

In this talk, I will present results for two example health metrics. First, I will discuss trends in hypertension, a primary risk factor for cardiovascular disease – the leading cause of death worldwide. I will then turn to malnutrition, an important contributor to childhood morbidity and mortality in low-income regions. As all levels of mild,

moderate, and severe malnutrition are of clinical and public health importance, I will present an extension of the model that uses a finite normal mixture to estimate the shape of the distributions for markers of malnutrition. The model incorporates both individual-level data when available, as well as aggregated summary statistics from studies for which individual-level data could not be obtained.

This work addresses three important problems that often arise in the fields of public health surveillance and global health monitoring. First, data are always incomplete. Second, data from different sources are often incomparable. Third, standard techniques fail to provide estimates of the full distributions of health metrics, the tails of which are often of substantive interest.

POC e-mail: mfinucane@mathematica-mpr.com

WebEx event address for attendees:

https://dol.webex.com/dol/j.php?MTID=mfdc5b6d08d4d1480685f067714db3649

For audio: Call-in toll-free number (Verizon): 1-866-747-9048 (US)
                         Call-in number (Verizon): 1-517-233-2139
                         (US) Attendee access code: 938 454 2

Note: Particular computer configurations might not be compatible with WebEx.

Title: **Geographic Oversampling for Race/Ethnicity Using Data from the 2010 U.S. Population Census**

Dates/Time: December 3, 2014
                    12:30 – 2:00 pm

Speaker: Sixia Chen, Westat

Chair: Donsig Jang

Discussant: David Judkins, Abt Associates

Sponsor: WSS Methodology Section

Location: Bureau of Labor Statistics Conference Center #9
                    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.

Abstract: In this paper, we apply geographic oversampling approach in Waksberg et al. (1997) for Race/Ethnicity by using 2010 U.S. census data. Some comparisons between 1990 and 2010 census data are discussed. Specifically, we extend the application to the census region and CBSA level. We consider the sampling rates as well as the reduction of sampling variance compared to the simple random sampling. In addition, we apply the proposed method to examine the renting status of occupied housing units. Some discussions about estimation of multiple rare population parameters are also presented.

POC e-mail: SixiaChen@westat.com

WebEx event address for attendees:
                    https://dol.webex.com/dol/j.php?MTID=m9e71621de7e06f29d68362b1d62f9329

For audio: Call-in toll-free number (Verizon): 1-866-747-9048
                    (US) Call-in number (Verizon): 1-517-233-2139
                    (US) Attendee access code: 938 454 2

Note: Particular computer configurations might not be compatible with WebEx.

Save the Date! – 24th Hansen Lecture

The 24th annual Hansen Lecture will be held on the afternoon of **Tuesday January 20th, 2015**, the exact time to be determined. The lecture will take place at the usual location, the USDA Auditorium.

The speaker will be Professor Danny Pfeffermann, Director of the Central Bureau of Statistics, Israel (along with many other titles!). The title of the lecture is "Methodological Issues and Challenges in the Production of Official Statistics." There will be two discussants of Danny's lecture – Professor Larry Brown of the Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania, and John Eltinge, Associate Commissioner for the Office of Survey Methods Research at BLS.
So be sure put this special event in your calendar. A full announcement will be posted once the details are finalized.

- The Hansen Lecture Committee

CONFERENCES

CBMS Forum on the First Two Years of College Math
October 5 – 7, 2014

The Conference Board of the Mathematical Sciences (CBMS) will host its fifth National Forum at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Reston VA on **October 5-7, 2014**. The focus and theme will be on building student success in the first two years of college math.

Details about the forum with a schedule and listing of confirmed speakers are available at
www.cbmsweb.org/Forum5/index.htm

Registration is now open and the web page has links to the online registration form and to the hotel reservation system.

Please share this information with colleagues who you think would be interested or should be interested.

NISS Hosts Analyzing Complex Survey Data with Missing Item Values Workshop

October 17, 2014
8:30 am - 4:30 pm

The National Institute of Statistical Sciences (NISS) invites you to join us for a stimulating day-long workshop on Analyzing Complex Survey Data with Missing Item Values at the Bureau of Labor Statistics Conference Center (2 Massachusetts Avenue, NE, Washington DC).

The workshop includes:

- **John Eltinge**, Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Overview of Issues Surrounding Missing Data*
- **Phil Kott**, RTI International, *Listwise-Deletion Methods*
- **Rod Little**, University of Michigan, *Likelihood-based Methods with Missing Data*
- **Shu Yang**, Harvard School of Public Health, *Fractional imputation method for missing data analysis: a review and a future vision*
- **Joe Schafer**, U.S. Census Bureau, *An Introduction to Multiple Imputation for Missing Data*
- **Kirk White**, U.S. Census Bureau, *Imputation in the Census of Manufacturers*
- **Martha Stinson**, U.S. Census Bureau, *Imputation in the Survey of Income and Program Participation*
- **Tim Keller**, USDA National Agricultural Research Service, *New Approach to Imputation for Agricultural Resource Management Survey*
- **Jerry Reiter**, Duke University, *Bayesian Mixture Models for Multiple Imputation*
- **Jae-kwang Kim**, Iowa State University, *New Research Ideas on Fractional Imputation*
- **Paul Biemer**, RTI International and the The Odum Institute (UNC), *Full Information Maximum Likelihood for Categorical Survey Data*
- and a working session on **Challenging Problems with Incomplete Data and Imputation in Large-scale Federal Surveys** with **Geoffrey Paulin**, U.S. Census Bureau, *Between-Interview Imputation in the Consumer Expenditure Survey*

Space is limited and preference goes to NISS affiliate members. **Go to the [NISS website](http://www.niss.org/events/niss-workshop-analyzing-complex-survey-data-missing-item-values)** (http://www.niss.org/events/niss-workshop-analyzing-complex-survey-data-missing-item-values) **for details and to sign up.**

Final deadline for registration is October 12 or until the workshop is full.

Committee on National Statistics
THE NATIONAL ACADEMIES
Public SEMINAR

Measuring Dimensions of Subjective Well-Being: The Role of Official Statistics

Friday, October 24, 2014 • *National Academy of Sciences Main Building*

2101 Constitution Avenue, NW, Washington, DC • Lecture Room

2:00 pm   **Light Refreshments for Seminar Guests — First Floor East Court**

2:30   **Welcome**
           —James House, CNSTAT member and University of Michigan Survey Research Center

2:35   **Developments at the OMB Statistical and Science Policy Office**
           —Katherine Wallman, Chief Statistician of the United States

2:45   **Measuring Dimensions of Subjective Well-Being: The Role of Official Statistics**
           Introduction: Lisbeth Nielsen, National Institute on Aging
           Presenters: Arthur Stone, Professor of Psychology, University of Southern California

                           Ed Humpherson, Head of Assessment, the UK Statistics Authority
                           Carol Graham, Senior Fellow, The Brookings Institution

A CNSTAT panel's recently issued report reviewed measurement of people's self-reported, or subjective, well-being (SWB); the report's primary focus is on happiness, suffering, and other dimensions of experience. The study was funded by the National Institute on Aging and the UK Economic and Social Research Council.

Arthur Stone—panel chair—will discuss the emergence of SWB measurement and its recent migration from the academic realm to a key interest of national statistics offices. He will present an overview of the panel's report and recommendations.

Ed Humpherson—principal adviser to the UK Statistics Authority on the statutory assessment and re-assessment of official statistics—will provide an overview of the experience of the UK Office for National Statistics with their experimental subjective well-being measurement program: why the ONS became involved in SWB data collection and how ONS programs have changed in response to a growing emphasis on broader measures of progress beyond those associated with conventional market economic growth.

Carol Graham—panel member and recent winner of the **International Society for Quality of Life Studies** award for substantial contribution to QOL research—will discuss ways in which SWB measures must continue to develop in order to become fully appropriate for government statistical agencies. She will also consider potential policy applications of current measures and possibilities for the future.

4:00   *Floor Discussion*

4:30–5:30   *Reception – First Floor East Court*

This seminar is open to the public. Please help us plan by registering here.

For assistance, please contact Jacqui Sovde at (202) 334-1616 or jsovde@nas.edu.

WSS Conference on the Consumer Price Index

Date/Time: October 28, 2014
1:00 pm — 4:30 pm

Location: Bureau of Labor Statistics Conference Center

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.

BLS cafeteria is open from 6:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Union Station has an extensive food court.

Sponsor: Methodology Section

WebEx event address for attendees:
https://dol.webex.com/dol/j.php?MTID=m644630d4bb233074d5e1f2e3f4c e72c4

For audio: Call-in toll-free number (Verizon): 1-866-747-9048 (US)
Call-in number (Verizon): 1-517-233-2139
(US) Attendee access code: 938 454 2

Note: Particular computer configurations might not be compatible with WebEx.

Schedule:

Time	Speaker	Point of Contact
1:00	Michael Horrigan	Horrigan.Michael@bls.gov
1:20	Stephen Reed	reed.stephen@bls.gov
2:05	John Greenlees	jlgreenlees@verizon.net
2:40	William Johnson	Johnson.Bill@bls.gov
3:10	Intermission	
3:25	Owen Shoemaker	Shoemaker.Owen@bls.gov
4:00	Ralph Bradley	Bradley.Ralph@bls.gov
4:30	Questions and Answers	

Abstracts:

Overview of the Consumer Price Index

The Consumer Price Index (CPI) seeks to measure the change in the cost of living by measuring the change in prices that consumers pay for a market basket of goods and services. Production of the CPI requires a geographic sample, an outlet sample, and a market basket with appropriate weights. With those in place, procedures for selecting the specific items to be priced, collecting prices, and translating the price data into indexes are required. Issues such as seasonality and missing prices must be addressed, and decisions must be made as to how and what to publish. This talk gives an overview of the CPI, including its measurement objective, the surveys that underpin it, the procedures for collecting and aggregating price data, and finally its publication.

~Stephen B. Reed, Economist, Consumer Price Index Program, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

The Chained CPI-U: Methods and Issues

The Chained Consumer Price Index for all Urban Consumers, or C-CPI-U, is the third CPI series produced and reported by the BLS each month (along with the CPI-U and CPI-W). The C-CPI-U was introduced in 2002, in order to provide a closer approximation to the economic concept of a Cost of Living Index, or COLI. For that reason, a number of analysts and advisory panels have proposed that the C-CPI-U replace the CPI-U and CPI-W in federal taxation and benefit programs. This talk describes the unique aspects of the C-CPI-U's construction, and how these have led to differences in the measured rates of consumer price change between the C-CPI-U and the other CPI series. Conceptual and operational issues in the use of the C-CPI-U for indexation will also be discussed.

~John S. Greenlees, Former Associate Commissioner for Prices and Living Conditions, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

The Surveys of the CPI: How They Fit Together and General Sampling Features

The CPI uses data drawn from many surveys including Commodities and Services, Housing, Consumer Expenditures, and TPOPS. Data from these surveys interact with a representative sample of geographic areas drawn to represent the urban population of the U.S. The sampling procedures for these samples share significant commonalities but each have some distinct features to take into account.

~William Johnson, Chief of Survey Research and Analysis Branch, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

Variance Estimation for the CPI-U

In 1998, the CPI Program adopted a Stratified Random Group (SRG) methodology for estimating 1-, 2-, 6- and 12-month variances (and so, standard errors) for every aggregate CPI index that the CPI program produces at and above the basic Index_Area—Item_Stratum level. A Jackknife estimator is used to calculate the variances for the index series which are formed from item groups lower than the Item_Stratum level. All these variances results are produced each month, immediately after CPI's official monthly release. This talk describes the constituent design structures and methodologies of the CPI-U's variance system. Summary and comparative variance results will also be presented and discussed.

~Owen J. Shoemaker, Mathematical Statistician, OPLC: Survey Research and Analysis Branch, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

A Glimpse into the Future CPI

The American economy is changing quickly and this will induce future consumers to behave differently from past consumers. There is increasing reliance on online purchases in place of "bricks and mortar" retailer purchases. The frequency of product changes is becoming increasingly rapid. Many industries such as the airlines, cable companies and health providers are consolidating and in some cases are giving fewer consumer choices. All these changes place new challenges on the current CPI manual sampling program. When products are being replaced at a faster rate, it is increasingly difficult to draw representative samples and to accurately adjust prices for quality change. I discuss these challenges and describe various BLS pilot projects that address these challenges. Several of these projects investigate the use of "big data" supplied from private vendors or from web scraping programs to replace the current manual system. I discuss how we construct price indexes from these new sources. Specifically, I explain how adjustments are made to account for the differences between the vendor's sampling methods and CPI sampling methods, for different geographical coverage between the vendor and the CPI program and for different information that that is collected on product characteristics. Finally, I discuss the opportunities to make better quality adjusted price estimates when products are rapidly changing.

~Ralph Bradley, Division of Price and Number Research, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

In Conjunction with the Celebration of its 5th Year Anniversary,
Info-Metrics Institute Announces:

Fall 2014 Conference: Recent Innovations in Info-Metrics
(Program is now available)

October 31 - November 1, 2014

American University, Washington DC

Institute Background: Info-Metrics is an interdisciplinary institute with the core objective of studying the emerging field of *info-metrics*: the science and practice of inference and quantitative information processing. It is applicable to all sciences and provides the universal mathematical and philosophical foundations for inference with finite, noisy or incomplete information. *Info-Metrics* is at the intersection of information theory, statistical methods of inference, applied mathematics, statistics and econometrics, complexity theory, decision analysis, modeling and the philosophy of science. The study of *Info-Metrics* helps resolve a major challenge to all scientists and all decision makers of how to reason (optimize) under conditions of incomplete information. For more information, please visit www.american.edu/info-metrics.

Objectives & Topics: The overall objective of our fifth year anniversary conference is to continue the exploration into the basics of info-metrics, information-theoretic inference and their mathematical and philosophical foundations. A special emphasis will be on the interconnection of inferential and philosophical problems and solutions across the disciplines. The conference will consist of Invited Talks, Invited Sessions and submitted papers.

We will focus on all the topics within info-metrics that we studied in the last five years. This includes, but is not limited to: *(1) Information-Theoretic methods of inference, (2) Info-metrics across the sciences and engineering, (3) Philosophy and value of information and info-metrics, (4) Information processing and nonparametric inference, (5) Networks and information across the sciences, (6) Complexity and information, (7) Large or sparse data and information, (8) Recent advancements in information theory and inference, (9) System information across sciences.*

Program Committee: Aman Ullah (UC Riverside and Info-Metrics) – Chair; Luciano Floridi (Oxford); Jeff Racine (McMaster University); Richard Smith (Cambridge); David Wolpert (Santa Fe Inst.)

The conference program is available online (via a downloadable Printable Program or an interactive program page including workshop papers and abstracts): http://www.american.edu/cas/economics/info-metrics/conference/Conference-2014-fall.cfm

Registration is open (**deadline is October 17, 2014**) and **free** for all.

To register, go to http://www.american.edu/cas/economics/info metrics/conference/conference-registration.cfm.

Further inquiries may be directed to info-metrics@american.edu or by visiting http://www.american.edu/info-metrics.

FROM THE JSM STUDENT TRAVEL AWARD WINNER

In early April, the chair of the Department of Statistics at George Mason University, Dr. Rosenberger, forwarded the Washington Statistical Society Joint Statistical Meetings (JSM) student travel award application to all of students in our department. I was a fourth year statistics Ph.D. candidate back then and my research area is on Medicine Diagnosis. Since there was only one winner around DC MD VA area, I didn't think I had a big chance to win. But I applied anyway. In early May, the president of Washington Statistical Society, Nancy Bates emailed me that I won the travel award. I am really grateful for the generous travel support from Washington Statistical Society!

So I carefully booked the flight and hotel and on August 3rd, I flew to Boston to attend JSM 2014. It was actually the first time I attended JSM. I have attended the 2013 International Conference on Health Policy Statistics, 2014 Eastern North American Region International Biometric Society, 2014 Southern Regional Council on Statistics Summer Research Conference, but JSM is the biggest conference in statistics world. It was my second time to visit Boston. My first visit to Boston was on August 2009. I stayed in Boston Park Plaza Hotel & Towers, one of the official JSM hotels. The official hotels were in downtown area of Boston next to the Chinatown. Because lots of the attendees rushed into the Chinatown for dinner, the waiting lines were pretty long outside of the good restaurants there. My friend and I went to two restaurants in Chinatown for dinner, one is Taiwan Café and the other one is Gourmet Dumpling House. We also went to Legal Harborside. Boston Convention and Exhibition Center is huge and located in a really nice area. It is only 5-10 minutes' walk to the Boston seaport where you can enjoy the Boston inner harbor. There were two routes of shuttles between the hotels and BCEC every 15 minutes which makes the commute pretty easy.

The registration area was full of people in the first couple of days. I picked up the JSM bag, programs, receipt, and name tags there. The program book is pretty heavy and I found a place where I could read the programs and marked the talks I wanted to go to. There were so many sessions of talks covering all the topics of statistics. I went to many fascinating invited sessions including Statistical Methods for Modern Complex-Structured Imaging Data, Big Data in Smart Health: Models, Algorithms, and Networks, and Statistical Planning of an Adaptive Design in Early Phase Trials given by statisticians from both industries and academia. I also went to the JSM EXPO where many companies had their own place for exhibition. I presented my research "Within-Cluster Resampling Methods for Clustered ROC Data", a joint research work with my advisor Dr. Liansheng Tang, in Session Classification and Diagnostic Accuracy on Wednesday afternoon, August 6th. There were seven talks in this session and around 40 participants in the room. It went pretty well I guess. I was the third speaker and used up all my 15 minutes.

On August 6th, I attended the JSM Survey Research Methods Business Meeting. Nice drinks and snacks were served and many survey statisticians gathered together. During the meeting, Nancy presented the award to me and it was such a great honor for me!
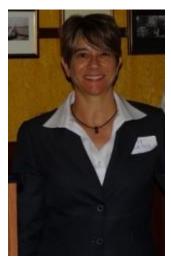
JSM was also a great place to meet friends who live all around the US. I ran into my old friends during the conference. Some of them I have not seen for years and some of them I have only known through emails but had never met them in person before.

On August 7th, after the morning session, JSM 2014 was closed. I flew back to northern Virginia the same day. What a great experience for me. I felt a little nervous at first but I enjoyed the conference. I really appreciate Washington Statistical Society for the travel award. Hopefully I will have a chance to attend JSM 2015.

~ Zhuang Miao

STUDENT CORNER

Getting Hired as an Entry-Level Statistician: An Interview with Nancy Bates

Recently I had the opportunity to interview Nancy Bates about entry-level statistician jobs. Nancy is the Past President of the WSS and a Senior Methodologist at the Census Bureau. Nancy has always helped me find my way in the working world of Statistics. I asked Nancy a few questions about her work experience:

Tell me about your current job.

My title is Senior Methodologist for Survey Research. I've been in this position since 2009. My job description is pretty wide-open but in a nutshell, I try to carry out original research aimed at improving the decennial Census, ongoing surveys, and the agency's implementation of Adaptive Design. Recent projects have included co-chairing a conference on Hard-to-Survey Populations as well as co-editing a monograph on the topic. I have also been active in the Census Bureau's research to understand and reduce measurement error when counting same-sex couples. I also have an interest in the collection and analysis of survey paradata for purposes of making our surveys more cost-efficient with less nonresponse bias. In my job, I consult across divisions within the agency, and collaborate on inter-agency workgroups across the federal statistical system. I am also active in various professional organizations where I have served on various Boards and Councils. I try to attend several professional conferences each year to discuss research findings and hear what's new in the field of survey methods. I also recently took on the role as the Census Bureau/National Science Foundation Research Network (NCRN) liaison -- the NCRN consists of 8 academic research nodes supported by the NSF and Census Bureau. This program conducts both basic and applied research on topics such as use of geo-spacial data to improve small area estimates, analysis of Big Data to produce social and economic indicators, analysis of survey paradata to improve reporting in web surveys, and use of administrative records to reduce decennial Census costs and reduce survey measurement error.

What kind of work do entry-level statisticians do at Census?

That pretty much depends on where you work within the Bureau and whether you are a survey statistician or a mathematical statistician. We employ both types of statisticians at the Census Bureau. We are a fairly large agency with over 5,000 folks at our headquarters in Suitland so the work statisticians perform is varied. For example, if you are hired as an entry-level survey statistician in a division responsible for conducting our on-going demographic surveys (e.g. the Current Population Survey), you might be tasked with monitoring performance indicators of how the survey is progressing in the field -- metrics such as daily response rates, contact rates and refusal rates. You might also be responsible for preparing

interviewer training materials, preparing instrument specifications, and testing automated instruments. On the other hand, if you were hired as a mathematical statistician in an area responsible for ongoing survey samples, you might be tasked with data quality checks and updates to the sample frame as well as drawing new samples or helping with sample re-designs or weighting activities. Other activities for survey statisticians could involve questionnaire design and pre-testing of new questions. I could go on and on....in short, there are many different kinds of work an entry-level statistician does at my agency!

What statistical abilities do you think are important for an entry-level statistician? How would you complete the sentence, "We use _____ here practically every day"?

If I had to select one thing, I think it would be "critical thinking". It's essential in the work we do to thoroughly consider all angles of a problem. Are there alternative methods we should consider? What are the advantages and disadvantages of each? Is there recent scientific literature to help inform us? Can we build in an experiment to learn more going forward?

Can you tell me about a "lesson learned" from early in your career that's been helpful to you?

One of my lessons learned was not to get pigeon-holed into performing the same work time and again. If you become good at one thing, it's inevitable that you'll be asked to keep doing that one thing. However, it's important to step outside your comfort zone and volunteer for new work assignments. One of the best things I did for my career was to take a temporary lateral position. Serving in that job opened my eyes to new areas of the Census Bureau and projects I would never have encountered otherwise.

Any thoughts you'd like to pass on to potential new statisticians?

Yes! Get involved in professional organizations like the WSS. Volunteer for a committee, run for office, or just attend a Board meeting sometime. The experience will pay dividends (both professionally and personally).

~ Tim Allen (timothychenallen@gmail.com)

Washington Statistical Society
Member Spotlight
*Introducing your fellow members and
showcasing the diversity of the WSS membership*

Meet WSS Member Valbona Bejleri...

1. Where do you work and what do you do?
After I graduated from American University in 2005, I obtained a position of associate professor in the department of Mathematics and Statistics at the University of the District of Columbia. In addition to teaching, I advise and mentor graduate and undergraduate students and work on my own research.

2. What attracted you to your current position?
I enjoy teaching and working with students in the classroom and outside of the classroom, mentoring and supervising their research projects.

3. Finish this sentence: "I joined WSS to..."
...connect with the community of statisticians in the Washington metropolitan area and get involved.

4. What advice would you give to someone entering the statistics profession?
When you are in college, look for internship position in industry or with government agencies. You will experience first-hand how statistics is applied in solving real life problems, and will gain important skills such as project management, leadership, and teamwork.

Graduating with a dual degree (or minoring) in statistics and another field of your interest will be an advantage to someone entering the statistics profession.

Become a member of the ASA and your local chapter (i.e., WSS) and get connected. Take advantage of the workshops and courses offered by ASA (WSS) in order to develop/strengthen new skills in statistical methods and computing.

5. What was your first job?
After graduating from college in 1989, I taught mathematics to high school students in my home town in Albania.

6. How do you like to spend your time away from work?
With my family, my daughter and my husband, enjoying outdoor activities.

7. What is the last book you read?
"Mosmarreveshja" (translated in English as "Misunderstanding") written in Albanian by Ismail Kadare.

8. What is favorite artist/song/genre?
Contemporary music.

9. If you could give your 18-year-old self one piece of advice, what would it be?
Do not worry much; you never know exactly what surprises the future holds for you.

10. Describe yourself in three words.
Disciplined, compassionate, and reliable.

SPOTLIGHT A WSS MEMBER!

Washington Statistical Society's Spotlight on Members Program

The WSS Board of Directors has established a program to highlight members who have made or are making notable contributions to the work of their organization or their professional field of expertise. We know that WSS members are doing interesting work in the fields of statistics, survey methodology, and the social sciences. Through this program, we hope to spotlight the accomplishments of our fellow WSS members.

This is our first request for nominations, to be featured in an upcoming issue of WSS News. We are interested in featuring members at all levels of the employment spectrum including recent graduates, mid-career employees, and those seasoned veterans.

Please feel free to nominate more than one person or a team working together. You may also nominate yourself as well. The nominees must be members of the WSS and not currently affiliated with the Board.

Please provide us with the following information about your nominee or nominees.
1. Your name, email address, and telephone number
2. Name or names of nominee(s)
3. Organizational affiliation
4. Job title
5. Their contact information including email address and telephone number
6. A brief narrative describing the reasons for your nomination
7. A photo of the nominee, although not required, would be great be greatly appreciated

Please submit your nominations or direct any questions to, John Finamore (jfinamore@nsf.gov), member of the WSS Board.

We look forward to hearing from you.

BE ENLIGHTENED!

Free Statistics Internship Listing Opportunity in Amstat News and on ASA Website

The American Statistical Association is inviting organizations to submit a 2015 internship listing to be included in the December 2014 issue of *Amstat News* and posted on the ASA website (at no charge). You are welcome to submit statistics related internship information all year for the ASA website, but only submissions received by October 20, 2014 will be included the December 2014 issue of *Amstat News*.

If interested, please visit http://www.amstat.org/education/internships.cfm where you will find instructions and the internship listing form under the Internship Opportunities Listing Form for Organizations link.

We offer this complimentary service for the organizations who offer statistics related internships for students and to assist statistics students to find internship opportunities. If you have any questions, please contact Rebecca Nichols at rebecca@amstat.org.

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SHORT COURSES

Presentation of Economic Data
OCTOBER 16, 2014
College Park Marriott Hotel and Conference Center, Hyattsville, MD 20783
Presented by Deborah P. Klein and Michael D. Levi
Registration and Payment Due by October 2, 2014
https://projects.isr.umich.edu/jpsm/html_content.cfm?CourseID=101614

Quality Adjustment Methods for Price Indexes
NOVEMBER 6-7, 2014
College Park Marriott Hotel and Conference Center, Hyattsville, MD 20783
Presented by John S. Greenlees
Registration and Payment Due by October 23, 2014
https://projects.isr.umich.edu/jpsm/html_content.cfm?CourseID=110614

Introduction to Survey Sampling
DECEMBER 2-3, 2014
College Park Marriott Hotel and Conference Center, Hyattsville, MD 20783
Presented by Colm O'Muircheartaigh and James M. Lepkowski
Registration and Payment Due by November 18, 2014
https://projects.isr.umich.edu/jpsm/html_content.cfm?CourseID=120214

Issues in Data Science: Unpacking "Big Data"
JANUARY 22-23, 2015
College Park Marriott Hotel and Conference Center, Hyattsville, MD 20783
Presented by Cliff Lampe
Registration and Payment Due by January 8, 2015
https://projects.isr.umich.edu/jpsm/html_content.cfm?CourseID=012215

Leveraging Mobile & Social Technologies for Data Collection
FEBRUARY 10-11, 2015
Bureau of Labor Statistics Conference Center, Washington DC 20212
Presented by Michael W. Link
Registration and Payment Due by January 27, 2015
https://projects.isr.umich.edu/jpsm/html_content.cfm?CourseID=021015

Introduction to the Federal Statistical System
FEBRUARY 25, 2015
Bureau of Labor Statistics Conference Center, Washington DC 20212
Presented by Brian A. Harris-Kojetin and Hermann Habermann
Registration and Payment Due by February 11, 2015
https://projects.isr.umich.edu/jpsm/html_content.cfm?CourseID=022515

Writing Questions for Surveys
MARCH 12-13, 2015
Presented by Nora Cate Schaeffer
Registration and Payment Due by February 26, 2015
https://projects.isr.umich.edu/jpsm/html_content.cfm?CourseID=031215

Practical Tools for Sampling and Weighting Survey Samples
MARCH 30-31, 2015
Presented by Richard L. Valliant and Jill A. Dever
Registration and Payment Due by March 16, 2015
https://projects.isr.umich.edu/jpsm/html_content.cfm?CourseID=033015

Total Survey Error
MAY 4-5, 2015
Presented by Paul P. Biemer and Lars Lyberg
Registration and Payment Due by April 20, 2015
https://projects.isr.umich.edu/jpsm/html_content.cfm?CourseID=050415

Introduction to Survey Estimation
MAY 28-29, 2015
Presented by David Morganstein and Sunghee Lee
Registration and Payment Due by May 14, 2015
https://projects.isr.umich.edu/jpsm/html_content.cfm?CourseID=052815

Practical Tools for Nonresponse Bias Studies
SEPTEMBER 18, 2015
Presented by Jill Montaquila and Kristen Olson
Registration and Payment Due by September 4, 2015
https://projects.isr.umich.edu/jpsm/html_content.cfm?CourseID=091815

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

Data Analyst/Statistician, Washington, DC

Employ your data skills for great causes!

The Avalon Consulting Group is seeking a data analyst/statistician to build and validate models and conduct data mining for direct marketing campaigns and program strategy. Collaborate with our dynamic teams on award-winning campaigns for museums, theaters, and an exciting variety of progressive nonprofits and political campaigns.

What You Will Do
- Provide actionable strategic analysis for progressive nonprofits
- Build and validate fundraising models for progressive non-profits
- Data mine donor files for trends
- Produce charts and data visuals for presentations
- Segment mail files and provide output to mail shops

What We Need
- Strong candidates with 1-3 years of experience
- Experience with SQL
- Programming/scripting skills
- Proficiency in regression modeling
- Expert data mining skills
- SPSS or R and Tableau are desirable

In addition, our most successful team members exhibit the following:
- Enjoyment of collaborative, fast-paced environments
- Execution of responsibilities with minimal oversight
- Management of multiple projects and deadlines
- Critical thinking and troubleshooting
- Consideration of strategic objectives alongside immediate concerns
- Collaboration with clients, partners and Avalon team members
- Outstanding communications, including both listening and persuasion
- Consistent professionalism and respectful communication
- Eagerness for learning and professional development

Why You Will Love Us

Avalon – one of Washington, DC's best regarded, most innovative fundraising consulting agencies – is a terrific place to work. We have created award-winning, successful multi-channel marketing and fundraising campaigns for nonprofit and political clients since 1997. We love our work, and it shows in our high staff retention rate, our industry accolades, and our happy clients.

We have created a culture unlike any other agency. We're strategic, analytical, creative, innovative, collaborative, and most of all: passionate about our work. Because every single day, we get to make the world a better place by helping our clients raise millions of dollars to fulfill their inspiring missions – cultural, environmental, social, political, charitable.

We work hard, but we also strive for a healthy work/home balance for our entire team – collaborating with each staff member to outline reasonable expectations and responsibilities, with a work plan for getting them done.

Besides being a great place to work, Avalon offers a rich benefit plan, including employer-paid health and dental insurance, paid vacation and sick leave, employer-paid life and disability insurance, access to flexible spending plans and a 401k plan. If you have the qualifications above, we would love to meet you. For consideration, please send your resume, cover letter, and salary requirements to careers@avalonconsulting.net.

NOTE: Phone calls and emails to staff regarding this job posting are not accepted.

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FROM THE WSS NEWS EDITOR

Items for publication in the **October, 2014** issue of WSS NEWS will be accepted thru the **20**[th] of **preceding month**.

Email items to wss.editor@gmail.com.

The authors are responsible for verifying the contents of their submissions. Submissions requiring extensive revisions on length and/or contents will be returned.

Please submit all materials as an attachment in **MS WORD** or **plain text**. Submissions in any other format will be returned.

PLEASE DO NOT SUBMIT YOUR ITEMS IN PDF OR IN THE BODY OF AN EMAIL.

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