

WSS JULIUS SHISKIN MEMORIAL AWARD SEMINAR

Title: How Will Statistical Agencies Operate When All Data are Private?

Speaker: John Abowd, 2016 Recipient of Julius Shiskin Memorial Award for Economic Statistics

Chair: Robert Parker, Chair, Shiskin Award Selection Committee

Time: Tuesday, September 6, 2016, 1 – 3 pm

Where: Auditorium, U.S. Census Bureau, 4600 Silver Hill Road, Suitland, Maryland

Contact: To be placed on the seminar attendance list at the Bureau of the Census, e-mail your name, affiliation, citizenship (if other than U.S. Citizen) and seminar name to Sandra.l.heineck@census.gov by noon of August 30 or call 301-763-7559 and leave a message. Bring a photo ID (passport and green card, if other than U.S. Citizen) to the seminar. The Census Bureau is located next to the Suitland Green Line Station in Suitland, MD.

Abstract: The dual problems of respecting citizen privacy and protecting the confidentiality of their data—Ken Prewitz’s famous “don’t ask/don’t tell” dictum—have become hopelessly conflated in the “Big Data” era. There are orders of magnitude more data outside an agency’s firewall than inside it—compromising the integrity of traditional statistical disclosure limitation methods. And increasingly the information processed by the agency was “asked” in a context wholly outside the agency’s operations—blurring the distinction between what was asked and what is published. Already private businesses like Microsoft, Google and Apple recognize that cybersecurity (safeguarding the integrity and access controls for internal data) and privacy protection (ensuring that what is published does not reveal too much about any person or business) are two sides of the same coin. This is a paradigm-shifting moment for statistical agencies. This talk will examine how statistical agencies can respond in manner consistent with their missions.

Speaker biography: John M. Abowd, is Edmund Ezra Day Professor of Economics, professor of information science, and professor of statistics at Cornell University, and since June, 2016 the Associate Director for Research and Methodology and Chief Scientist at the Census Bureau. He began teaching and conducting research at Cornell in 1987 where he established, along with his colleague Lars Vilhuber, and directed the Cornell Virtual Research Data Center, and the Labor Dynamics Institute, while also directing the Cornell Institute for Social and Economic Research. He is a Research Associate of the National Bureau of Economic Research and at several research organizations in France and Germany, as well as with the French national statistical office. He is a fellow of the Society of Labor Economists, the ASA, and the Econometric Society, as well as an elected member of the International Statistical Institute. He has served on the National Research Council’s Committee on National Statistics, the American Economic Association’s Committee on Economic Statistics.