



WSS NEWS

October 2002

WASHINGTON
STATISTICAL
SOCIETY

The 2002 Morris Hansen Lecture

The Washington Statistical Society is pleased to announce the twelfth in the annual series of lectures to honor the memory of Morris Hansen. This lecture series is made possible by a grant from Westat, where Morris Hansen was senior statistician for 20 years and served as Chairman of the Board of Directors at the time of his death.

This year the Morris Hansen lecture series will have its first panel discussion. Panelists are Eleanor Singer, Norman Bradburn, and Katherine Wallman.

Eleanor Singer is currently serving as Senior Research Scientist, Survey Research Center, Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan. She has written widely on survey research methods, with special emphasis on privacy attitudes of individuals and their influence on survey response. Her research has touched on many of the important issues in survey methodology: informed consent, incentives, effects of interview length, refusal conversion, and their effect on survey response rates. She has focused on analyzing these issues in particular for the Nation's Decennial Census. She has been an active member of the American Association for Public Opinion Research and the American Statistical Association. She has received the American Association for Public Opinion Research's Award for Exceptionally Distinguished Achievement.

Norman M. Bradburn is currently serving as Assistant Director for the Social, Behavioral, and Economic Sciences at the National Science Foundation, on leave from the University of Chicago. There he is the Tiffany and Margaret Blake Distinguished Service Professor Emeritus in the Department of Psychology, Graduate School of Business, the College, and the Harris Graduate School of Public Policy Studies. He has written widely on survey research methods and is a pioneer in developing the application of cognitive psychology to the study of nonsampling errors. His recent work has been on cognitive psychological explanations for behavioral reporting errors, particularly telescoping errors, and on context effects in attitude surveys. He is a Fellow of the American Statistical Association and a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. He was Chairman of the National Academy's Committee on National Statistics from 1993 to 1998.

Katherine K. Wallman currently serves as Chief Statistician at the United States Office of Management and Budget. In this capacity, she is responsible for overseeing and coordinating Federal statistical policies, standards, and programs; developing and advancing long-term improvements in Federal statistical activities; and representing the Federal government in international organizations such as the United Nations Statistical Commission. During her tenure in this position, Ms. Wallman has placed particular emphasis on increasing collaboration among the agencies of the Federal statistical system, strengthening the protection of confidential statistical information, fostering improvements in the scope and quality of Federal statistics, and making the products of the system more readily accessible to the public. She is an elected member of the International Statistical Institute, a Fellow of the American Statistical Association and the American Association for the Advancement of Science, and a Founder Member of the International Association for Official Statistics. In 1992, she served as President of the American Statistical Association.

WSS Short Course

The WSS is sponsoring a short course titled "Understanding the language of nature: The past, present and future of graphic display." The instructor is Howard Wainer of the Educational Testing Service. The date is Wednesday, October 23, 2002 from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. The location is the Capitol Hyatt Washington. Additional details are available in this issue of the WSS NEWS.

WSS and Other Seminars (All events are open to any interested persons)		
October		
15	Tues.	Synthetic Tabular Data To Limit Statistical Disclosure Of Sensitive Information
17	Thur.	Afghan Refugee Camp Surveys: Pakistan, 2002
		SHORT COURSE
23	Wed.	Understanding the language of nature: The past, present and future of graphic display
November		
12	Tues.	The 2002 Roger Herriot Award For Innovation in Federal Statistics
12	Tues.	Correcting for Omitted-Variables and Measurement-Error Bias in Autoregressive Model Estimation with Panel Data
		Morris Hansen Lecture
19	Tues.	Privacy and Confidentiality – A New Era?

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

SIGSTAT Topics for Fall-Winter 2002/2003

November 13, 2002: SAS Enterprise Guide-- Enterprise Guide® software brings the full power of SAS to business analysts, statistical analysts and SAS programmers in a PC client application via an easy to use point-and-click user interface. This Windows client connects to Version 8 SAS System servers and provides access any data types supported by the SAS System, uses the execution power of the server to run any SAS processes, and returns professional reports and graphics to your PC. Enterprise Guide also provides you with web deployment and repeatability of your analysis and results.

December 11, 2002: SAS Graph--Go-- Graph-n-Go is an interactive application for producing simple or complex graphical representations of data. It can be used for data exploration or for creating

presentation-quality graphical images that can be printed or imported into documents.

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 3056, 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, www.cpcug.org/user/sigstat/.

Program Abstract

- Title:** Synthetic Tabular Data To Limit Statistical Disclosure Of Sensitive Information
- Speaker:** Ramesh A. Dandekar, Energy Information Administration
- Co-Author:** Lawrence H. Cox, National Center for Health Statistics
- Chair:** Phillip Steel, U.S. Census Bureau
- Discussant:** Brian Greenberg, Social Security Administration
- Date/Time:** Tuesday, October 15, 2002, 12:30 to 2:00 p.m.
- Location:** Bureau of Labor Statistics, Postal Square Building (PSB), Conference Center, Conference Room 1, 2 Massachusetts Ave., N.W., Washington DC. Please use the First Street entrance to the PSB. To gain entrance to BLS, please see Notice at the end of this announcement.
- Sponsor:** WSS Methodology Section
- Abstract:** In the scientific community a synthetic product is developed when the real product is either in short supply or exhibits some undesirable properties. The objective in the latter case is to remove undesirable properties from the synthetic product. Several examples of synthetic products include: rubber, wood, sugar, fiber, fuel, and hormones.

We apply this notion to the release of statistical data products in tabular form. Here, the undesirable property is that of revealing confidential information on entities covered by the data. We explore the possibility of generating synthetic tabular data, which exhibits overall statistical characteristics similar to that of the real tabular data, yet offers protection from statistical disclosure. The method applies linear programming to synthesize tabular cells by controlled adjustments to original tabular cells. The controlled adjustments are made in such a way that the overall distortion of the original cell value is minimal, based on one of several standard criteria. The resultant synthetic table conveys approximately the same statistical information to the end users as the original table, but at reduced risk of disclosure.

NOTICE

To attend this seminar, you will need to do one of the following:

1. email name, affiliation, and name of seminar to wss_seminar@bls.gov (underscore after 'wss') by noon 1 day ahead or
2. call 202-691-7524 (Karen Jackson) at least 2 days ahead. Finally, bring a photo ID.

Program Abstract

- Title:** Afghan Refugee Camp Surveys: Pakistan, 2002
- Speakers:** James Bell, Ruth Citrin, David Nolle U.S. Department of State and Fritz Scheuren, NORC, University of Chicago
- Chair:** Mary Batchter, Ernst & Young LLP
- Date/Time:** Thursday, October 17, 2002, 12:30 to 2:00 p.m.
- Location:** Bureau of Labor Statistics, Postal Square Building (PSB), Conference Center, Conference Room 1, 2 Massachusetts Ave., N.W., Washington DC. Please use the First Street entrance to the PSB. To gain entrance to BLS, please see Notice at the end of this announcement.
- Sponsor:** WSS Methodology Section and AAPOR-DC
- Abstract:** Both as professionals and as citizens, the events of the last year and now more have brought about many changes to our view of the world and our engagement in it. This survey was one response to those changes. Its main goal was measuring attitudes on a variety of social, economic, and political issues of the Afghan refugees that are now returning to their homeland from Pakistan. Particularly important was learning about their perceptions regarding current circumstances as well as future expectations. Methodologically, in a setting of great danger, trying to obtain a good sample of adult males in the refugee camps posed many challenges and most of the discussion will be focused on these.

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Program Abstract

Title: The 2002 Roger Herriot Award For Innovation in Federal Statistics

Recipient: Daniel H. Weinberg, U.S. Census Bureau

Speakers: Katherine K. Wallman, Statistical Policy Office, Office of Management and Budget
William P. Butz, Rand Corporation
Paula J. Schneider, U.S. Census Bureau (retired)
Daniel H. Weinberg, U.S. Census Bureau

Chair: Edward J. Spar, Council of Professional Associations on Federal Statistics

Date: Tuesday, November 12, 2002 12:30 - 2:00 p.m. Reception to Follow

Location: Bureau of Labor Statistics. Conference Rooms 7 and 8**. Video Conference to selected sites

Co-sponsors of the Herriot Award: Washington Statistical Society, American Statistical Association's Government Statistics Section and Social Statistics Section

ABSTRACT: On August 12, 2002, Dan Weinberg was awarded the Roger Herriot Award at the annual meeting of the American Statistical Association in New York. Dan is the Chief of the Housing and Household Economic Statistics Division of the U.S. Census Bureau. Dan has been immersed in all three sectors of federal statistics: He taught at Yale and Tufts Universities, worked as a private sector research contractor, and has spent the last 22 years in the federal government. Those who know Dan know he "thinks outside the box" in the tradition of Roger Herriot. Because of his strong intellectual interest and expertise in poverty measurement, Dan has been an active champion for updating the 40-year-old poverty measure. Dan's successful leadership on issues of strategic importance resulted in initiating the Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates program. The promise to "end welfare as we know it" set the stage for Dan's vision to establish the Survey of Program Dynamics in order to measure the effects of welfare reform over a 10 year period. These activities exemplify the accomplishments the Herriot Award represents.

Kathy Wallman, Bill Butz, and Paula Schneider will first discuss Dan's contributions to federal statistics. Dan will then present a paper: Better Measures of Income and Poverty

Roger Herriot was the Associate Commissioner for Statistical Standards and Methodology at the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) before he died in 1994. Throughout his career at NCES and the Census Bureau, Roger developed unique approaches to the solution of statistical problems in federal data collection programs. Dan truly exemplifies this tradition.

**To attend seminars at BLS, you need to email your name, affiliation, and seminar names to wss_seminar@bls.gov (Underline between "wss" and "seminar") by noon at least two days in advance or call 202-691-7524 and leave a message. Bring a photo id to the seminar. A new list begins July 1. Once you are on the list you need not contact BLS for seminars through September 30 2002. BLS is located at 2 Massachusetts Ave NE. Use Red Line to Union Station.

Program Abstract

Title: **Correcting for Omitted-Variables and Measurement-Error Bias in Autoregressive Model Estimation with Panel Data**

Speaker: P.A.V.B. Swamy, BLS

Discussant: Tom Lutton, OFHEO

Moderator: Charlie Hallahan, ERS/USDA

Place: BLS Conference Center, Room 6*

Date: Tuesday, November 12, 2002, 12:30 - 2:00 p.m.

Sponsor: Statistical Computing Section

Talk to be videoconferenced.

Abstract: The parameter estimates based on an econometric equation are biased and can also be inconsistent when relevant regressors are omitted from the equation or when included regressors are measured with error. This problem gets complicated when the “true” functional form of the equation is unknown. Here, we demonstrate how auxiliary variables, called concomitants, can be used to remove omitted-variable and measurement-error biases from the coefficients of an equation with the unknown “true” functional form. The method is specifically designed for panel data. Numerical algorithms for enacting this procedure are presented and an illustration is given using a practical example of forecasting small-area employment from nonlinear autoregressive models.

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Program Abstract

- Title:** Privacy and Confidentiality – A New Era?
- Chair:** Virginia deWolf, consultant
- Panelists:** **Eleanor Singer**, Senior Research Scientist, Survey Research Center, Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan
- Norman Bradburn**, Assistant Director for the Social, Behavioral, and Economic Sciences at the National Science Foundation and Tiffany and Margaret Blake Distinguished Service Professor Emeritus in the Department of Psychology, Graduate School of Business, the College, and the Harris Graduate School of Public Policy Studies, University of Chicago
- Katherine Wallman**, Chief Statistician of the United States Office of Management and Budget
- Date/Time:** Tuesday, November 19, 2002: 3:30-5:30 p.m.
- Location:** The Jefferson Auditorium, USDA South Building, between 12th and 14th Streets on Independence Avenue S.W., Washington DC. The Independence Avenue exit from the Smithsonian METRO stop is at the 12th Street corner of the building, which is also where the handicapped entrance is located. Except for handicapped access, all attendees should enter at the 5th wing, along Independence Avenue. Please bring a photo ID to facilitate gaining access to the building.
- Sponsors:** The Washington Statistical Society, Westat, and the National Agricultural Statistics Service.
- Reception:** The lecture will be followed by a reception from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. in the patio of the Jamie L. Whitten Building, across Independence Avenue S.W.
- Abstract:** Privacy and confidentiality issues are receiving heightened attention for a variety of reasons. The exponential growth of available data and the increased ease with which large databases can be mined are causing government agencies concern over the release of information collected for the public good. At the same time, Institutional Review Boards (required for a number of government surveys) are taking a more restrictive view of what is permissible. And a seemingly minor provision of the USA Patriot Act, in response to the September 11 national tragedy, permits the Attorney General to petition the court for access to confidential data maintained by the National Center for Education Statistics. The success of the Federal statistical system, and the ability to provide accurate aggregate information for the public good, relies on the confidence that respondents place in government statistical organizations and their willingness to participate in government surveys.

This panel session brings together three key government leaders and researchers to discuss the implications of these important issues. The first speaker, Dr. Eleanor Singer, will review research findings concerning people's concerns about confidentiality of personal information collected by government agencies, focusing on the Census Bureau. In the second presentation, Dr. Norman Bradburn will highlight issues of privacy and confidentiality that are becoming increasingly salient in social and behavioral research. He will argue that information and data are different concepts and that the privacy and confidentiality issues are different for the two concepts. The third speaker, Ms. Katherine

Wallman, will discuss some of the issues that have arisen since the events of September 11, the challenges they place on the Federal statistical system, and current initiatives to address these challenges.

Panelists will identify the main issues in the debate, weigh tradeoffs, discuss the role of informed consent procedures, and consider the long-term implications for federal statistics. The discussion will inform decisions on the need for, and nature of, a formal response from the statistics profession with respect to balancing compelling interests in data for national security against promises made to respondents to Federal surveys.

Announcements

Note from the WSS NEWS Editor

Items for publication in the December 2002 WSS NEWS should be submitted no later than October 29, 2002. E-mail items to Michael Feil at michael.feil@usda.gov.

Federal Committee on Statistical Methodology – Statistical Policy Seminar Integrating Federal Statistical Information and Processes

The Federal Committee on Statistical Methodology is sponsoring a Statistical Policy Seminar titled "Integrating Federal Statistical Information and Processes" on November 6 - 7 2002. This is the Sixth in a Series of Seminars Hosted by COPAFS (Council of Professional Associations on Federal Statistics). Support is provided by the Agency of Healthcare Research and Quality, Bureau of Economic Analysis, Bureau Of Labor Statistics, Bureau of Transportation Statistics, Energy Information Administration, Environmental Protection Agency, National Agricultural Statistics Service, National Center for Education Statistics, National Center for Health Statistics, Social Security Administration, Statistics of Income, Internal Revenue Service, and U.S. Census Bureau.

The subjects include: Access to Data for users, Stakeholders and Sponsors; Ensuring Data Confidentiality; E-Government and New Dissemination Paradigms; Improving Data Quality; Preserving the Past, Linking to the Future; Providing Adequate Technical Support; Achieving Timeliness in a "Real Time" World; Enhancing Data for Statistical Use Through

Linkage and Modeling; Capitalizing on Technology to Enhance Survey Reporting; Ensuring Citizen Privacy; Providing Small Area Estimates; and Obtaining Respondent Cooperation. The keynote address will be given by Jay Hakes who is affiliated with the Jimmy Carter Library. Participants will include federal statisticians, economists, and managers, as well as others in the broader statistical community who share an interest in the quality of federal data. The location is at the Holiday Inn Bethesda, 8120 Wisconsin Ave., Bethesda, MD. The cost is \$150.00 per person. The maximum number of participants will be 300.

For further information, contact the COPAFS office via phone at (703)836-0404, via fax at (703)684-3410, or via e-mail at copafs@aol.com.

Probability and Statistics Day

The Department of Statistics at the George Washington University will hold the next Mid-Atlantic Probability and Statistics Day on November 16, 2002. Contributed talks (15 minutes) on topics of interest to Statisticians from academia, industry and government are planned. Invited speakers include Professor Bimal Sinha of University of Maryland, Baltimore County and Professor Abdel El-Shaarawi of Water Research Institute and McMaster University, Canada. Special invitation is extended to young researchers from local universities, industries and governmental agencies to participate and present their work. If you are planning to attend or give a talk, please register at <http://www.gwu.edu/~stat/index.html>. The last day for submitting abstracts is October 18, 2002. Early submissions are encouraged.

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.ipr@versizon.net or (703) 979-1191.

Statisticians

The Consumer Product Safety Commission, an Agency of the U. S. Government, has several openings for Statisticians. They are located in the Division of Hazard Analysis which has a major role in describing and analyzing the hazards associated with a wide variety of consumer products. Candidates with degrees in statistics, epidemiology, or mathematics preferred. For job information, contact Sue Ahmed, Ph.D. at 301-504-0470, ext. 1371 or visit our website www.cpsc.gov (CPSC announcement number CPSC-004-02). The CPSC is an Equal Opportunity Employer. Selection for these positions shall be determined on the basis of merit and without regard to race, color, national origin, sex, political preference, marital status, sexual orientation, labor affiliation or non-affiliation or other non-merit factors.

Economic Analyst

The Congressional Research Service is seeking an Analyst in Applied Microeconomics to perform empirical analysis of major domestic social policy programs. The incumbent will work on projects that require the modeling of current law and proposed eligibility and benefit rules for programs like Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and Food Stamps, and changes in the federal tax system that affect this population (e.g., the Earned Income Tax Credit). The incumbent will also conduct statistical analyses of survey data like the Current Population Survey, the Survey of Income and Program Participation, or the Medical Expenditure Panel Survey. This position is being offered at the GS-13 level (\$66,229 - \$86,095); promotion potential is to the GS-15 level (\$92,060 - \$119,682). This position requires a degree in economics or an equivalent

combination of education and experience. The position also requires superior analytical, writing, and oral communication skills; the ability to collaborate with individuals at a variety of levels and across a range of disciplines; and the ability to exercise objectivity, judgment and discretion.

Interested applicants must either apply online at www.loc.gov/crsinfo (preferred) or call 202/707-5627 to request an applicant job kit. When applying, please refer to vacancy #020217. All applications must be received by October 4, 2002. CRS is the public policy research arm of the United States Congress.



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