



WSS NEWS

WASHINGTON
STATISTICAL
SOCIETY

September 2004

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

I am very pleased to be serving as president of the WSS for the year that began at the end of June. We are the largest and, by far, the most active chapter of the American Statistical Association. With several seminars each month and other special events scattered throughout the year, the opportunities for professional and social interaction with other statisticians in the DC area are many and varied.

A few months ago we acted to lower our dues. This will take effect with your next annual membership renewal. (For most of you, this is through your ASA renewal.) This reduction was made possible by steps that we took to shift more of you to receiving the monthly newsletter electronically. Our hope is that we can eliminate the paper newsletter except for a limited number of members without regular access to email. If we can do so, we can reduce the dues even further.

With the paper newsletter, it cost us as much to add a new member as we received in dues. With a fully electronic newsletter our unit costs will fall dramatically, making this a good time to expand our membership. There remain many local members of ASA who have not joined the WSS, and many other statisticians in our area who have not joined either organization. Expanding our membership will be a priority of mine over the coming year.

One thing that was driven home to me in my year as President-Elect is the amount of work carried on behind the scenes by members who have served in their various roles--or multiple roles--for years. Having a steady stream of new volunteers who are willing to step into their shoes is critical to our continued vitality as the organization that we all know. If you have not volunteered in any capacity previously, I urge you to think about doing so. Or think about giving or organizing a seminar. If you are interested, you can contact me at jczajka@mathematica-mpr.com or, by phone, at (202) 484-4685.

Lastly, I want to call your attention to a special event coming up at the end of February. Two years ago the WSS joined the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) as a co-sponsor of the CDC's biennial statistical symposium, which was held in Atlanta. This year the 10th biennial symposium will be held in the Washington area, at the Bethesda Marriott, from Sunday February 27 through Wednesday March 2. WSS members will receive a discount on short course and symposium fees, and there are still opportunities to sign up as presenters. Watch the newsletter for further information.

I hope to see you at one or more events this year.

John Czajka

WSS and Other Seminars (All events are open to any interested persons)	
September 21 Tues.	Data Quality Methods
23 Thurs.	Testing An Automated Refusal Avoidance Training Methodology
29 Wed.	Creating A Market for Reducing Market Sprawl
October 14 Thurs.	Microdata Confidentiality Methods
November 16 Tues.	Data Quality and Record Linkage: A Broad Survey of Applications and Techniques

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

Announcements

2005 CDC and ATSDR Symposium on Statistical Methods: Statistics and Public Health Policy [March 1-2, 2005]

Call for Abstracts

Statisticians, epidemiologists, and all others interested in the application of statistics to public and environmental health are invited to participate in the Tenth Biennial Symposium on Statistical Methods, sponsored by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention & Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (CDC & ATSDR) and the Washington Statistical Society (WSS) Chapter of the American Statistical Association (ASA), to be held at the Bethesda Marriott in Bethesda, MD. The theme for the 2005 Symposium is "Statistics and Public Health Policy." A short course on a related topic will be offered on February 28, 2005 in conjunction with the Symposium.

The Symposium will include invited talks and contributed papers. Authors are encouraged to submit abstracts for contributed papers related to one of the following session topics:

- * Using observational data to develop public health policy
- * Using interventions trials to develop public health policy
- * Evaluating causation
- * Bioterrorism, biometrics, and security

Abstracts will be considered for either oral or poster presentation and must be postmarked by no later than September 30, 2004. Authors of accepted presentations will be notified by November 1, 2004. (All accepted papers will be considered for publication in a dedicated issue of *Statistics in Medicine*.) For more information, please visit the Symposium website at <http://www.cdc.gov/od/ads/sag/> or contact Harvey Lipman, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 4770 Buford Hwy NE (MS G-23), Atlanta, GA 30341-3717; [(770) 488- 8113; hlipman@cdc.gov].

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].

Federal Committee On Statistical Methodology - Statistical Policy Seminar

"Achieving Statistical Quality in a Diverse and Changing Environment" on December 15-16, 2004 is the Seventh in a Series of Seminars Hosted by COPAFS (The Council of Professional Associations on Federal Statistics).

Participants will include statistician, economists, and managers, as well as others in the broader statistical community who share an interest in the quality of federal data.

Support is provided by Agency for 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 Division of the Internal Revenue Service, and U.S. Census Bureau.

The topics include: Standards for Statistical Surveys * Agency Initiatives to Monitor Survey Quality * Recent Advances in Measuring Quality Assurance * Confidential Information Protection and Statistical Efficiency Act: Where Are We and Where Are We Going? * Integrated Survey Designs: Analytical Enhancements Achieved Through Linkage of Surveys, Administrative and Secondary Data * Telephone Surveys in a Changing Environment * Incentives in Government Surveys: Practices and Perspectives * Web Surveys: A Research Agenda For a Changing Environment * Advisory Panels: Seeking user Feedback to Improve the Quality of Statistical Programs * Researcher Access to Confidential and Micro Data From Home Institutions * Data Mining: Policy Implications and Applications * Tools, Policy, and Procedures for Survey Improvement

The keynote address will be given by Richard Kulka who is with the Research Triangle Institute. The location is the Holiday Inn Select at 8120 Wisconsin Avenue in Bethesda, Maryland. The cost is \$150.00 per person.

For Further Information, contact the COPAFS Office at 703-836-0404(phone), fax at 703-684-3410, or email copafs@aol.com.

Program Announcement

- Title:** **Data Quality Methods**
- Speaker:** William E. Winkler, U.S. Census Bureau (william.e.winkler@census.gov)
- Chair:** Jacob Bournazian, U.S. Department of Energy
- Date/Time:** Tuesday, September 21, 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:** Statistical agencies collect data from surveys and create data warehouses by combining data from a variety of sources. To be suitable for analytic purposes, the files must be relatively free of error. Record linkage (Fellegi and Sunter, JASA 1969) is used for identifying duplicates within a file or across a set of files. Statistical data editing and imputation (Fellegi and Holt, JASA 1976) are used for locating erroneous values of variables and filling-in for missing data. Although these powerful methods were introduced in the statistical literature, the primary means of implementing the methods have been via computer science and operations research (Winkler, Information Systems 2004). This talk provides an overview of the recent developments.

Program Announcement

- Title:** **Testing An Automated Refusal Avoidance Training Methodology**
- Speakers:** Tracey Hagerty-Heller, Westat
- Chair:** Jonaki Bose, Bureau of Transportation Statistics
- Date/Time:** Thursday, September 23, 2004/12:30 - 2:00 p.m.
- Location:** Bureau of Labor Statistics, Conference Center. 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, WSS and DC-AAPOR
- Abstract:** Interviewer training to avoid refusals has traditionally relied on tailoring the messages to the concerns of the individual respondent (Groves and Couper, 1998; Schaeffer, 1991). For many telephone interviews, tailoring is difficult because relatively little information is provided to interviewers before a refusal occurs. Research has shown that practice and drilling interviewers to respond as quickly as possible plays an important role in avoiding refusals (Groves and McGonagle, 2001; Mayer and O'Brien, 2001). Practice may take many different forms, including role playing, "games" and observing others. Westat has developed automated refusal avoidance training for telephone interviewers. The purpose of the training is to provide interviewers with an opportunity to develop and practice their refusal avoidance techniques. Interviewers, seated at a CATI station, call into an Interactive Voice Response (IVR) system to listen and respond to a set of recorded scenarios where survey respondents object, refuse and ask questions. The conversations are recorded and interviewers/supervisors are able to listen and evaluate their responses. This tool potentially offers a relatively inexpensive way for interviewers to get practice and for supervisors to get a realistic assessment of how the interviewer will perform once they are making "live" calls. This presentation will report results from a study that evaluated the effectiveness of this newly developed training tool. The evaluation randomly assigned approximately 100 interviewers to two groups. Both groups received the standard refusal avoidance training (classroom lecture and role-playing) while only the second group participated in a series of practice sessions with the IVR system. Cooperation rates between the two groups, direct observations of interviews (e.g., using behavioral coding), and feedback from interviewers were assessed to measure success.

Program Announcement

- Title: **Creating A Market for Reducing Sprawl**
- Speaker: Frederic H. Murphy, Temple University
- Chair: Mel Kollander, Temple University
- Date/time: Wednesday, September 29, 2004/12:30 pm-2 pm
- Location: Bureau of Labor Statistics Conference Room 10. 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 Agriculture and Natural Resources Section

Abstract: Sprawl has well-known environmental consequences. It has caused the increase in oil imports over the past few decades and makes the country more vulnerable to high energy prices. Now it has been implicated in slowing economic growth and harming the health of the population. Sprawl damages the longer-run growth prospects of a region by reducing innovation through lessening social interactions among potential entrepreneurs and technologists. Most recently sprawl has been identified as an important contributor to the obesity problem in the U.S.

Sprawl has become a major problem for metropolitan areas because the regional markets for land and development do not include the cost of sprawl to society at large. The individual decisions to locate residential, commercial and industrial facilities do not incorporate costs that include damage to watersheds, congestion on the highways, and lack of job access for lower-income residents. Nor do they include the consequences of lost economic growth or on health.

Attempts to legislate limits on growth and use zoning have led to lawsuits and inefficiencies that create a zero-sum mentality that in turn accentuates conflicts within regions. What we propose is to design a market mechanism that adds the cost of sprawl to the costs of development in a way that is equitable to developers. The mechanism is based on the successful approach of the federal government to substantially reduce sulfur pollution throughout the United States.

Simply put, a state or region should place annual limits on the rights to use land for new development within the state and auction off these rights. The buyers of the rights would be the companies and individuals who seek to develop land and anyone else interested in owning the rights. The revenues gained from the auctions could then be used to mitigate the impact of development on the region or reduce tax rates.

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).

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, location BLS Conference Center Room 1
- 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.

Note from the WSS NEWS Editor

Items for publication in the November 2004 WSS NEWS should be submitted no later than September 28, 2004. E-mail items to Michael Feil at michael.feil@usda.gov.

JPSM Courses Announcement

The Joint Program in Survey Methodology is offering two courses.

The first course is ***INTRODUCTION TO SURVEY MANAGEMENT*** on November 4 - 5, 2004. This course focuses on the application of project management principles and techniques to the management of survey research projects. The course will cover a broad range of survey management topics, including: proposal preparation, Work Breakdown Structures, Gantt charts, organization charts, staffing, budgeting, management tools to monitor the work, earned value analysis, project leadership skills, types of survey contracts, and an overview of survey design issues that survey managers need to know. This course will present an introduction and overview of survey management within a contract research environment, with particular emphasis on surveys conducted for the Federal Government. The course is intended for persons involved in the management of survey projects, whether as a project officer, a member of the project officer's staff, a grantee, or a contractor. The course assumes a basic working knowledge of survey design and operations. The Instructor is Michael F. Weeks who is a senior survey director at Research Triangle Institute. Online registration is required. Confirmation of registration will be sent after theregistration form has been processed. Registration is not firm until you receive a confirmation email. The email will include directions to the course. Payment by credit card is required. Post registration payment may be done online using the student's confirmation number or by calling 800-937-9320. **The registration deadline is October 18, 2004.** The registration fee for staff at sponsoring agencies and affiliates is \$550, \$550 for full-time university students, and \$730 for other participants. Payment by credit card is required. Post registration payment may be done online using the student's confirmation number or by calling (800) 937-9320. Payment is required by October 18, 2004. The course will be held at the University of Maryland Inn & Conference Center, College Adelphi, Maryland. It is located on University Boulevard at Adelphi Road, adjacent to the College Park campus of the University. Convenient parking in the UMUC garage is included in the registration fee. For hotel room reservations, call the Conference Center at(800) 727-8622.

The second course is ***INTRODUCTION TO SOCIAL NETWORK ANALYSIS*** on December 6-7, 2004. This course will present an introduction to various concepts, methods, and applications of social network analysis. The course focus is on methods, rather than on theories. These methods apply to the analysis of relational data measured on groups of social actors. Topics to be covered include an introduction to social networks, an introduction to graph theory, and the use of directed graphs to study structural theories of actor interrelations. Other topics will be drawn from the following: structural and locational properties of actors, such as centrality, prestige, and prominence; subgroups and cliques; equivalence of actors, including structural equivalence, blockmodels, and an introduction to role algebras; an introduction to local analyses, including dyadic and triadic analyses; and an introduction to statistical modeling of network processes. The instructor is Stanley Wasserman who is Rudy Professor of Sociology, Psychology, and Statistics at Indiana University. Online registration is required. Confirmation of registration and instructions will be sent after the registration form has been processed. Registration is not firm until you receive a confirmation email. The email will include directions to the course. The automatic web receipt is not an acceptance letter. Payment by credit card is required. Post registration payment can be done online using the student's confirmation number or by calling (800) 937-9320. Please note confirmation number. **The registration deadline is November 22, 2004.** The registration fee for staff at sponsoring agencies and affiliates is \$600, \$600 for full-time university students, and \$780 for other participants. Payment by credit card is required. Post registration payment may be done online using the registrant's confirmation number or by calling (800) 937-9320. Payment is required by November 22, 2004. 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 e-mail.

Questions for both courses should be directed to the JPSM Short Course, Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan, 426 Thompson Street, Room 4050, Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1248, Phone: (800) 937-9320, Fax: (734) 764-8263, Email: jpsmshort@isr.umich.edu.

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.

Another Note from the Editor

The editor is very much aware that the board membership information is not current.

Statistical Analysts

Highly successful Washington, DC consulting firm has mid-level openings for statistical analysts with strong proficiency in SAS/SPSS. ARPC (www.arpc.com) specializes in actuarial forecasting and multi-variate data analysis in support of litigation, product liability trusts, and business decision-making. Positions require experience in structured-yet-creative data compilation, investigation and analysis involving medical, actuarial or transaction-based records. We seek individuals with 3-5 years work experience preferably in a consulting environment with solid computer skills and the ability to clean, merge and analyze large-scale databases. Compensation is highly competitive.

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