NEWSLETTER

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The IASSIST Newsletter represents an international cooperative effort on the part of individuals managing, operating, or using machine-readable data archives, data libraries and data services. The Newsletter reports on activities related to the production, acquisition, preservation, processing, distribution, and use of machine-readable data carried out by its members and others in the international social science community. Your contributions and suggestions for topics of interest are encouraged and welcomed. The views set forth by authors of articles contained in this publication are not necessarily those of IASSIST.

Information for Authors

The Newsletter is published four times yearly, as Winter, Spring, Summer, and Fall issues. Substantive articles are refereed. Articles and other information should be typewritten and doublespaced. Each page of the manuscript should be numbered. The first page should contain the article title, author's name, affiliation, address to which correspondence should be sent, and telephone number. An author should NOT place his or her name on the manuscript itself. The second page should contain an abstract of 100 to 200 words. Authors are requested to follow the instructions given by the "Publication Manual" of the American Psychological Association. Other material for inclusion in the Newsletter should be completely identified by name, address, and telephone number. If the entry is an announcement of a conference, training session, or the like, the notice should include a mailing address and telephone number for the director of the event, or of the organization sponsoring the event. Book notices and reviews may not exceed two, double-spaced, typewritten pages.

Manuscripts should be submitted in duplicate to the Editor:

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TOWARD CREATING THE PROFESSIONAL DATA LIBRARIAN

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Abstract

This article describes the need for training the professional data librarian, archivist, and information scientist in a framework of social science research and applications and library and information sciences. The University of Wisconsin-Madison Intersession 1978 course was designed to meet this need. The course is described.

Since President Lyndon Johnson called for a "War on Poverty" in his State of the Union Message of January 1964, we have seen an exponential growth in the production of statistical information in order to allocate resources at the national, state, and local levels of government; to plan, audit and evaluate the distribution of resources; and to ensure adequate planning for human needs and an equitable delivery of benefits. Almost all federal legislation has included requirements to collect, analyze, and report the findings of data gathering. Recent trends in federal reporting requirements suggest an even greater increase in the rate of production of statistical data during the next decade as the need increases for more information by policy planners and analysts in both the public and private sectors.

Most of the data have been collected as part of the administrative record keeping process of governments, but a large portion of the data gathering has been funded as part of the research, policy, and evaluation activities of the Federal government. In the social sciences, an increasing amount of scientific research activity as well as policy planning and evaluation involves the collection, dissemination, and secondary analysis of statistical machine readable data files (MRDF). Some of these files are produced in the course of individual research projects; others, by organizations in the course of their operations; and still others, by ongoing data collection efforts funded by a consortium of data users.

While a substantial portion of these data are probably not useful for reanalysis, a great body of data continues to be useful for research related to public policy analysis, planning, and evaluation. While some of the data have been transferred to national archives and data centers whose major functions are to preserve, describe, and disseminate these data, many of these data files which are potentially rich sources of information remain outside the public domain.

The problems of access to information about MRDF, the quality of data, and the need for good documentation describing MRDF have been issues discussed by secondary analysts and data archive staffs for a number of years. One aspect of the MRDF problem, however, has not been sufficiently addressed, and that has been the insufficient and
inadequate concerted national efforts to facilitate access to MRDF through the development of training programs for professional librarians and information scientists.

When IASSIST was established in 1976, it was with the recognition that members of data archives and libraries needed a vehicle to communicate information about organizing, managing, and disseminating machine readable data files. In the IASSIST Constitution, the 'Objectives' include the establishment of training courses for data center personnel (NEWSLETTER, 1(1), 1976). This objective not only represents the recognition that data center personnel need assistance, but that established data services have the potential for providing training programs to assist others in understanding the nature of MRDF and the special problems of organization, management, and dissemination associated with this medium. The Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research responded to this objective by holding two Workshops on Data Library Management in the Summers of 1976 and 1977, as adjuncts to their regular summer program (Rowe, 1977). The Workshops were taught by Carolyn Geda. Alice Robbin, and Judith Rowe. Participants included trained data center personnel and professional librarians who wanted to become more informed about MRDF and integrating them in a library collection.

These Workshops were a source of satisfaction to their instructors and a good deal of information was communicated and exchanged. But it became increasingly obvious that a Workshop was not the best structure in which to communicate a conceptual framework for organizing and managing MRDF. There were few incentives to utilize the computing and data processing facilities, and within the time constraints there was little possibility of dealing with major social research and applications concepts needed to understand statistical MRDF, data base management, and organizational behavior. In addition, if the ideas were to reach an audience who could most directly benefit from this learning experience—the professional librarian—the course had to be taught in a university library school environment, and integrated in the library school and social science departments' curricula.

Why two different departments and indeed ones which rarely communicate with one another? Although social scientists continue to demonstrate negative attitudes toward the library profession, it is the library which has the expertise in our society to organize and disseminate information. Libraries are a natural environment for MRDF, because it can be treated as an additional informational resource, albeit in a different storage medium. Library schools train professionals to handle a variety of informational resources. Courses in library automation, systems design, information storage and retrieval, and on-line bibliographic data bases are becoming integral offerings of library schools throughout the country. Thus, a library school is the natural setting for introducing the concept of numeric or statistical MRDF. But while library schools routinely address problems of textual data in machine readable form, they have not addressed the problems of numeric MRDF and future professional librarians and information scientists are ill-equipped to serve the quantitative bent of today's social scientist.
On the other hand, most social science disciplines offer at least one course and at a growing number of institutions, major course offerings consist increasingly of a number of areas related to quantitative social research. Social science departments train students in methodology, statistics, survey research, modeling and simulation, data handling, and the like, subjects which provide the basis for understanding the construction and analysis of MRDF. In fact, personnel of most of the data services in North America and Western Europe have been (and continue to be) people who trained in one of the social sciences. They have not been professional librarians and have been slow to recognize that the tasks they perform or the problems they encounter in organizing, managing, and retrieving MRDF (and information about MRDF) are tasks which have been traditionally performed by reference librarians who work with other media (see, Carmichael, 1978; and Robbin, 1978).

A course which integrates the theoretical foundations of library and information science and social science research is therefore one which potentially speaks to the formation of a professional information scientist and manager of numeric or statistical MRDF. With this in mind, in September 1977, I recommended that the Data and Computation Center, of which the Data and Program Library Service is a part, design a course which would respond to a perceived need to train professionals (both in the social sciences and library and information sciences) to deal with the explosion of information in machine readable form. It would be an interdisciplinary, graduate level course, one semester in length, which would draw upon the expertise of social scientists, data library specialists, and computer specialists at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Because it would be offered during Intersession 1978, it could be viewed as a potential course for in-service training for library and archive professionals who wished to become familiar with this informational resource.

The course was cross-listed by the School of Library Science and Department of Economics, and for a variety of bureaucratic reasons was entitled, "Micro Data Collection Methods in Economics." Funding for Intersession 1978 was made possible with the generous support of the UW-Madison, which encourages its faculty and staff to use Intersession as an opportunity to develop new courses in response to perceived scientific and social changes within and outside the University. The course was designed to meet the needs or interests of social scientists, users, and generators of numeric machine readable data, and professionals engaged in information services, whose present or future responsibilities might include managing large numeric data files or providing data services or information about numeric MRDF to users. The objective of the course was to provide the student with the underlying principles of access to and management of MRDF in a library and archive setting. Students were introduced to social science research and applications, data collection techniques, computing and data processing, statistical analysis and file handling, policy issues and problems regarding data libraries, and bibliographic documentation and control of numeric MRDF. Problem-solving was an integral part of the course, and included exercises in statistical analysis and building a biblio-
graphic data base of numeric MRDF. In addition, there was a heavy dose of daily readings on which the lectures and discussions were based and a final paper (in lieu of an examination).

Lectures included (1) introduction to social science research methods and applications, introduction to statistical processing and file handling, orientation to data library and data processing and computing facilities; (2) introduction to systems analysis: data library as an information management system, complex data bases, data base management systems (DBMS), networking; (3) selected policy issues concerning MRDF and the data library and archive; (4) bibliographic documentation and control of MRDF; (5) planning a data library and information service for MRDF; (6) special issues of concern for MRDF and data librarians: copyright, strategies for file preservation and handling. Practical exercises included (1) statistical analysis of a MRDF specially prepared for the course, using the SPSS package; (2) use of a data base management system; (3) use of networks; (4) data library procedures; and (5) bibliographic documentation and control (building a bibliographic data base of information for MRDF). The Independent Project (final paper) assignment was a choice of (1) designing a research problem, carrying out limited statistical analysis on the data file prepared for the course, and reviewing the findings in a short paper; (2) writing a short analysis of the problems of creating a bibliographic data base for MRDF; and (3) designing an independent project with the approval of the instructors (most chose to do this and selected a wide range of topics on confidentiality and privacy, content analysis, book reviews, and archive and library problems and their relationship to MRDF).

Primary responsibility for the course was in the hands of Martin David, Department of Economics and Director of the Data and Computation Center; Alice Robbin, Head of the Data and Program Library Service; and Al Schubert, Head of the Program Consulting Service. Members of the Madison Academic Computing Center (MACC) contributed their expertise during the course, as did experts in data base management from the Department of Landscape Architecture and the Center for Demography and Ecology. Lectures on social science research and data collection were given by an economist, sociologists, and a survey methodologist.

Fourteen registered students and auditors began and completed the course. One half of the students were professional archivists (From the Wisconsin State Archives) and library students and the other half were graduate students (primarily from developing countries) in economics, sociology, political science, business, and history. One of the students is a professional data librarian from the University of California at Los Angeles.

Most of the students had never worked with a computer before, but within a few days were keypunching control cards and submitting statistical runs. Although the course was highly concentrated and very demanding (students attended lectures from 8-11 a.m., Monday through Friday, and worked on assignments with the help of a teaching assistant from noon, often until 10 p.m.), enthusiasm and commitment never flagged. It was an exciting time for instructors and students. A detailed evaluation

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instrument was completed by the students. The recommendation was that the course be integrated in
the University's curriculum and extended into a full four week program during Summer School or the
regular academic year.

The response was so positive that DACC submitted a request for
refunding for the Intersession 1979 program. (At UW, all Intersession
courses go into competition for funds.) We have recently learned
that DACC has successfully competed for funds and the course will once
again be offered and cross-listed by the Department of Economics and
School of Library Science. Several changes are anticipated on the
basis of what the instructors learned last year. First, the
title of the course has been changed to reflect the actual
course contents. It will be officially titled, "Management of
Machine Readable Numeric Data for the Social Sciences." (People were
more than a little mystified last year to learn that "Economics 615,
Micro Collection Methods in Economics," would deal with the subjects
I just described.) The import of the title change and new course
number(s) should not be underestimated: While we have no assurance
that the Divisional Committee of the College of Letters and Science
will approve a new course offering (these changes are very hard to
come by), it does suggest the recognition of the need to respond
to information and technological changes in our society; universi-
ties must continue to broaden their course offerings to meet profes-
sionals' needs and to respond to technological change. Indeed, the
concept of data services, libraries, and archives has too long remained
the purview of special support facilities within the university
and the notion that services to preserve and disseminate
statistical MRDF are a function of the general or special library
within the university or in both the government and private sectors
has not been widely accepted.

Second, the course structure was too demanding, for both the stu-
dents and instructors. The work-
load will be reduced. Rather than
building a bibliographic data base,
time will be spent analyzing the
structure and syntax of its con-
tents. Some of the time allocated
to the data base will now be
devoted to exercises in documenta-
tion and control and records man-
agement of MRDF (known earlier by
its misnomer, "accessioning").
Less time will be devoted to under-
standing the development of statis-
tical software and more time to
understanding problems (through
statistical techniques) of statisti-
cal data (assaying the quality of
data). The number of required
readings will be reduced. However,
the basic structure of the course
remains the same. Once again, a
set of instructional materials will
be created, but its size (242 p.)
will be reduced.

What is evident from the enthusiasm of the students and
instructors is that the course DACC
offered last year is much needed. It responds to the recognition that
the information explosion must be managed. Access and retrieval of the vast quantities of information
in statistical machine readable form are becoming important issues in the information and library sci-
cences' professions and social science disciplines. The course also demonstrates that the complexity
and dimension of information in numeric machine readable form are such that no one individual has the
expertise to teach future professionals to organize and manage col-
lections of statistical MRDF; rather, the approach to teaching
must be an integrated, interdisciplinary one, where the quantitative social researcher and analyst, data archivist, and computing specialist communicate their particular expertise. In the future it is hoped that Schools of Library and Information Sciences will recognize that numeric machine readable data and the non-librarian professional have a place in their curricula.


References


NEWS AND NOTES

IASSIST NEWS

Chairperson's Report

Ballots for the election of the Administrative Committee members were recently mailed by and returned to the treasurer, Ed Hanis. The office of the treasurer tallied the votes and the results are announced in this issue of the Newsletter. Officers of the Administrative Committee will be elected by the Committee members according to the constitution. Election results will again be announced in the Newsletter.

On behalf of the Steering Committee members, I would like to thank the Nominations and Elections Committee--Elliott Avidon, Nancy Carmichael, and Ekkehard Mochmann for their efforts in undertaking the implementation of the first IASSIST election. I would also like to thank the Steering Committee, especially the Secretariats, Newsletter Editors and treasurer, for their services and particularly their initiative and creativity which fostered the development of IASSIST. In a relatively short period of time, IASSIST has gained a great deal of visibility and provided a communications outlet for individuals involved with or interested in the dissemination of data and informational services to the social sciences.

It is, however, necessary to continue to build and strengthen the Association with a broader membership base. The growth rate of the Association has been slow, but membership retention has been excellent. Although we do not anticipate becoming a mass membership organization, there are sectors of the information community that have not been adequately reached. Reference librarians frequently have limited sources of information concerning data resources available in machine-readable form. Technical services librarians may soon be cataloguing machine-readable data files and will want to develop a greater understanding of this medium. Scholars and students continue to be concerned with data resources. Computer center personnel frequently assist users of social science data and may find the Association's activities useful. We would like to encourage all of you to aid in identifying potential members. Attached to this Newsletter is a sample copy of a membership flyer which Judith Rowe had printed for membership recruitment. Please contact Judith for additional copies or send her the names and addresses of interested individuals.

During the past year there has been increasing recognition of IASSIST's role in representing the data needs of the social science community. As a charter member of the United States National Committee for the UNESCO General Information Program we were instrumental in encouraging the Committee to more actively seek participation of social scientists in program planning. Unfortunately we were not successful in electing a social scientist to the Bureau, which is the governing body of the committee.

At the recent ASIS (American Society for Information Science) both North American IASSIST secretariats were represented on a panel
which discussed "international dimensions of social science information." Activities of this sort provide visibility for IASSIST which results in increasing membership and increasing support for IASSIST activities and programs. At this point no formal mechanism exists for organizing this participation, but since the IASSIST membership includes people with varied professional backgrounds and affiliations greater membership participation in these activities is appropriate.

The 1979 IASSIST Conference program outline is featured in the Newsletter. If you are interested in presenting a paper in one of the sessions, please contact Sue Gavrel as soon as possible.

**Election Results**

In accord with the constitution (NEWSLETTER, Vol. 2, No. 1) and procedures set forth by the Nomination and Elections Committee (NEWSLETTER, Vol. 2, No. 3, page 79), the Treasurer received and counted the election ballots cast for the Administrative Committee. A total of 134 ballots, containing 1,278 votes for candidates were counted with the result that the following persons were elected:

- Patrick Bova
- Nancy Carmichael
- John DeVries
- Sue Dodd
- Carolyn Geda
- Pierre Lacasse
- Guido Martinotti
- Harold Naugler
- Per Nielsen
- Alice Robbin

Edward H. Hanis  
Treasurer  
November 23, 1978

**ORGANIZATIONAL REPORTS**

**Computers and the Humanities**

Two major international conferences are scheduled to be held at Dartmouth College in August 1979. The Fourth International Conference on Computers and the Humanities (ICCH/4) will be held on 20-23 August 1979. The Conference on Data Bases in the Humanities and Social Sciences will follow immediately on 24-25 August 1979.

ICCH/4 is the latest in a series of conferences held previously at the Universities of Minnesota, Southern California, and Waterloo, Ontario. It is now sponsored by the Association for Computers and the Humanities. As at the earlier conferences, there will be papers on the application of computers to research in language, literature, musicology, history, archaeology, and other related disciplines.

The Conference on Data Bases in the Humanities and Social Sciences is sponsored by Queens College of the City University of New York and by the International Federation for Information Processing (IFIP). It will be the first conference to bring together representatives of numerous computer-readable compilations of data in alphabetic and numeric codes. This information is related to research in such fields as language, sociology, archaeology, art history, political science, and anthropology.

Although much research has been conducted in these areas, only recently have efforts been mounted to coordinate the activities of major centers in North America, Europe, and Japan. Selected papers from ICCH/4 will be published in the journal COMPUTERS AND THE HUMANITIES. Those from the Confer-
ence on Data Bases will be included in a proceedings volume to be published by North-Holland Publishing.

Further information on both conferences is available from Prof. Joseph Raben, Queens College, Flushing, NY 11367. Telephone: (212) 520-7407, or (212) 520-7428.

UNISIST Information Activities

The ongoing activities of UNISIST (see NEWSLETTER, 1, 4, 41-42, for further information concerning UNISIST) were demonstrated through several European meetings during 1978. The following notes may be of interest to IASSIST members.

INFODOC Programme

The International Organizing Committee of the INFODOC Programme, set up by the European Coordination Centre for Research and Documentation in the Social Sciences, at Vienna, was held at Moscow from 23 to 25 June 1978. The committee noted progress made on the first stages of a GUIDEBOOK OF EUROPEAN SOCIAL SCIENCE INFORMATION SERVICES the preparation of an INTERNATIONAL BIBLIOGRAPHY ON THE APPLICATION OF MATHEMATICS TO THE SOCIAL SCIENCES and the development of bilateral exchanges of books and publications between the services of Eastern and Western Europe.

European Cultural Data Bank

The Division of Cultural Development at UNESCO held, from 4 to 7 July 1978, a second meeting of experts to examine the progress of work since the first meeting held at Bucharest (2-4 March 1977), to determine the priority areas for the setting up of a cultural data bank and the conditions for implementing the project. Among other things, the participants defined the categories of data which will be collected, processed, stored and disseminated:

1. Information on national and international bodies and institutions with a cultural mission, on the cultural documentation structures already existing at national levels.

2. Bibliographical references processed in accordance with international standards.

3. Use of the Office of Statistics at UNESCO -- on a temporary basis -- as a sub-bank for the quantitative data of the proposed European Bank.

Development of Research on Peace

A meeting of an expert committee on the coordination and development of research, information, and documentation on peace was held at UNESCO from 28 August to 1 September 1978. It was attended by 19 experts from research institutions in social science, peace, and related subjects as well as editors of periodicals devoted to the problems of peace.

DATABASE REPORTS
Babylonian Documents

Of the many efforts to establish machine readable databases, one of the more ambitious efforts, and not well known among archivists, is the establishment of a computerized database of Babylonian documents. Several papers describing a project at the University of Minnesota for computerizing Babylonian documents have been presented during 1978 by R. Ward, P. Patton, J. Merkel, and D. Katz. Several datasets are currently in use:

1. All published (and some unpublished) Kutalla documents.

2. Old Babylonian tenant farming contracts prepared by R. Veenker, Western Kentucky University, Bowling Green, KY 42101.

Other groups of documents are being acquired. The objectives of the project centered at the University of Minnesota has the following objectives:

1. To build a database of machine-readable Babyloneconomic documents.

2. To design and implement computerized procedures for analyzing these documents.

3. To disseminate information regarding the system and specified analytical reports to the Assyriological community and other interested parties.

Further information may be obtained from Dr. Richard Ward, University of Minnesota. Telephone: (612)298-4208 or (612)483-4375.

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UCLA Data Archive Catalog

The Institute for Social Science Research (ISSR) Data Archives Library at the University of California, Los Angeles, has recently prepared a description of their library operations and a catalog of their collection. Those desiring a copy may send requests to:

Elizabeth Stephenson,
Data Librarian, ISSR
UCLA
405 Hilgard Ave.
Los Angeles, CA 90024, USA
Phone: (213)825-0711 ext 241

EDUCATIONAL AND RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES

Social Science Research Council (SSRC)

The SSRC Survey Archive at the University of Essex has begun a feasibility study into the construction and implementation of an information retrieval system for their machine readable social science data.

The system presently envisaged would involve indexing each survey with a string of terms taken from a thesaurus constructed specially for the Archive. The thesaurus would be unique to the Archive in that it would contain only those terms appended to surveys in the archive. With notation and its implicit hierarchies, the thesaurus would function as the main retrieval tool for the system. Eventually index terms would be machine held, and retrieval achieved by computer listing of surveys indexed under searched-for terms.

It would be appreciated if readers could contact Michael Pearson at the SSRC Survey Archive,
University of Essex, Wivenhoe Park, Colchester, Essex CO4 3SQ, England, with information, opinions or criticisms of this kind of system. Information on experiences with the construction or use of information retrieval systems in other survey archives would also be greatly appreciated.

The Archive would be pleased to keep interested bodies informed of progress in this project.

M. Pearson
ASSIST Newsletter, Vol. 2, No. 4 (Fall 1978)

ASSIST STEERING COMMITTEE

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