
ICPSR BULLETIN

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Katherine McNeill-Harman

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of the ICPSR Official Representative
by Training Subject Librarians**

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The Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR), located at the Institute for Social Research at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, is the world's largest repository of computer-readable social science data. For over 40 years, the Consortium has served the social science community by acquiring, processing, and distributing data collections on a broad range of topics. Researchers at the Consortium's member institutions may obtain any of these data collections at no charge; researchers at nonmember institutions may also use the data, after paying an access fee. To find out more about ICPSR's holdings or about a specific data collection, visit the ICPSR Web site at www.icpsr.umich.edu.

The *ICPSR Bulletin* is published twice a year to inform interested scholars, including Official Representatives at the member campuses and ICPSR Council members, about topics and events relevant to ICPSR and its data collections. For subscription information, please contact the Editor.

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Expanding the Reach and Effectiveness of the ICPSR Official Representative by Training Subject Librarians

Katherine McNeill-Harman

*ICPSR OR and Data Services and Economics Librarian,
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The Official Representative (OR) at an ICPSR member institution is responsible for providing and promoting data services to his/her university community. However, even the most experienced and energetic OR is only one individual with limited time and numerous potential users. Moreover, data are used in a wide variety of disciplines, many of which may be outside the OR's primary domain. This article discusses one method for expanding the reach and effectiveness of the ICPSR OR: training subject librarians to be more data savvy and increasing their awareness of ICPSR resources.

Background

Many university libraries employ subject librarians — liaisons to departments throughout the university — who can be a valuable resource for promoting and facilitating the use of data. These librarians also may be potential contacts for other data initiatives at a university, such as those regarding geographic information systems (GIS) and scientific data. As the Data Services Librarian and ICPSR OR at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), I designed a program to

educate our subject librarians and enable them to provide data services.

The MIT Libraries consist of five main divisional libraries for the following disciplines: architecture and urban planning, engineering, humanities, management and social sciences, and science. I am based in the Dewey Library for Management and Social Sciences, where I lead the Social Science Data Services program. Over 30 subject librarians serving as the primary liaisons to one or more academic departments are scattered throughout the MIT Libraries. For each of their subject areas, these individuals purchase library materials, function as the primary contact for instruction and in-depth reference, and support the faculty in their associated departments. For example, in addition to leading the Social Science Data Services program, I am the Economics Librarian.

MIT Training Plan and Implementation

In 2004, I developed a plan for Social Science Data Services in the MIT Libraries for FY05–07, which proposed strategic programs in reference, instruction, and collection

development and management. As the Data Services Librarian, I was to serve as the facilitator — rather than the sole provider — of data services. By involving subject librarians, data services would benefit from their expertise and existing departmental relationships, and thus be better integrated into general library services. The aim was for me to continue to serve as specialist in this area but in addition to provide other librarians with tools with which to incorporate data into their work. Given that most of the subject librarians had limited knowledge of Social Science Data Services, it was essential to develop their skills. Therefore, I chose to conduct in-person training for all subject librarians.

The main goal of the MIT training program was to enable subject librarians to accomplish the following tasks: provide reference services on social science data; make appropriate referrals to specialized data services on campus; be aware of issues pertaining to the use of data, such as responsible use and respondent confidentiality; include data resources in their instruction guides and presentations; and promote to their departmental library projects for managing and archiving data files that faculty members produce or license.

“In 2004, I developed a plan for Social Science Data Services in the MIT Libraries for FY05–07, which proposed strategic programs in reference, instruction, and collection development and management. As the Data Services Librarian, I was to serve as the facilitator — rather than the sole provider — of data services. By involving subject librarians, data services would benefit from their expertise and existing departmental relationships, and thus be better integrated into general library services.”

A formal system of ongoing training for subject librarians in the MIT Libraries did not exist; therefore, I created and promoted a new series of training workshops. As librarians’ time is at a premium, I arranged the workshop content into a single session covering all topics. In order to tailor the sessions and make the best use of attendees’ time, I conducted two tiers of training based on levels of expected involvement in data services. While most librarians attended a brief one-hour session, those likely to use social science data regularly (i.e., those from the libraries for architecture and urban planning and management and social sciences, as well as the staff of the GIS Laboratory) attended an in-depth two-hour session.

The sessions were divided into three sections covering reference, instruction, and collection management projects; each session included a combination of lecture, hands-on exercises, and group discussion. Throughout the sessions, I made a point of presenting models and tools for utilizing and managing data that the librarians could apply to data in their respective disciplines. In the reference training section, I described the scope of the Social Science Data Services program and reviewed guidelines for referrals to the main data-related services on campus: Social Science Data Services, the GIS Laboratory, and resources supporting use of statistical software. Next I guided participants through

a conceptual model of searching for, evaluating, and using data, via demonstrations and hands-on exercises. The instruction training section focused on two methods for integrating data into library instruction: in-person workshops and Web guides. I suggested opportunities for instruction and provided a sample script that the librarians could adapt to their own needs. Lastly, in the collection management training section, participants discussed options



for archiving of faculty-produced data and methods for promoting this service to faculty in their departments.

Results

I first conducted the training in the spring of 2005, providing three brief and four in-depth sessions. A total of 70 percent of the subject librarians attended; I sent the handouts to those who were unable to attend. In an evaluation of the training, 81 percent of respondents agreed with the statement “I found the training to be helpful,” and 78 percent agreed with the statement “I learned tools that I believe I can apply in my job.”

Several attendees expressed interest in a more in-depth version of the session in the future. In the fall of 2006, I conducted a reprise of the training for those subject librarians hired since the original set of sessions, achieving a 100-percent attendance rate. No follow-up evaluation has been conducted to measure to what extent the training impacted the librarians' work practices or provision of services. However, anecdotal evidence indicates that librarians have maintained their awareness of Social Science Data Services and are finding opportunities to utilize the handouts as a reference for users' questions. Moreover, since the 2005 training, the Engineering and Science Libraries have formed a data initiatives group (ESL-DIG), which has begun a study of faculty data archiving in their departments.

Next Steps

At this time, a program of periodic data services training for all subject librarians does not seem feasible. Any follow-up training in the future would be considered in light of major service changes and would likely target librarians who regularly provide information services to social scientists on campus. I continue to

educate all subject librarians through monthly email updates in which I highlight a new resource or service offered by Social Science Data Services. In addition, I coordinate monthly lunches attended by the GIS Laboratory staff and members of ESL-DIG in which we exchange information on projects.

Other Training Programs

How do other ICPSR member institutions address data training challenges? While many ORs educate users on data, training of other professionals to support data services seems to be less common. The Canadian-based Data Liberation Initiative (DLI) training program provides baseline skills for contacts and primary providers of data services at DLI-member institutions throughout Canada. However, given the scope of the program, the training is limited to core staff members and does not at this time extend to other information providers such as librarians in other subject areas (Humphrey 2006 and University of Toronto 2006).

Some universities have regular opportunities for training subject librarians, but coverage of data



services is not necessarily included (Cain and O'Toole 2006 and University of Connecticut Libraries 2006). Some ICPSR ORs, such as those from Cornell and Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU), have taken the initiative to train reference librarians on data services, covering topics such as utilizing ICPSR resources, referring reference questions, and understanding the difference between statistics and data. To accompany the training, the OR from VCU has created a Web guide to ICPSR for reference staff, which includes tips on data formats, searching, using the subject thesauri, downloading, online analysis, and using codebooks. In an effort to educate broader communities of librarians about data services, members from the University of Connecticut, Pennsylvania State University, and Carleton College presented a poster session on data librarianship at the conference of the American Library Association (Conner, Darragh, and Lackie 2006). These programs parallel the efforts at

The Campus Workshop Template: A New Tool

If you are considering such a training program, ICPSR has developed a new tool that can help you in that effort. The Campus Workshop Template is a PowerPoint presentation on utilizing ICPSR resources that can be used to conduct workshops locally for librarians, as well as for users such as faculty and students. Find the presentation template at: www.icpsr.umich.edu/or-public/promo.

"The main goals of the MIT training program were to enable subject librarians to accomplish the following tasks: provide reference services on social science data; make appropriate referrals to specialized data services on campus; be aware of issues pertaining to the use of data, such as responsible use and respondent confidentiality; include data resources in their instruction guides and presentations; and promote to their departmental library projects for managing and archiving data files that faculty members produce or license."

MIT to leverage other staff in order to reach more potential users of data.

Conclusion

Several lessons from the MIT training program can be applied to similar projects at other institutions. It is important to give thought to how to describe the division of labor between the Data Services Librarian and the subject librarians. Throughout the sessions, it was vital to be clear on what functions librarians would and would not be expected to perform with regard to data services and how levels of service would differ among subject librarians in different departments. The two-tiered program enabled more in-depth training for appropriate staff while providing a concise overview for others. I emphasized that I would continue to be the expert in data services and a resource for their questions or concerns. Overall, attendees were pleased that they could incorporate support for data into their everyday work, rather than adding an additional responsibility. Lastly, while I provided important education on social science data, I presented broad models and examples of service that could apply to data in any discipline. This framework helped to engage the librarians in the topic and enabled them to think about providing services for data in their subjects.

It is my hope that by leveraging other information professionals, this

program will make it possible for more of the university community to utilize, analyze, and archive social science data, as well as to consider the role of data in all disciplines. ■

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OR Sabbatical Fellows Author Online Modules

During their June 2006 Sabbaticals at ICPSR, Official Representatives Lori Weber and Rachael Barlow authored online instructional modules focusing on social science methods for introductory level undergraduate or graduate courses. Below, they describe their experiences during their month in Ann Arbor and what they took back with them to their campuses.

Lori M. Weber is ICPSR OR and Associate Professor of Political Science at California State University, Chico, where she teaches undergraduate and graduate political methods and public opinion courses.



I spent the month of June 2006 at ICPSR for the Official Representative's sabbatical program. I now quip to my colleagues that it

was my all-expenses-paid vacation to Ann Arbor, Michigan. I describe my time as a "vacation" because, despite the fact that I spent an educational month working in my own office provided to me by ICPSR, it was also an enjoyable social experience. During my time there, I was able to network with the talented staff and faculty who make ICPSR such a unique organization. In fact, it is ironic that my proposed project involved the concept of "social capital," a term used by social scientists to connote that social networks have value.

My proposed project, Investigating Community and Social Capital, soon transformed from a low-tech

Investigating Community and Social Capital (www.icpsr.umich.edu/icsc) is an instructional module authored by Lori Weber that teaches data analysis of social capital, as discussed in Robert D. Putnam's *Bowling Alone*. The site introduces students to quantitative social science research with a case study on social capital. Concepts illustrated include replication, unit of analysis, level of measurement, analysis over time versus cross-sectional analysis, crosstabulation, creating an index, and correlation. This resource is intended to enhance courses in disciplines such as political science, public administration and policy, and sociology.

Exploring Data Through Research Literature (www.icpsr.umich.edu/edrl) is an instructional module authored by Rachael Barlow that uses ICPSR's Bibliography of Data-Related Literature to teach students how to conduct research in the social sciences. Each exercise requires students to locate academic journal articles and consider those articles within an encompassing disciplinary context. EDRL aims to support the traditional collaboration of faculty and librarians by illustrating how to effectively use new technological platforms to teach and conduct scholarship and research.

collection of word processing files into a Web site. I was able to create this Web site with the assistance of ICPSR staff, which included a Web designer, a computer programmer (to convert data into SDA format), and even an editor. The resulting Web site introduces students to quantitative social science research with a case study on social capital, using Robert D. Putnam's book *Bowling Alone*. My overall goal for the site was to introduce students to the merits and rewards of quantitative social science research and to demonstrate the power of this approach.

I will continue to benefit for years to come from the education and networking that the summer sabbatical program made possible. I strongly encourage faculty to consider applying for this program, and I also encourage faculty to be creative with their proposals. ICPSR employs a

myriad of talented individuals in an organization that is quite different from the traditional academic department. Having access to these types of "human resources" is an opportunity that should not be missed.

Finally, I would like to mention the important connection that ICPSR facilitates between librarians and social scientists. My fellow OR sabbatical representative, Rachael Barlow, is completing her Ph.D. in sociology at Indiana University, and she is currently a librarian at Trinity College in Hartford, Connecticut. Working with Rachael, along with other librarians at ICPSR, has convinced me that there is a necessary connection between the issues of data librarianship and those that I confront as both a social scientist and a teacher of statistical data analysis courses. ICPSR not only facilitates this connection but also embodies it.

"[M]eeting with ICPSR staff also gave us the opportunity to learn valuable information about the organization's current projects, like transferring more datasets to online analysis and the new internship program. I was eager to bring the details of these projects back to my home institution, where I have been increasingly using online analysis for class exercises and where I know students who would benefit from becoming ICPSR interns."

Rachael Barlow is ICPSR OR and the Social Sciences Data Coordinator at Trinity College in Hartford, Connecticut.



To become an OR sabbatical fellow, I proposed creating an instructional module that would exploit ICPSR's Bibliography of

Data-Related Literature. During my month in Ann Arbor, I fleshed out the idea behind this project and wrote the actual text that would appear in the module's completed form. Now that the module, called "Exploring Data Through Research Literature" (EDRL) is complete, you can explore the three exercises it contains and propose new journal articles that would work well with these exercises. I hope the notion that one can use ICPSR resources without actually downloading data catches on, and that others experiment with different ways of teaching social science research methods.

But the sabbatical was not all about the projects. It was the "extramural" activities at ICPSR, the conversations those activities inspired, and the knowledge and networks gained from those conversations that made this program so valuable for me, my home institution, and (I hope) ICPSR staff.

When Lori Weber and I were not in our offices, we were talking to those who work at ICPSR. We held lunch meetings with many ICPSR staff members, during which we discussed

numerous issues of concern to ICPSR. How should ICPSR and its member institutions best make use of the features offered by the online analysis? How can ICPSR entice more small liberal arts colleges and community colleges to become member institutions? Is the advertising of online analysis capabilities a viable strategy for gaining new member institutions and, if so, how? How can ICPSR extend its role into teaching data analysis to new constituencies? What role does ICPSR have to play in prescribing and imposing data citation standards?

In addition, meeting with ICPSR staff also gave us the opportunity to learn valuable information about the organization's current projects, like transferring more datasets to online analysis and the new internship program. I was eager to bring the details of these projects back to my home institution, where I have been increasingly using online analysis for class exercises and where I know students who would benefit from becoming ICPSR interns.

It is worth nothing that I am not a faculty member at Trinity, but a staff member. I hope other "staff" ORs consider applying for this sabbatical. The relationships I have formed at ICPSR in June 2006 changed the way I think about how I bring faculty members, students, staff, and data together here at Trinity. Hence, Trinity has actually benefited from my absence and this opportunity for professional growth. ■

ANNOUNCEMENTS

ICPSR Welcomes New Consortium Members

ICPSR is pleased to announce that several new institutions have joined the Consortium since October 2006. We extend a sincere welcome to the following new members:

- Macomb Community College
- Whittier College
- York College of Pennsylvania (Philadelphia Federation)
- Reinhardt College (ACS Federation)
- New College of Florida
- University of Texas, Pan American
- University of Ontario Institute of Technology (Ontario Federation)
- University of South Dakota
- Federal Reserve Bank of New York
- Federal Institute of Technology Lausanne (Swiss National)
- Federal Institute of Technology Zurich (Swiss National)
- University of Basel (Swiss National)
- University of Berne (Swiss National)
- University of Fribourg (Swiss National)
- University of Lausanne (Swiss National)
- University of Neuchatel (Swiss National)
- University of St. Gallen (Swiss National)
- Institute of Social Studies (Dutch National)
- Yeungnam University (Korean National)
- Kyung Hee University (Korean National)
- École Normale Supérieure (French National)

- University of the Thai Chamber of Commerce (established Thai National Membership)

ICPSR Annual Report

ICPSR's 2005–2006 Annual Report highlights the theme “Outreach and Innovation.” It features photos of the completed addition to the Perry Building; the new lobby of ISR Perry with ICPSR Director, Myron Gutmann, Institute for Social Research Director, James Jackson, and Survey Research Center Director, Bob Groves; along with candid shots of ICPSR staff and visitors throughout the year. Gutmann and ICPSR Council Chair, Ruth Peterson, report on the organization's achievements over the year. The report is sprinkled with fun facts and figures about ICPSR activities and milestones. Also included are summary statistics on data processing and distribution, information about the Summer Program in Quantitative Methods, the end-of-year financial summary, membership information, and research insights.

New Online Analysis Interface Introduced

ICPSR has recently deployed Version 3.0 of the Survey Documentation and Analysis (SDA) software, which provides a new interface to the studies available for online analysis. SDA Version 3.0, developed by the University of California, Berkeley,

enables users to browse and select variables for analysis and choose a specific type of analysis from a single browser window.

Visit our site for more information on SDA 3.0 and to view the complete list of the more than 300 studies available for online analysis.

ICPSR Launches New Online Deposit Form

An online version of ICPSR's Deposit Form is now available for use by data depositors. The ICPSR Deposit Form is submitted to ICPSR along with research data and other types of research resources intended for archiving and dissemination. The new online form allows depositors to enter information about a submission using their Web browser and to upload files to ICPSR through a secure Internet connection. Users may save information they have entered in the form at any stage, and return to complete the form later at their convenience. The online form can be accessed by multiple users, allowing for collaboration and verification of Deposit Form information with colleagues and staff.

Please direct any questions about the online deposit form or the deposit process to Amy Pienta: deposit@icpsr.umich.edu.

The online deposit form can be found by clicking on the “Data” tab or at www.icpsr.umich.edu/access.

Announcing the Minority Data Resource Center at ICPSR

ICPSR is pleased to announce the launch of the Minority Data Resource Center (MDRC) Web site.

The mission of MDRC is to provide data resources for the comparative analysis of issues affecting racial and ethnic minority populations in the United States. We offer streamlined access to existing ICPSR data and to newly acquired studies that are relevant to the study of immigration, place of origin, ancestry, ethnicity, and race in the United States. Access to MDRC data is available to anyone at an ICPSR member university or institution. Many of the studies that comprise the collection have the full product suite of setups and ready-to-go files for SAS, SPSS, and Stata, as well as PDF documentation and online analysis capabilities.

MDRC is both a data archive and a resource for instructors. ICPSR is in the process of developing teaching tools based on the data in the MDRC collection. Others are also invited to develop tools for studies in our collection. MDRC data collections with SDA online analysis are equipped with three additional analysis tools:

Sample Characteristics. This tool allows interested users to assess whether the sample population of a study has the desired demographic characteristics.

Recode Syntax. This tool allows users not only to recode a variable, an option already available through

online analysis, but also to print out the syntax necessary for that recode so that syntax may be incorporated into users' own statistical syntax files.

Subset. This tool allows users to create data subsets dynamically for selected subpopulations of a survey.

Feel free to try out these new tools in a sample MDRC study at www.icpsr.umich.edu/MDRC: **Capital Punishment in the United States, 1973–2003** (ICPSR 4404).

If you have any questions or would like more information, please contact David Thomas (davethom@umich.edu).

McGovern Coauthors Council on Library and Information Resources Report

Nancy McGovern, ICPSR's Digital Preservation Officer, is a coauthor of a September 2006 Council on Library and Information Resources (CLIR) report entitled, "E-Journal Archiving Metes and Bounds: A Survey of the Landscape."

This report represents a recent contribution to the literature of the digital preservation community. The recommendations in the report acknowledge that digital preservation is a shared responsibility that requires cooperation between digital archiving programs, like ICPSR, and the producers and users of digital content. Though the report focuses specifically on e-journal archiving, there are implicit links to initiatives at ICPSR, such as the evolution of the Publication-Related Archive

(PRA) and the development of comprehensive digital preservation policies. The emphasis in the report on the essential role of producers for digital preservation has implications for DataPASS, ICPSR's collaborative digital preservation research project with funding from the Library of Congress.

SAMHDA Disclosure Work Published in Ethics Journal

JoAnne McFarland O'Rourke of ICPSR along with colleagues from the disclosure committee of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Data Archive (SAMHDA) at ICPSR has published an article in the September 2006 issue of the *Journal of Empirical Research on Human Research Ethics* (JERHRE). The article is titled, "Solving Problems of Disclosure Risk While Retaining Key Analytic Uses of Publicly Released Microdata." Coauthors are Stephen Roehrig, Carnegie Mellon University; Steven G. Heeringa, Institute for Social Research, Survey Research Center, University of Michigan; Beth Glover Reed and William C. Birdsall, School of Social Work, University of Michigan; and Margaret Overcashier and Kelly Zidar, ICPSR.

When creating a data protection plan, it is important to strike a balance between human subject protection and data that retain analytic utility, say the authors. They write that the public-use version of the data is very important because it is likely to be the only one to which most researchers, policy analysts, teaching faculty, and students will ever have access. Hence,

it is the version from which much of the utility of the data is extracted and often it effectively becomes the historical record of the data collection.

In the article, the authors analyze the disclosure risks and discuss the data protection plans for two national studies and one administrative data system. Taking key uses of each of the data collections into consideration, they employ three distinct disclosure limitation methods to protect respondents while still providing statistically accurate and highly useful public-use data: data swapping, microaggregation, and suppression of detailed geographic data. They describe the characteristics of the data sets that led to the selection of these methods, provide measures of the statistical impact, and give details of their implementation.

They also describe the composition of their disclosure committee, highlight the important disciplines and experience represented by the group, and describe the group process. The authors end by suggesting best practices for data users, principal investigators, and distributors; possible research agendas; and educational implications. The article is available online: <http://caliber.ucpress.net>.

ICPSR Offers On Demand Creation of Setup Files

ICPSR announces a new service to create statistical package setup files on demand. We are providing this service to assist users at member schools who want to work with particular studies

in the ICPSR holdings that currently lack these setup files. To request setup files for a specific study, please contact netmail@icpsr.umich.edu. Our User Support staff will discuss the request with you and then respond with a rough estimate of how long it will take to deliver the needed files and, if applicable, your place in the queue.

We caution that the estimates are only approximate since the time and effort involved in generating setup files vary greatly from study to study and depend on several factors, including the number of study variables and files, and the condition, clarity, and format of the documentation.

This service is part of a larger effort to retrofit the ICPSR holdings. Your requests will help us to prioritize our efforts.

Voting Behavior Teaching Module Wins Prestigious Awards

Voting Behavior: The 2004 Election, an online instructional module authored by political scientists Charles Prysby (University of North Carolina at Greensboro) and Carmine Scavo (East Carolina University) and hosted by ICPSR, received two awards at the 2006 American Political Science Association convention in Philadelphia.

APSA granted Prysby and Scavo its most prestigious instructional award — the 2006 Rowman and Littlefield Award for Innovative Teaching in Political Science — as well as an award from the Information Technology and Politics section for

the Best Instructional Web Site for 2005–06. Both awards recognize the quality and innovation of Prysby and Scavo's online module.

The Voting Behavior module has been continuously developed since 1972, when APSA and ICPSR joined together to develop and distribute a collection of instructional modules that combined pedagogic social science material with subsets of important ICPSR datasets. In 2005, Prysby and Scavo worked extensively with ICPSR staff to turn the stand-alone module into the first Voting Behavior module that was entirely online. ■

Register Now for the 2007 Summer Program

Registration is now open for the 2007 ICPSR Summer Program in Quantitative Methods of Social Research. Go to the Summer Program Web site to see the new time schedule, course descriptions, and other information about our Summer Program courses.

In addition to our core courses in research design, statistics, data analysis, and methodology, the Program offers the following new and noteworthy courses this year:

Four-Week Courses:

- Measurement of Race and Ethnicity
- Historical Demography

Three-to Five-Day Workshops:

- National Long-Term Care Survey
- Collaborative Psychiatric Epidemiology Surveys
- Introduction to CrimeStat 3.0
- Introduction to Spatial Analysis
- Spatial Regression Analysis
- American Community Survey
- Child Care & Early Education Research Themes



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