ICPSR BULLETIN

Fall 2006 Vol. XXVII, No. 1

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ICPSR BULLETIN

Fall 2006 ● Volume XXVII, No. 1

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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Editor: Ruth Shamraj
Assistant Editor: Naghma Husain
Since 1962, ICPSR has added over 6,300 studies to its collections. Despite the efforts of ICPSR and several other social science data archives in the United States, many social science studies do not reside in a permanent archive, and the availability of many legacy social science studies for secondary analysis is problematic. In 2005, ICPSR set an ambitious goal of identifying much of the universe of quantitative social science data that has been collected. We also wanted to determine how much important social science data had been lost or is at risk of being lost. ICPSR created the LEADS database to document information about the thousands of social science studies that have been conducted over the last 40 years. Each of the records is a “lead” describing a potential study for archiving at ICPSR.

LEADS contains information about research grant awards made by the National Science Foundation (NSF) and the numerous institutes at the National Institutes of Health (NIH). The database is used to document, track, and identify for possible archiving original social and behavioral data collections funded by NIH and NSF. LEADS has been developed with support from three research projects at ICPSR: Data Preservation Alliance for the Social

Amy Mehraban Pienta is Acquisitions Director at ICPSR. She is also a research affiliate of the Center on the Demography of Aging and the Population Studies Center at the University of Michigan. At ICPSR, she oversees new data acquisitions. Major responsibilities include identifying new data collections in the social sciences, negotiating with potential data depositors, strategic planning for new data acquisitions, and developing appraisal standards for data. Pienta’s primary research interests are retirement and health in later life. She has studied women’s retirement behavior, labor force exits of African-American and white men, the joint retirement behavior of married couples, and the relationship between various social statuses and health. She is also part of the Center for Urban African American Health (CUAAH) at Wayne State University, funded by the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS).

The staff of the LEADS project (from left to right, back row): Lisa Quist, Darrell Donakowski, Amy Pienta; (front row) Felicia LeClere, Russel Hathaway, and Tannaz Sabet. Other LEADS staff not pictured: JoAnne McFarland O’Rourke, Brian Madden, Kelly Zidar, Jared Lyle.
Despite the efforts of ICPSR and several other social science data archives in the United States, many social science studies do not reside in a permanent archive, and the availability of many legacy social science studies for secondary analysis is problematic. In 2005, ICPSR set an ambitious goal of identifying much of the universe of quantitative social science data that has been collected.

Methods

To create the LEADS database, we have employed a systematic approach to identify the most significant studies of the past 75 years, many of which are at risk of loss. Because we expected the list of at-risk data to be very long, standard selection criteria were developed. A major selection criterion is the importance of a given study; we defined as important those studies whose data will advance knowledge, bearing in mind that it is not always evident in the present what data we might need in the future. The extent to which a dataset is assessed as being at-risk is another of the selection criteria. We evaluate the risk of losing the content of each study should acquisition and archiving not take place quickly and then we assign a priority ranking.

Studies identified for the LEADS database have come primarily from two sources: research grant awards made by NSF and the National Institutes of Health. Information about research projects that NSF has funded since 1989 is located by searching the online Award Abstracts database (www.nsf.gov/awardsearch). The database includes abstracts describing the research and names of principal investigators and their institutions. Both completed and in-process research are included in the database. For awards prior to 1976, limited information is available. In comparison, more information about awards made between 1976 and 1988 is available, but coverage is not as complete as for awards from 1989 to the present.

For leads on NIH awards, we mined NIH’s CRISP database. CRISP (Computer Retrieval of Information on Scientific Projects) is a searchable database of federally funded biomedical research projects conducted at universities, hospitals, and other research institutions (www.crisp.cit.nih.gov). Current and historical awards made between 1972 and 2006 are currently accessible through CRISP. Users, including the public, can use the CRISP interface to search for scientific concepts, emerging trends and techniques, or to identify specific projects and/or investigators. The database, maintained by the Office of Extramural Research at the National Institutes of Health, includes projects funded by the National Institutes of Health, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Health Resources and Services Administration, Food and Drug Administration, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Agency for Health Care Research and Quality, and Office of the Assistant Secretary for Health.

Evaluation of NSF Grant Activity

For possible inclusion in the LEADS database, 17,194 grant records were downloaded from the NSF Web site using wildcard matching where the search terms (SOC*, POLIT*, and/or STAT*) appeared somewhere in the grant award record. These awards were made by 53 NSF programs and span the years 1976 to 2005.
Next, we applied screening criteria to the records. To be considered for inclusion in the LEADS database, the grant record must describe research activity that is related to the social/behavioral sciences. Second, the grant must propose original/primary data collection or assembly of a new database from existing (archival) sources. Also, grant records referencing secondary data sources are coded for information pertaining to data that may or may not have not been archived.

Table 1 shows the distribution of activity proposed in the 17,194 NSF awards after the initial screening. The largest number of awards reviewed were not related to the social sciences (47.9 percent did not meet substantive criteria). Additionally, a large number of awards were excluded from LEADS because they described training/workshop/conference activity (not research), had no abstract, or were flagged for further review (3.8 percent, 15.5 percent, and 13.0 percent respectively). Over 3,000 awards were found to be related to the social/behavioral sciences, with the majority proposing a primary data collection activity (n=2,336) or a combination of primary data collection and secondary analysis (n=201).

Evaluation of NIH Grant Activity

The LEADS review process of the NIH awards was similar to that used with the NSF awards, with one exception. NIH awards were screened and included in the LEADS database when they met the following criteria: social science (including behavioral) and original quantitative data. This strategy differs from the NSF award review in that strictly qualitative studies were not eligible for inclusion in LEADS. For the award years 1990–

Data Preservation Alliance for the Social Sciences (DataPASS)

In supporting the development of the LEADS database, DataPASS seeks to acquire and preserve data at risk of being lost to the research community, such as opinion polls, voting records, large-scale surveys, and other social science studies. DataPASS is a broad-based partnership led by ICPSR, the Roper Center for Public Opinion Research at the University of Connecticut, the Howard W. Odum Institute at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, the Henry A. Murray Research Archive, the National Archives and Records Administration, and the Harvard-MIT Data Center. The project is supported by an award from the Library of Congress through its National Digital Information Infrastructure and Preservation Program (NDIIPP).
“The LEADS database benefited from investments by several funded projects at ICPSR and has developed into a diverse and rich resource for identifying important social science studies that might be lost if they are not archived.”

2001, all NIH institutes available from CRISP were downloaded and screened. For all other years, only the following institutes were reviewed: NICHD, NIA, NIMH, NINR, AHRQ, NIAAA, NIDA, Clinical Center, NIDCD, FIC, NCI, NHLBI, NIDDK. In all, 172,196 awards were screened and 6,381 selected as meeting the two review criteria. The selected awards will be researched further in a later phase of the project.

The Data Sharing project (DSDR) has used the LEADS database to identify data of interest to the field of demography and population studies. From LEADS, DSDR selected 416 (43 percent at the time) NICHD awards as being relevant to the field of demography. DSDR then reviewed the ICPSR catalog and catalogs of other major archives in the United States to determine how many studies had been archived. Of the 416, only 7.5 percent were archived (9 at ICPSR and 22 elsewhere). Similarly, ICPSR’s Data-PASS project selected 97 National Science Foundation awards from the LEADS database, and conducting the same catalog search just described, contacted PIs to inquire about the status of the data collected. Of the 97 awards, 17.5 percent were archived, mostly at ICPSR. This higher result may reflect the understanding ICPSR and NSF have had regarding data sharing, particular for the NSF economics program.

Enhancing the Research Grant Records in LEADS

Using the information recorded in the LEADS database, ICPSR is in the process of enhancing each grant record using the following procedures: (1) generating updated contact information for the PI of the study; (2) determining whether the study is archived at ICPSR, Roper, Odum, Murray, or Sociometrics; (3) collecting related citations using online citation searches; (4) reviewing other awards obtained by the principal investigator; and (5) asking the principal investigator whether data

Human Subject Protection and Disclosure Risk Analysis (Best Practices)

A subproject of the Disclosure Risk Analysis project, the Best Practices project contributes to the LEADS database, in part, by helping to develop a sampling frame for a national survey of principal investigators. Recognizing the gap that currently exists for researchers, archivists, and others who are uncertain how to evaluate data for risk and apply disclosure limitation techniques, Best Practices seeks to define best practices for disclosure limitation for microdata and to develop and test tools for applying disclosure limitation techniques. Ultimately, these best practices and tools would facilitate the data sharing process for researchers who wish to share sensitive data without disclosing the identity of human subjects or survey respondents. The Best Practices project was funded by the Office of Applied Studies, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.
have been produced, shared, or archived, and whether they are still available or accessible.

Nearly 120 data leads in the LEADS database have been researched using these procedures. In the process of researching these leads, we retain the following: (1) information about the archival home of the study, if one is discovered; (2) all related bibliographic citations; and (3) updated contact information for principal investigators. ICPSR staff also generates a description of how the data fit within the scope of interest — important social science studies — and their potential value for archiving. Finally, we assign priority ranking to each grant record, which guides the prioritization of our active pursuit of data.

Obstacles to Archiving and Secondary Analysis

Based on the approximately 120 leads that we have examined more closely, we have begun to compile a list of reasons that older data have not been archived or in some instances cannot be archived. Some principal investigators attribute this to problems with data format or documentation. Moreover, we have learned that principal investigators have sometimes even destroyed data stored on magnetic tapes because they mistakenly came to believe that there was no way to recover the data from those formats. Related to this, often a lot of time has elapsed since the study was funded and consequently data cannot be located or recollections about the structure and organization of the data and documentation have faded. Also, several investigators noted that they were unable to secure the funding to archive the data. A problem common to foreign language surveys is that no English language translation exists of the survey or the documentation. Several studies lacked significance for archiving because the source of the archival materials was available elsewhere, the series was not updated, or the study was itself not successful. However, the most common reason that data have not been archived is that principal investigators have made the data available on a personal or departmental Web site instead. Through the DataPASS project, ICPSR is beginning to acquire studies that meet the selection criteria of being important to the social sciences and are at risk of being lost because they are not in a permanent archiving situation.

Limitations to the LEADS Database

The LEADS database has several methodological limitations that we are working to address. First, we have not completely quantified the extent to which errors were made during the screening review process. Throughout the duration of the project, ICPSR has employed many staff and temporary employees to help review the NIH and NSF awards. In the process of screening the hundreds of thousands of records, a large number of awards could not be fully evaluated based on our inclusion criteria and many were missing an abstract altogether. Thus, we are pursuing additional measures to research these awards. Finally, the selected awards do not necessarily represent a mutually exclusive set of projects. Collaborative projects and continuation projects have not yet been eliminated from the records selected for LEADS; thus the number of selected records will likely be smaller than the 8,918 NSF and NIH awards combined that met our screening criteria.

Preserving the Legacy of Social Science for Future Generations

ICPSR has examined hundreds of thousands of awards in pursuit of
“ICPSR has long-term plans to continue to identify studies through the LEADS database that are important to the legacy of social science, in order to acquire, document, and disseminate them. This will enrich our collection and our ability to provide data on a wide range of social science topics that represent a diverse set of data collection methodologies.”

Creating a database of important social science studies that have not been archived has been of longstanding interest for ICPSR. The LEADS database benefited from investments by several funded projects at ICPSR and has developed into a diverse and rich resource for identifying important social science studies that might be lost if they are not archived. ICPSR is beginning to realize the benefits of these investments as the first data are starting to arrive at ICPSR to be archived and disseminated. ICPSR now has a number of data collections that will be read from punched cards directly to a PC.

In the coming year, ICPSR will pursue ways to better utilize the potential of the LEADS database. We are developing a Web-based tool for collecting additional information about the research data collected by the LEADS principal investigators. We are planning to conduct a pilot Web survey to collect information. All information gathered will be appended to LEADS and will further enhance the value of the records in the database. Also, the LEADS database will be updated with additional years of data from NIH and NSF.

Finally, ICPSR has long-term plans to continue to identify studies through the LEADS database that are important to the legacy of social science, in order to acquire, document, and disseminate them. This will enrich our collection and our ability to provide data on a wide range of social science topics that represent a diverse set of data collection methodologies.

ICPSR’s newly purchased punched card reader can be attached directly to a PC.
Student Demographers Present Projects as Posters

August 18, 2006 — Instead of taking a final exam on the last day of class, students in the ICPSR Summer Program’s historical demography course presented their group projects during a poster session much like those that take place at professional association meetings. A sense of accomplishment and comraderie was evident as students discussed their work with each other, their instructors, and ICPSR staff. “They accomplished a great deal in a relatively short timeframe,” said Professor Myron Gutmann, an instructor in the intensive four-week course.

Students worked in groups to prepare and analyze well-known demographic data from the 17th–19th centuries from France, Germany, and Belgium. Their task was to formulate research questions, generate testable hypotheses, analyze the data, and write individual final reports.

According to Ola Claësson, a graduate student studying economic history, “The work with the poster was really exciting because it made us go through all the different parts from scratch, sometimes almost fighting, but most often collaborating and discussing about how the question could best be answered with the prerequisites of the data.” Students attended the course from many countries around the world: United States, Mexico, England, Norway, Italy, Belgium, Romania, Spain, Taiwan, Poland, Austria, Sweden, and Japan.

Course organizers plan to submit the posters to a professional conference in the coming year. Students whose posters are accepted for presentation at conference poster sessions will have the opportunity to share their work with the broader scholarly community.

The course was structured so that in the mornings, Professors Myron Gutmann, Katherine Lynch, J. David Hacker, and James Lee took turns delivering lectures on substantive topics, while Professors Glenn Deane, George Alter, Glenn Deane, Ken Smith, and Cameron Campbell taught statistical methods. The afternoons were devoted to hands-on computer lab work for the students with instruction and demonstrations offered by Professor George Alter and Dr. Susan Leonard and teaching assistance by Dr. Kristine Witkowski.

When they weren’t in class or studying, students often gathered for evening outings or weekend picnics. “This class gives students an opportunity to learn historical demography and to network. Some students were talking about writing grant proposals to do research together in the future,” noted Dr. Leonard.

Supported by the National Institutes of Health and ICPSR’s Summer Program, the Longitudinal Analysis of Historical Demographic Data course will be offered again July 23–August 17, 2007.

For more details on this and other Summer Program courses, watch for an announcement of the 2007 Program on the ICPSR Web site at www.icpsr.umich.edu/sumprog.
New Council Members Appointed

ICPSR is pleased to announce that the ICPSR Council has recently appointed two excellent researchers to fill vacated Council positions for the 2006–2010 term.

Matthew Snipp, Professor of Sociology at Stanford University, will complete the term of Rodolfo de la Garza. Dr. Snipp is currently working with the Current Population Survey and other Census data that were especially collected using several different variations of a question designed to elicit information about racial identification. He is particularly interested in how factors such as residence, education, and family composition are related to racial identification and especially to questions about multiracial backgrounds, and how this might change under different scenarios of immigration and intermarriage rates. Snipp's past work has shown that there is a great deal of volatility in the reporting of race by persons of American Indian ancestry.

Michael Goodchild, Professor of Geography and the Director of the Center for Spatially Integrated Social Science at the University of California, Santa Barbara, will complete the term of Nancy Y. McGovern, who left Council when she took a position with ICPSR. Dr. Goodchild, a member of the National Academy of Sciences since 2002, has published work on geospatial data, historical geography, and Geographic Information Science (GIS). He has taught several courses and workshops on GIS techniques, and has received numerous grants to investigate GIS research, infrastructure, and priorities from the National Science Foundation and other institutions. His recent work has focused on geospatial data modeling and data quality. Goodchild is currently serving as an advisor on two of NSF’s social science committees and as Chair of the Executive Committee for the National Center for Geographic Information and Analysis.

ICPSR Launches Undergraduate Research Paper Competition

ICPSR is launching a new annual event during the 2006–2007 academic year — the ICPSR Undergraduate Research Paper Competition. The purpose of the competition is to highlight exemplary undergraduate student research papers based on quantitative data. We wish to encourage undergraduates to explore the social sciences by means of critical analysis of a topic supported by quantitative analysis of a dataset(s) held within the ICPSR archive.

Up to three cash prizes will be awarded. The winner will receive a monetary award of $1,000. Second place will receive $750 and third place $500. The deadline for paper submission is January 31, 2007. Details on the competition can be found at www.icpsr.umich.edu/prize/index.html.

ICPSR Seeks Director for Summer Program

ICPSR seeks to appoint a distinguished social science educator as Director of the ICPSR Summer Program in Quantitative Methods of Social Research. This individual will lead ICPSR's world-famous program of advanced training in the social sciences. The Director will provide leadership for ICPSR's on-site and off-site training for graduate students and faculty. She or he will work closely with other members of ICPSR's leadership, with the members of ICPSR's instructional faculty and the Summer Program's Advisory Committee, as well as ICPSR's governing Council. The Director has primary responsibility for recruiting, retaining, and interacting with the Program's outstanding faculty, and in overseeing student work and relationships with students. This position involves the management of a small year-round staff, plus overall supervision of a seasonal group of nearly 100 faculty, teaching assistants, and support staff. Recruiting and maintaining a diverse faculty and student population are important components of the job.

ICPSR invites nominations for the position (including self-nominations). Anyone with suggestions or nominations should send them to ICPSR Director Myron Gutmann by email (gutmann@icpsr.umich.edu) or at the mailing address below.

“The Summer Program is ICPSR's crown jewel,” says ICPSR Director Myron Gutmann, “and finding an outstanding successor for Hank Heitowit when he retires is critically important for us. I hope to hear from everyone in the ICPSR community who can help us identify and recruit the next Director of the Summer Program.”
A full description of the position, including requirements, can be found on the University of Michigan career site (www.umich.edu/~jobs) — see posting #2567. Applicants should submit a letter of application, a CV, three letters of reference, and relevant writing samples to: Myron P. Gutmann, Director, ICPSR, Professor of History, University of Michigan, PO Box 1248, Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1248.

Nancy McGovern Joins ICPSR as Digital Preservation Officer

ICPSR is pleased to announce that it has hired Nancy Y. McGovern as Digital Preservation Officer, effective September 1, 2006. McGovern has served ably on the ICPSR Council since June 2004, and brought to it her valuable expertise and contacts in the field of digital preservation.

McGovern comes to us from Cornell University Library, where she served as Digital Preservation Officer. She is also coeditor of RLG DigiNews, a bimonthly Web publication that focuses on digitization and preservation.

Over the past 15 years, McGovern has been an active member of the senior management teams at the Center for Electronic Records at the National Archives and the Open Society Archives in Budapest. She is codeveloper of the Digital Preservation Management workshop and tutorial, along with Anne Kenney, and she is involved in OAIS-related international development activities including a task force on Digital Repository Certification and a working group to develop OCLC/RLG Preservation Metadata Implementation Strategies.

Myron Gutmann to Serve Second Term as Director

Myron P. Gutmann, director of ICPSR since 2001, has accepted a second five-year term. Gutmann is also professor of history at the University of Michigan and research professor in the Population Studies Center of the Institute for Social Research.

“I want to thank Myron for a job well done in his first term, during which he gained the confidence of his ICPSR colleagues and staff and the leadership of ISR,” said James S. Jackson, director of the Institute for Social Research. “I am particularly pleased that we have made great progress over the last five years in forging excellent working relations with the ICPSR Council and successfully moving into ISR Perry, which now houses ICPSR and Survey Research Operations. I look forward to continued progress in Myron’s second term.”

“Gutmann’s accomplishments during his first term have been excellent on multiple fronts — organizationally, with respect to staff development, and most notably in his furtherance of ICPSR’s leadership role in data archiving and distribution. Council applauds Myron’s energetic leadership and accomplishments, and we are excited about the prospects of working with him over the next five years as ICPSR moves forward in meeting the challenges of providing archival and scientific leadership as the nation’s premier social science data resource.”

Gutmann received his Ph.D. from Princeton University in 1976, and served as professor of history and geography and director of the Population Research Center at the University of Texas at Austin before coming to Ann Arbor. The author of War and Rural Life in the Early Modern Low Countries (1980), Toward the Modern Economy, Early Industry in Europe 1500–1800 (1988), and more than 60 articles and chapters, he is currently president of the Consortium of Social Science Associations (COSSA), an advocacy organization supported by more than 100 professional associations, scientific societies, universities, and research institutions. Gutmann has served as chair of the Social Sciences, Nursing, Epidemiology and Methods-3 Study Section of the
National Institutes of Health, and as a member of the National Academy of Sciences Committee on the Human Dimensions of Global Change, as well as other national advisory committees and editorial boards.

ICPSR Welcomes New Consortium Members

ICPSR is pleased to announce that several new institutions have joined the Consortium since July 1, 2006. We extend a sincere welcome to the following new members:

- Borough of Manhattan Community College (CUNY Federation)
- Bronx Community College (CUNY Federation)
- Chuo University (Japanese National)
- Economics Education and Research Consortium (Russia)
- Graduate School of Journalism (CUNY Federation)
- Hostos Community College (CUNY Federation)
- Indiana State University (Indiana Federation)
- Kingsborough Community College (CUNY Federation)
- LaGuardia College (CUNY Federation)
- Lake Forest College (ACM Federation)
- Maastricht University (Dutch National)
- Meharry Medical College
- New York City College of Technology (CUNY Federation)
- Norwalk Community College
- Queensborough Community College (CUNY Federation)
- Richard Stockton College of New Jersey
- Saint Olaf College (ACM Federation)
- School of Law (CUNY Federation)
- Texas A&M University - Corpus Christi
- Yokohama University (Japanese National)
- York College (CUNY Federation)

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