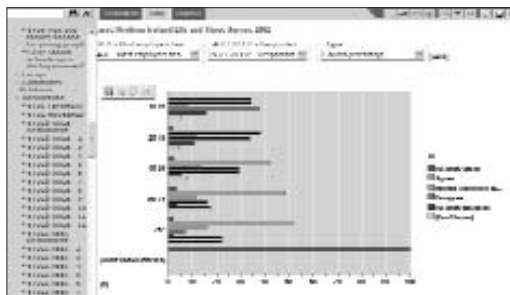


Nesstar WebView service launched for ESDS

The launch of ESDS one-stop registration on 14 June 2004 saw the release of a new version of the ESDS Nesstar Catalogue. This uses a customised version of the latest Nesstar software, now called Nesstar WebView (formerly known as Nesstar Light). The ESDS Nesstar Catalogue is a virtual data library that facilitates searching, browsing, analysing and downloading a selected range of key economic and social data. More specifically, users can obtain frequencies, conduct online tables, produce graphs, and subset and download by case and variable. The ESDS Nesstar Catalogue now contains over 100 datasets, including many large-scale surveys and a number of teaching and sampler datasets.

New features available in Nesstar WebView include:

- an improved search facility returning variables as hits and opening them in context;
- a redesigned user interface where the left frame is used to view and select variables for analysis and results are displayed in the right frame;
- bookmarking of any display (dataset, variable, analysis, graph) which can be recreated at a later time;
- support for analysis of micro-data as well as aggregated data (cubes);
- calculating and displaying tables step by step by adding variables to rows or columns - variables can also be added to layers where they can be used to filter the content of the table;
- changing the dimensionality of tables by dragging and dropping variables between rows, columns and layers;
- exporting tables directly into an Excel spreadsheet.



The Nesstar WebView User Guide is a context-sensitive guide to the main components of the system and enables best use of the facilities offered. The guide can be accessed at any time via the online help link.

Online data analysis and data download using Nesstar usually requires Athens login and registration with ESDS. However, browsing

information about the data and access to frequencies do not require authentication.

ESDS Nesstar Catalogue:
nesstar.esds.ac.uk/webview/index.jsp

News from ISER

The Institute for Social and Economic Research (ISER), which collaborates with the UKDA in ESDS Longitudinal, has recently been successful with three major funding bids to the ESRC. Originally established in 1989, the Institute was reorganised in 1999 to incorporate two ESRC Centres: the Research Centre on Micro-Social Change and the UK Longitudinal Studies Centre (ULSC) which manages the British Household Panel Survey (BHPS).

The ESRC Council meeting in April 2004 agreed to provide further five-year grants for both the Research Centre and the ULSC, to start from October 2004.

The Research Centre will pursue a programme of work mainly using longitudinal surveys to explore the changes in individuals' social position over the life course, and the role of social interactions. It will also engage in the development of methods for analysing longitudinal data.

The ULSC grant will provide full support for the next five waves of BHPS data collection. It will also support an enhanced programme of work to promote the use and improve the quality of longitudinal data and research. This will include supporting best practice in longitudinal research, methodological research on improving longitudinal data collection, and wider understanding of longitudinal research. It also aims to increase opportunities for international comparative research using longitudinal data.

The ESRC also agreed funding over a four-year period for a new research group on time use based at ISER, and headed by Professor Jonathan Gershuny.

For further information about ISER: iser.essex.ac.uk

Appointment of advisor on data strategy

Professor Peter Elias, University of Warwick, has been appointed to the post of Strategic Advisor (Data Resources) for the ESRC Research Resources Board. The appointment, which begins in October 2004, will be for three years. Professor Elias will have responsibility for the development of a National Data Strategy to support social science research.

New series of ESDS Guides

ESDS has produced a series of guides that both introduce and show how to use various ESDS services.

In addition to showing how to navigate the ESDS web sites, and various online facilities for finding and exploring social science data and documentation held by ESDS, some of the guides include exercises that are used in ESDS hands-on workshops. These exercises are designed to be self-explanatory and ESDS wish to encourage teachers and workshop facilitators to use them in their own training activities events.

Other guides provide a more in-depth exploration of issues pertaining to data by research theme, software packages or data analysis techniques.

The first set of ESDS Guides are available in hard copy or can be downloaded in PDF format from the web site. They are:

- Introduction to ESDS web sites
- Using ESDS data and documentation for teaching and learning
- Guide to using Nesstar: exploring survey data online
- Guide to exploring data documentation at ESDS
- Guide to large-scale government data series using Nesstar
- Guide to visualising large-scale government data using CommonGIS
- Guide to accessing international survey (micro) data
- Guide to the British Household Panel Survey (BHPS) Nesstar samplers
- Guide to ESDS Qualidata Online
- Secondary analysis of qualitative data

Further guides will be announced on the ESDS-news JISCmail list.

www.esds.ac.uk/support/guides.asp



Research Methods Festival

The Research Methods Programme (RMP) forms part of ESRC's strategy to promote excellence in social research. The importance and relevance of research methods was demonstrated at a three-day festival, held from 1-3 July, at St Catherine's College Oxford. Over 600 people attended the festival, which encompassed the wide methodological and disciplinary breadth that underpins the programme. Almost a third of participants were PhD students.

The festival included traditional paper sessions on cutting-edge methodologies in quantitative, qualitative and integrated methods, as well as opportunities to showcase work in progress, discuss methodological problems, consider issues arising in the teaching of methods at undergraduate and postgraduate level, and find out about new resources.

A formal evaluation found considerable support for another Research Methods Festival. Current plans are to hold another festival in July 2005, in collaboration with the new National Research Methods Centre and National Centre for e-Social Science.



The festival left a great many people eager to move to the next step of hands-on workshops and training sessions. Some of the most frequently noted areas were: Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis, multilevel modelling and methods of integrating data. Many of the RMP projects provide training programmes while others are running workshops, holding seminars or developing online resources.

More details are available on the RMP web site: www.ccsr.ac.uk/methods

ESDS events for ESRC Social Science Week

A one-day seminar 'ESDS Longitudinal: Introducing the UK Cohort and Panel Studies' promoted some of the key longitudinal data series available in the UK. Staff from the major UK longitudinal studies centres presented overviews of the surveys and answered questions on their coverage and potential application as research resources. ESDS Longitudinal offered advice on accessing the data and demonstrated the online data analysis tool, Nesstar.

The 'Repurposing social science data for use in teaching and learning: Crime and Social Order' workshop at Cambridge was part of the X4L Survey Data in Teaching (SDiT) outreach activities designed to: publicise and increase take-up of the SDiT materials; obtain feedback on the detail of the materials and the general direction of the project.

'ESDS Awareness Day, Cambridge' provided the opportunity to explore how quantitative and qualitative archived data sources held by ESDS can be used in research, teaching and learning. Participants were introduced to ESDS, and the ESDS online data browsing systems: Nesstar to explore some of the large-scale government datasets; and ESDS Qualidata Online to investigate in-depth qualitative interviews.

The workshop 'Secondary analysis of qualitative data: Using Atlas.ti to explore archived sources', introduced the re-use of qualitative data using Atlas.ti, a software tool for managing qualitative data. Best practices in data creation and documentation to enable re-use, covering guidance on transcription, anonymisation and data formats were addressed. Participants used ESDS Qualidata datasets to explore and rework data using self-paced hands-on exercises.

ESDS Government held two workshops. 'Using government surveys for research' introduced the UK large-scale government survey data that are available for secondary analysis. 'Analysing hierarchical survey data' focused on methods of handling and analysing hierarchical data such as is found in the General Household Survey and the Labour Force Survey.

The workshops were attended by academics, data resources support staff, postgraduates, government civil servants, and researchers from both the not-for-profit sector and the commercial sector.

Details of the events can be found at:
www.esds.ac.uk/news/esdspastevents.asp

All Hands Meeting

The National Centre for e-Social Science (NCeSS) held an All Hands Meeting at Manchester on 5-6 July. The meeting was a combination of demonstrating the exciting developments already underway, in terms of the eleven previously-funded pilot demonstrator projects, and setting up a dialogue between NCeSS and the social science community it serves. The meeting enabled NCeSS to fulfil its core missions: to stimulate the uptake and use of new and emerging Grid-enabled computing and data infrastructure; to provide training, advice, support and online resources; and to advise on the future strategic direction of e-social science.

NCeSS, funded by the ESRC and launched in April 2004, comprises a co-ordinating hub, based at Manchester Computing and supported by the UKDA, and research nodes - the first phase of which will be commissioned at universities throughout the UK later in 2004.

Details of the All Hands event can be found at:
www.ncess.org/events/ncess_ahm/report.htm

Methodologists meet to debate secondary analysis of qualitative data

August saw the RC33 Sixth International Conference on Social Science Methodology take place in Amsterdam. The Research Committee on Logic and Methodology (RC33) is a specialist thematic research interest group of the International Sociological Association (ISA) that helps to foster professional networking and collaboration within the field of logic and methodology in sociology. RC33 hosts its main conference every four years, and this year's event, on the theme of 'Recent Developments and Applications in Social Research Methodology', attracted over 350, mostly European, delegates.

Louise Corti organised and chaired two sessions on the Secondary Analysis of Qualitative Data. Speakers from Germany, the Netherlands, the UK

and Canada spoke on the merits or problems of re-visiting qualitative data, by offering case studies of analysis of existing data sources. Themes covered were the presentation and organisation of data, through issues of anonymity and approaches to re-analysis, to teaching with qualitative data sources. Mike Savage who was unable to attend, has written an insightful paper on 'Revisiting Classic Qualitative Studies' based on his studious re-use of some of the UK classic sociology studies' data, housed at the University of Essex, including Elizabeth Bott's famous 1950s study on Family and Social Networks and the Affluent Worker Studies.

The papers from these sessions, together with submissions to a general call for further contributions will be published in a forthcoming 2005 special edition on Secondary Analysis of Qualitative Data of the free online journal, *Forum: Qualitative Social Research* (FQS). The call for papers will go out in early September, but if you would like to submit a paper on this theme, please contact Louise Corti at corti@essex.ac.uk.

Conference report and speakers' PowerPoint presentations:
www.esds.ac.uk/news/eventdetail.asp?ID=1201

FQS journal:
www.qualitative-research.net/fqs/fqs-eng.htm

IASSIST 2004

The ESDS was represented at the recent IASSIST conference in Madison, Wisconsin.

The paper 'One-Stop-Shop: UKDA Implementation of Athens' investigated centralised authentication regimes by discussing the UKDA's experiences, both positive and negative, with the implementation of Athens Single Sign On.



'Laying the Groundwork for Addressing Interoperability Issues between Geo-spatial Metadata Standards, the DDI and Dublin Core' discussed how the social sciences and geo-spatial technologies need to ensure that a common element set is considered, or measures are taken to support cross-searches between geo-spatial and social science portals.

As part of the Multilingual Access to Data Infrastructures of the European Research Area (MADIERA) project, the development of an eight-language multilingual thesaurus has continued. The paper 'No Longer Lost in Translation' highlighted the changes within the Nesstar publisher that make the tasks of assigning index terms from this thesaurus at study, variable group and variable level to DDI marked-up metadata both consistent and less resource intensive.

'A DTD for qualitative data: extending the DDI to mark-up the content of non-numeric data' proposed a set of recommended elements from the Text Encoding Initiative that might enable the Data Documentation Initiative to be extended to the

“...to stimulate the uptake and use of new and emerging Grid-enabled computing and data infrastructure...”

“...the development of an eight-language multilingual thesaurus...”

description of the structure and content of qualitative social science data.

The workshop 'Using Atlas.ti to explore qualitative data' used data from ESDS Qualidata in hands-on sessions with Atlas.ti to introduce data preparation, importing data into software, coding data, and searching and retrieval of coded data.

The paper 'Mixing It: Preparing Qualitative and Quantitative Data Collections for Dissemination: Experiences from the UK Data Archive' gave an overview of the challenges of processing mixed methods collections including: case-linkage and anonymity; descriptive and cataloguing requirements; documentation or user guide preparation; and staff skill and training requirements.

'Delivering the World: The Establishment of an International Data Service' described ESDS International, which provides access to the major socio-economic databanks produced by international governmental organisations such as the World Bank and United Nations.

The paper 'Grid Technologies for Social Science: The SAMD Project' outlined the Seamless Access to Multiple Datasets (SAMD) project which is designed to demonstrate the benefits of Grid (e-Science) technologies for dataset manipulation and analyses in a social science context.

IASSIST 2004:
dpls.dacc.wisc.edu/iassist2004/index.html

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AHDS History News

Recent releases

SN 4978: Cornwall Online Census Project, 1891

Produced as part of FreeCEN this study is a transcription of all census enumerators' books from the 1891 census from the Cornwall registration districts. Variables include: number of schedule; road, street and number and/or name of house; forename and surname; relation to head of household; marital status; age at last birthday; occupation; place of birth; disability and additional notes.

SN 4975: Trans-National Database and Atlas of Saints' Cults, c.700-2000

This study forms an inventory of evidence for both official and popular devotion to religious figures and concepts ('cults') at the most local level at all periods. The datasets begin with the principal secular or ecclesiastic unit running down through the various levels of administration to the parish (or its equivalent), and then specifying the location and the object of devotion or commemoration. The category of devotion or commemoration is given, together with

the earliest date of evidence, and in many cases geo-referencing and additional information.

SN 4969: Markets and Fairs in Thirteenth-Century England Data Collection, 900-1516

The dataset contains information on all known markets and fairs and on the places in which they were held in the 39 pre-1974 counties of England and Wales from c.900-1516. Variables include: placename; county; borough status; valuation in 1334; market day; first recorded date/year charter was granted; season of fair; year by which market or fair was definitely established; year market/fair ceased to exist if before 1516; and whether the place had a fair in c.1600.

SN 4971: Historical Statistics on the Funding and Development of the UK University System, 1920-2002

This study is a collation of statistics on UK higher education which refers to pre-1992 universities and includes all institutions delivering degrees afterwards. The dataset, which gathers historical series on funding and development of universities from the early 1920s, is the result of research into primary and secondary governmental and institutional sources.

Forthcoming Events

30 September 2004: An Open Meeting on the Samples of Anonymised Records from the 2001 Census, future census-type activities and procedures for access to microdata, Royal Statistical Society, London

19 October 2004: Recent advances in multilevel modelling methodology and applications, Royal Statistical Society, London

22 October 2004: Social Science Data Archives: creating, depositing and using data, University of Plymouth

27 October 2004: National Child Development Study (NCDS) and the 1970 British Cohort Study (BCS70) - a workshop for potential users, MIMAS, University of Manchester

29 October 2004: ESDS Government Research Conference - Understanding Coronary Heart Disease: evidence from survey data, Institute of Mechanical Engineers, London

7-10 November 2004: The Information Society: New Horizons for Science, Berlin

11-17 November 2004: 4th Intensive Short Course in the Biographic-Narrative-Interpretive Method (BNIM), Muswell Hill, London

26 November 2004: Labour Force Survey User Group Meeting, Royal Statistical Society, London

27 November 2004: Association for History and Computing UK 2004 Conference - Recasting the Past: Digital Histories, Institute for Historical Research

9 December 2004: Social Science Online - Internet for Economics and Business, London School of Economics

Training Courses

Cathie Marsh Centre for Census and Survey Research (CCSR), University of Manchester has a Short Course Programme covering a range of research methods and advanced data analysis. www.ccsr.ac.uk/courses/

Further details of events and training courses can be found on the ESDS web site.