The Origins and Early Years of IASSIST

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A Personal Prologue

This essay is based upon my presentation on a plenary panel commemorating the 25th anniversary of the founding of IASSIST at the IASSIST annual conference in Toronto, Canada, May, 1999. My panel colleagues were Carolyn Geda and Ekkehard Mochmann; Laine Ruus chaired the session. All three had participated in IASSIST's 1974 founding meeting, also in Toronto, and remained active in IASSIST thereafter. Although I was part of the late 1960s social science data archives community, at the time of the 1974 meeting I was "retired" – at least temporarily, and did not participate in IASSIST's founding nor formative years.

Carolyn's and Ekkehard's 1999 presentations drew upon their personal experiences and memory. Carolyn focussed on her experiences as the chair of the ad hoc committee that created IASSIST and then as its first association president. Ekkehard provided a European view, and brought the discussion of the evolution of the international social science data community closer to the present. Laine, too, drew upon her memory of events to add her own coloring and a Canadian perspective.

We all spoke from rough outlines or notes, which we promised to convert to text. In the time since I have tinkered with my material, planning to finalize it for the IASSIST Quarterly (IQ). The IQ editor, Karsten Boye Rasmussen, patiently inquired about an article from time to time. When he wrote that he was coming from Denmark to Washington, D.C. in the summer, 2005, to pick it up, I expected to be able to oblige. Instead, completion became a 2006 New Year's resolution.

This essay, submitted in anticipation of the 32nd anniversary of the founding of IASSIST, is neither as detailed nor as extensive a history as I once planned. That qualification aside, the IASSIST history is a tribute to all IASSISTers: to the pioneers no longer engaged in data services or no longer with us, to those who carry on their work and the IASSIST traditions today, and to those who will do so into the indefinite future.

Introduction

Preparing a historical interpretation of the founding and evolution of IASSIST offers a chance to relive its early days vicariously and to celebrate the founding and subsequent contributions of the IASSIST community. It also provides an opportunity to survey the milieu from which IASSIST emerged and to document efforts of international cooperation in the collection, processing, storage, retrieval, exchange, and use of machine-readable social science data. Looking back more than three decades on experiences of the early international data services community can also, perhaps, contextualize contemporary digital library and archives challenges, issues, and initiatives. Maybe it can contribute to defining the unique professional identity of its multi-disciplinary members.

Hindsight often is 20/20. It seems to be human nature to minimize past challenges met when considering those that loom and are still to be resolved. The accomplishments of the international data community over the last three decades are not necessarily well known. To those unaware of the history of the social science data community, expectations for identifying, preserving, and providing access to the valuable portion of the immense outpouring of digital materials produced by the tools of office automation, or by digitization, are "new" challenges. Yet from the perspective of past as well as present achievements managing social science data, and from subsequent accomplishments exploiting contemporary technologies to describe, disseminate, and preserve them, today's challenges may be seen as simply the latest variation at the intersection of computing technology and the social sciences. Valuable lessons learned by the pioneers who preserved, described, and provided access to computer-readable structured data can be applied to the archival challenges of continuing and new forms of digital information. The story of how the pioneers came together to collaborate in an international organization may yield contemporarily useful insights.

Historical Sources

Two sets of materials, the IASSIST archives and the full run of Social Science Information (SSI), offered plentiful primary material for considering IASSIST's past and some of its early accomplishments. From 1962-1987, the International Social Science Council (ISSC), with support from the United Nations Educational, Social, and Cultural

Organization (UNESCO), published SSI. SSI became a vehicle for reporting on the work of the ISSC as well as for publishing articles from interdisciplinary social science research

The IASSIST archives rest for now in a traditional environment. They are paper documents foldered in approximately 30 Hollinger boxes, the acid-free containers that traditional archives use to store paper records. They include an almost complete set of the early years of the IASSIST Newsletter/Quarterly, a significant volume of correspondence between the founders, meeting minutes, and other administrative material. The author's ready access to the archival material provided her the opportunity to attempt this history. All of this essay's references to unpublished materials are from the IASSIST archives, unless otherwise cited.

Elina Almasy, the long-time editor of SSI and for many years the Executive Director of the ISSC, supported the quest for additional background materials by kindly offering access to all the volumes of SSI when the author visited her in Paris in the spring, 1999. Numerous SSI articles document post-World War II international and interdisciplinary collaboration in the social sciences, including efforts to coordinate resources and support services. Some of the earliest explicitly discuss the need for data libraries or data archives to support international, interdisciplinary, and comparative social science research.[1] Mme. Almasy, who was Secretary of the ISSC's Standing Committee on Social Science Data Archives at the time of the founding of IASSIST, also generously shared with the author some of her recollections of the personalities and milieu that contributed to IASSIST.

One of the oft-told stories of IASSIST's origins revolves around "the meeting in the bar." Thus one of the first pieces of evidence sought in the archives was any documentation or reference to such a meeting. The author also hoped that the archives would offer evidence of the role that Michael T. Aiken played in facilitating the emergence of IASSIST. Aiken, professor of sociology at the University of Wisconsin, Madison (UW) in 1974 and eight years earlier, the founding faculty director of UW's [Social Science] Data and Program Library Service (DPLS), had been active in the work of the ISSC's Standing Committee on Social Science Data Archives. He appears to have been largely responsible for planning a Conference on Data and Program Library Services that was held in conjunction with the World Sociology Congress meeting in Toronto in late August 1974. IASSIST emerged from that conference.[2]

Earlier in August 1974, Mike had shared a copy of the conference "call" and general program outline with the author and enthusiastically told her of his hopes that this conference could be the catalyst for the formation of an association for the newly emerging profession of social science data archivists and librarians. They were the women and men who were developing data support services in numerous institutions around the world and establishing standards for managing and sharing computer-readable social science data. An internationally recognized association might solidify the professional status of data services personnel, something that was becoming especially important in North America in an era of increasing professionalization that was in part a by-product of new affirmative action and equal opportunity initiatives.

In addition, an international association of social science data services professionals could further collaboration in social science research. That long had been a goal of the ISSC's Standing Committee on Social Science Data Archives and of the by-then defunct U.S. Council of Social Science Data Archives (CSSDA).[3] With a cutback in U.S. government funding, CSSDA met an early demise in 1969-1970. Its final activity was co-sponsorship with the University of Wisconsin of a national workshop on the management of a data and program library in Madison, Wisconsin in June 1969, and the subsequent publication of the proceedings from the workshop.[4]

The Archives
The IASSIST archives do document the "meeting in the bar" and they verify Michael Aiken's role in the formation of IASSIST. They also document much more, well beyond what can be drawn upon in a single essay. It therefore focuses solely on the formative years.

Before considering the specifics of IASSIST's history, some general impressions gleaned from skimming the archival material offer insight about the environment from which IASSIST emerged and suggest the degree to which its accomplishments are so noteworthy. For example, on a mundane level, the archives include few photocopies but many onion skin carbons. The latter offer evidence of the way correspondents circulated multiple copies of letters and document drafts across continents. Somewhat surprisingly by contemporary standards, there is much traditional formality in these materials, despite the collegiality and familiarity of the writers. One frequently finds original typewriting whose quality caused self-consciousness on the part of the authors. On the other hand, imagine the effort that Judith Rowe was reflecting upon when she wrote to Carolyn Geda on September 12, 1974, barely three weeks after the Toronto meeting: "Enclosed are the two drafts typed with my own hands. What greater love has anyone?"

Those drafts contrasted with many of the others, and contained no strike-overs, no typos. One was a three-page general memo concerning the organization of ASSIST [sic], the Association for Social Science Information Services Technology. It presumably was intended for widespread distribution, while the second was a memo to members of ASSIST's Ad Hoc Organizing Committee. These drafts

were the first of many that Judith composed in the early months, and that were revised many times by Alice Robbin, Per Nielsen, Carolyn Geda, and sometimes others, as well as by Judith herself. They formed the beginning of a hefty collection of paper documents that Carolyn gathered for a mailing to the Ad Hoc Organizing Committee later in the fall, 1974.

The authors of the early IASSIST documentation comment frequently about delays in circulating correspondence within North America, and between the U.S., Canada, Western Europe, and other parts of the world. There is no suggestion that the authors considered using international telephone lines to speed communication. Questions of currency equivalencies and how they might apply to any effort to set a standard membership fee, the challenges of hedging any organizational bank accounts against possible currency deflations, and the problems of the varied financial costs of seemingly comparable activities from one country or continent to another are among the persistent organizational themes.

The archives offer a window on the vicissitudes of the academic employment scene of the time, and the vagaries of institutional support for both international and national social science data infrastructures. You don't have to read between the lines to understand that dealing with all of this took a toll on the abilities of individuals to do the organizing work they had promised. The reader also observes a group of dedicated professionals trying to build a worldwide network of achievement and support, apparently having no question about the language by which they would communicate among themselves: English.

Many of the concerns of the early IASSISTers are issues that still preoccupy the international data community. Yet in terms of basic communication, and especially the technologies that support it, the environment was wholly different than that of today. While we all know this and understand on many different levels what this means, there is something about all those carbon paper copies that serves to symbolize just how much has changed, societally and professionally, since 1974.

Any foray into the IASSIST archives leaves the reader exhausted by the volume of correspondence and other written material produced in those early IASSIST years. What is especially remarkable was that most of it was authored by only four individuals: Judith Rowe of Princeton University's Data Library, Alice Robbin of UW's Data and Program Library Service, Carolyn Geda of the Inter-University Consortium for Political Research (ICPR) at the University of Michigan, and the late Per Nielsen of the Danish Data Archives. While many others contributed throughout the early period, those four were the primary actors, and by their unique commitment, enthusiasm, and tenacity, assured the emergence of a formal international

membership organization to address the common problems facing all who were organizing and staffing social science data archives or libraries.

We're getting ahead of the story.

Background for the Toronto Meeting, 1974
Reading between the lines in the materials reviewed for this essay, and recalling the author's conversation with Mike Aiken shortly before the Toronto meeting, it seems that organizing a conference on data archives and program library services concurrent with the 1974 World Sociology Congress in Toronto was the way Aiken found to advance his long-term goals. He had connections with at least three professional groups that shared his interests in influencing the future of international social science research and support services for it. His networks included the international profession of sociologists, his colleagues in ISSC's Standing Committee on Social Science Data Archives, and the staffs of the emerging informal network of social science data services providers. It is fairly clear that Aiken, and likely others, sought to use the Toronto sociologists' meeting, ISSC connections, and personal involvement in the nascent "data community" to bring issues of common interests to a joint gathering of social science researchers and data services providers.

The International Social Science Council (ISSC), formed in 1952, was an interdisciplinary nongovernmental organization (NGO) supported by UNESCO. By the early 1970s, Stein Rokkan, a Norwegian social scientist (and founder of the Norwegian Social Science Data Services, the NSD), was President of the ISSC. Rokkan had been working since the late 1950s, if not earlier, on international efforts to facilitate access to social science data for comparative cross-national and cross-cultural analysis. He and his colleagues had identified the tools essential for access to data for comparative analysis. They included data inventories, archives of raw survey data, a current file of information on progress in cross-national and cross-cultural research, guides for research workers in need of data for other countries, standardization and manuals of information on existing and proposed data classification standards for the social sciences, and regional working conferences and seminars of senior social scientists as well as some for graduate students.[5]

During the 1960s the ISSC sponsored several conferences on social science data archives, most of which focussed on European issues, with one in the U.S. hosted by Yale University. Rokkan, among others, viewed UNESCO, through the efforts of the ISSC, as the logical agent for internationalizing social science research and for making truly comparative research a reality.[6] As a result of a recommendation of the third European Social Science Data Archives conference in 1965, the ISSC decided at a conference in London in April 1966 to constitute a Standing

Committee on Social Science Data Archives (SCSSDA). Its first meeting was in the U.S., at Ann Arbor, Michigan in June the same year. By fiscal year 1967-68, UNESCO allocated [U.S.] $6000 for the Standing Committee's work.

The original Standing Committee members included Stein Rokkan, Erwin K. Scheuch of Germany, John Madge of England, and three other Europeans. Ralph L. Bisco and Warren Miller of ICPR, William Glaser of Columbia University, Philip Hastings of the Roper Center, and Ithiel de Sola Pool of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology formed the U.S. contingent. Glaser and Bisco wore two hats on the Standing Committee as they were also, respectively, Chairman and Executive Director of the U.S. National Science Foundation (NSF)-financed Council of Social Science Data Archives (CSSDA). Over time, membership on the Standing Committee expanded to include other European and North American social scientists, as well as members from South America, East Asia, South Asia, and the USSR.[7]

The ISSC's Standing Committee and the U.S. CSSDA emerged at approximately the same time and for the years of their co-existence, jointly focused upon developing data inventories. None was produced before the demise of the CSSDA in 1969. CSSDA did, however, sponsor several national meetings and in 1967 published a directory of social science data archives in the United States, covering the activities of twenty-three U.S. data organizations and one in Canada, and included an entry for the CSSDA itself.[8] Both ISSC's Standing Committee and the CSSDA focused primarily on the interests of social science researchers. Professionals from the data services community who were not themselves researchers played no role in ISSC's Standing Committee, though some participated in the work of the CSSDA.[9]

The evolution of the Standing Committee on Social Science Data Archives continued as the CSSDA faded. It became more structured, recasting itself into Task Forces as the vehicles through which its work would be done. By the time of its 1968 meeting, the ISSC's Standing Committee had seven such groups: Task Forces on

Data inventories and data retrieval,

Archives management,

Program library services,

Archives of aggregate data,

Historical data archives,

Training in secondary analysis, and

Archives development.

The Standing Committee also decided that year that resolving policies on the privacy and confidentiality of

"archived records" should be the joint concern of all its Task Forces.[10

In 1970 Michael Aiken became chairman of the Program Library Services Task Force. This likely reflected not only his interests, but also a new project at the University of Wisconsin: a NSF-sponsored national program library service.

The 1974 Toronto Conference
The formal convenors of the 1974 Conference on Data Archives and Program Library Services, August 21-22, 1974, sponsored by the ISSC's Standing Committee on Social Science Data Archives were its chair, Erwin Scheuch, director of the Zentralarchiv, Cologne; Michael Aiken; and Hagen Stegemann, also of the Zentralarchiv. These three also were the coordinator and discussants, respectively, of the final summary session of the conference.

An overview of the conference program is reprinted here as Appendix A. It shows the conference considering some of the topics that were a responsibility of one or more of the Standing Committee's Task Forces. In addition, the program introduced some themes that reflected issues of importance to professionals who were supporting social science research, rather than undertaking it.

UW's Data and Program Library Service sent more than 300 invitations to the conference. Session coordinators, program speakers, and the approximately 60 registrants came from the social science data services community, from the existing membership of the Standing Committee's Task Forces, and other interested social scientists. This mix of people differed from participants in previous ISSC activities, wherein social science researchers prevailed. The conference program addressed issues that both complemented and expanded upon challenges the ISSC and the former CSSDA had confronted. Note the similarity to the themes and issues of IASSIST conferences over the years.

Alice Robbin's account of the final session, included in the reprinted program overview, summarized the action areas agreed to by conference participants. Taken together, they led to recognition that meeting the challenges of facilitating the kind of international and interdisciplinary social science research collaboration that Stein Rokkan and others had long advocated required moving beyond the organizational status quo. The group identified professionalization and training of data archivists, the people on whose work social science research depended, as the first means of accomplishing their goals.

More than 30 years later, clarifying the professional status and complementary relationship between data archivists or librarians and those engaged in social science research

can sometimes seem elusive. Compounding this is the challenge of integrating data services into the mainstream of the traditional archives and libraries as they embrace a digital era.

Robbin recalls that at the summary session of the conference, David Nasatir, then Director of the International Data Library and Reference Service at the University of California, Berkeley, recommended that the group adjourn and continue discussing the idea of a new organization "down in the bar."[11] The idea of a "meeting in the bar" thus can be credited to Nasatir, embellishing further the reputation he earned for his many contributions to the social science data community.[12]

There are several documentary references for "the meeting in the bar" to corroborate the memories of this happening. The first is a letter of September 10, 1974, less than three weeks after the conference, from Alice Robbin to Carolyn Geda and Judith Rowe. Alice sent news that Stein Rokkan, President of the ISSC, had already written to Mike Aiken to say he was delighted with what he heard about the Toronto meeting, which he had been unable to attend. Rokkan urged that "programme points," i.e., an outline of mandate, function, goals, etc. for the new organization be formulated quickly, so he could submit them to UNESCO. He evidently emphasized that UNESCO funding might be available, given the right approach. Alice adds a "p.s." to her letter, in which she refers to the "notes that Carolyn and Judith took at the Long Bar on Thursday night." She ends by suggesting that the newly-forming group may want to think of a name change.[13]

The second reference to "the bar" comes in a letter from David Nasatir to Carolyn Geda dated a day later, September 11, 1974, in which he writes, "recognizing that Mike Aiken will have to fill in, etc., I thought I would set down what I understand of the results of our meeting in the bar, the meeting the next morning, and the Standing Committee on Social Science Data Archives meeting on Friday night, and possible implications for IASSIST." Apparently some shift in emphasis or support developed after the conference summary session and the meeting in the bar and before or during the Standing Committee's meeting a day or so later.

At a planning meeting for IASSIST the morning after the gathering in the bar, there had been tentative proposals that IASSIST might associate in some manner with the ISSC's Standing Committee. One suggestion was that a chair and vice-chair of IASSIST serve on ISSC's Standing Committee, alongside its Task Force chairs. However, it seems not everyone on the Standing Committee supported this overture or the idea of a joining of IASSIST and the Standing Committee in this manner. Nasatir's letter recommends that "everyone. . .should keep her cool" and remember a few things.

IASSIST is [to be] an independent, autonomous organization that can (and should) do as its members please. They may wish to have working groups, for example. . . .[secondly] The [ISSC] Standing Committee on Social Science Data Archives. . .has an established structure. . . . [thirdly] Nothing prevents (in fact everything supports) some or all of the working groups of IASSIST becoming Task Forces of the Standing Committee, without [its members] ceasing to exist as IASSIST members. [He continues:] . . .on the morning after the meeting in the bar, a group met to form IASSIST and agreed to form a provisional organizing committee with you [Carolyn] as the chair, Per as the European Secretary, . . .and we decided to work towards a goal of an organizational meeting to be held in 1975. We hoped to seek funds for this, but the mechanism for funding remains vague in my mind.

Aiken wrote a few weeks later to Carolyn Geda, confirming the information in Nasatir's letter (David had sent him a copy), and said he was writing with hopes of clarifying the situation. He, or he and Nasatir, had evidently reported to the Standing Committee about the organizing plans of "International ASSIST," and had there expressed the desire of the new group to be an independent professional organization, while recognizing that it probably would gain greater "legitimacy in the international social science [research] community immediately [if it had] association with the [ISSC] Standing Committee." He expands a bit: "International ASSIST is a stand alone organization with autonomous status, unless its membership decides otherwise. It is an association of professionals in the data archives field who will define projects of mutual concern, set up task forces to carry out these objectives, and we hope, be able to obtain sufficient resources to have national and international meetings from time to time."

He continues: "Regarding its relationship to the [ISSC] Standing Committee on Social Science Data Archives... one way to maintain both its autonomy and to participate in the activities of the Standing Committee is for the task force chairmen of International ASSIST also to occupy the position of task force chairmen in the Standing Committee." He also mentions that when it met in Toronto after the conference, the Standing Committee formed one new task force, on a worldwide data archives register, that was "eminently fundable" by the ISSC. He implied that such an effort would be of interest to International ASSIST. Nonetheless, it is likely that even at this early point, the potential for competition between the SCSSDA and IASSIST for ISSC and/or UNESCO funds added to the tension related to the issue of organizational autonomy.

Post-Toronto
The stage was thus set for the flurry of organizing activity that consumed Carolyn, Judith, Alice, Per and colleagues

for the next many months and years. Overall it is a story of many small and not so small dramas, well beyond the scope of this essay. The organizing tensions evident in the early correspondence needed to be resolved in a manner that the interested parties could support

Should IASSIST affiliate with the ISSC's Standing Committee on Social Science Data Archives? Doing so might mean eligibility for UNESCO support. Should it affiliate with other professional organizations? Should IASSIST be a federation of regional associations or some other structure? Perhaps the key decision, from the perspective of establishing the professional identity of data archivists and librarians, was whether membership was to be of individual professionals or institution-based. Ultimately, when the IASSIST constitution was adopted a couple of years later and made clear that its membership was of individuals, the International Federation of Data Organizations (IFDO) emerged to facilitate the types of collaboration that its organizers felt required institutional support.[14]

A few organizing efforts offer a glimpse of the range and variety of work undertaken in IASSIST's first years. The first was assembling the package of materials that Carolyn Geda sent to the IASSIST Ad Hoc Organizing Committee. Mailed in early December 1974, it included five parts:

  • a list of most of the major meetings related to social science data archives that had been held between 1962 and 1969, including reports or agendas from some of them;

  • two sample constitutions from other professional associations that might help IASSIST draft its constitution;

  • the summary of the meetings on IASSIST in Toronto;

  • a questionnaire on the interests of the committee members, including their suggestions for persons for the mailing list that the Ad Hoc Organizing Committee was building; and,

  • a list of suggested newsletters and publications which might be asked to print a notice publicizing IASSIST.

While Carolyn was busy those first couple of months with this mailing and the numerous other details that fell to the chair of an organizing committee, the archives provide evidence that Judith Rowe was also busy doing what she seemed to do without ceasing throughout her career. She was working every angle, spreading the word about the new organization and seeking allies in and among numerous other associations. For example, there is a letter dated September 19, 1974 from the Canadian Secretary/ Treasurer of WAPOR (World Association for Public Opinion Research), Yvan Corbeil, responding to a letter he had received from Irving Crespi of the Gallup Organization

in Princeton about "the idea" proposed by Judith Rowe. He calls "the idea" interesting, though he "isn't sure of the exact nature of the association she is planning." However, he raises a concern that the two associations potentially could be competing for the same members, so proposes an alternative. IASSIST could become a research group within WAPOR. Clearly he missed the point because being subsumed in this manner was not what the IASSIST founders had in mind. It is, however, representative of some of the response they encountered as they began to organize.

For her part, Alice Robbin was contributing to the narratives about the Toronto meeting, including authoring the article in SSI excerpted here as Appendix A. She also put the growing mailing list into machine-readable form, corresponded with some of the others who had been at the Toronto meeting, and during 1976 and 1977, edited the first volume of the IASSIST Newsletter.[15]

As European Secretariat, Per Nielsen shouldered responsibility for rounding up commitment from "interested parties," as he called them, from throughout Europe. To some extent his efforts evolved in parallel with an informal coming together in the spring, 1976, of European data archives in what became CESSDA: Committee of European Social Science Data Archives. His IASSIST organizing challenges also related to the continuing tensions that emerged in Toronto between ISSC's Standing Committee and IASSIST and are reflected in a letter he received from Erwin Scheuch, dated June 7, 1976, on the subject of the future structure for the ISSC Standing Committee. It echoed, in part, a letter Scheuch had sent Geda in January 1975 following the mailing described above to IASSIST's Ad Hoc Organizing Committee. After discussing his interpretation of the differences between IASSIST and the Standing Committee, Scheuch proposed some possible areas for collaboration, such as on a world registry of data archives and related data sources, and in the development of procedures for data handling in survey archives.

While negotiating all of the above, Per also responded at length to the various draft documents and other mailings that came from the North Americans, and urged what he called "the aspect of the third world." In addition, given that most of the sentiment for an individual-membership organization, which he personally seemed to support, was coming from North America, while the sentiment for an association of institutional members tended to be preferred by some of the Europeans, the archives suggest that Per was the point person for ameliorating the differences in these perspectives. Both Carolyn and Per drafted constitutions for IASSIST for discussion with the Ad Hoc Organizing Committee, and subsequently its Steering Committee, and the constitution which was eventually adopted later in 1976 significantly merged their drafts.

The Evolution of IASSIST

Evidence of organizational progress for IASSIST is shown in Appendix B, a reprint from the first issue of the IASSIST Newsletter (November 1976). It lists the original seventeen members of the IASSIST Steering Committee. The latter replaced the Ad Hoc Organizing Committee following meetings in April 1975 in London in conjunction with the meeting of the European Consortium for Political Research (ECPR), and in August 1976, in Edinburgh during the International Political Science Association meeting. The list provides evidence of commitment to IASSIST from a very heterogeneous international social science community. The identification of six regional secretariats suggests the ambitious manner in which the organizers sought to be truly international. Members of the Steering Committee came from thirteen different countries!

IASSIST as an organization, and its members individually, can be credited with numerous contributions in the fields of archives and library services and also in interdisciplinary social science research. They occurred as IASSISTers participated in the programs of numerous allied professional associations, collaborated in data-related standards-setting efforts at both national and international levels, and through the work of the IASSIST Action Groups.

The closing glimpse in this essay of the work undertaken by IASSIST in the early years is thus of its initial Action Groups. The fourth issue of the IASSIST Newsletter, dated Fall, 1977, included a list of all the initial groups and their respective Canadian, European, and U.S. chairpersons. There were seven Action Groups, giving further evidence of the scope and ambition of the young IASSIST. They were: Classification [of data], Data Acquisition, Data Archive Development, Data Archive Registry, Data Documentation, Data Organization and Management, and Process-Produced Data.

Perhaps the best known and most influential product to emerge from the early IASSIST years was the Working Manual for Cataloging Machine-Readable Data Files, prepared by Sue A. Dodd, the U.S. chair of the Classification Action Group. Members of the Action Group and other IASSISTers tested the manual's guidelines, using them to prepare descriptions of their holdings. This was the necessary first step toward the long-sought goal of a union catalog for data files. In 1982 the American Library Association (ALA) published Dodd's manual, Cataloging Machine-Readable Data Files: An Interpretive Manual and subsequently chose it as their prize book of the year. The Classification Action Group, the last operational Action Group from the formative IASSIST years, disbanded shortly thereafter.

Conclusion

In its first decade IASSIST succeeded in becoming an autonomous, vibrant, and productive association for professionals of the international community of social science data services. From the outset, IASSIST has been a forum for "early-adopting" collaboration between social science researchers and data services and information technology professionals. IASSIST's continuing embrace, over time, of ever-new technologies for its own communications and organizational efforts, together with its workshops, annual meetings, and publications, have facilitated widespread adoption of innovations and standards for the management of collections of social science data.[16]

The first decade's activities represent the rich legacy from which present-day IASSIST has evolved. IASSIST's more than 30 years of accomplishments, rooted in international professional collaboration, are a firm foundation for confidently addressing contemporary challenges at the intersection of technology and the social sciences.

Footnotes

1. Examples are Henning Friis, "Institutional Means of Collaboration Between the Social Sciences," Social Science Information 1:2 (1962), pp. 5-22; and, Stein Rokkan, "The Development of Cross-National Comparative Research: A Review of Current Problems and Possibilities," Social Science Information 1:3 (1962), pp. 21-38.

2. Michael T. Aiken was Chancellor of the University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana in 1999, when the author contacted him with respect to the material she was preparing for IASSIST's 25th anniversary panel. When we talked, Mike was modest in his recollections of his role in the founding of IASSIST. Those who know how he worked and his commitment to the development of data services for social science teaching and research likely know of his contributions to the data services community. In addition, the author has her own personal debt to Michael Aiken, for he hired her in 1966 to be DPLS's founding data archivist/librarian.

3. For background on the CSSDA, see William A. Glaser, "Note on the Work of the Council of Social Science Data Archives 1965-1968," Social Science Information 8:2 (1969), pp. 159-176.

4. The Proceedings of the Workshop on the Management of a Data and Program Library [June 19-20, 1969]. Margaret O'Neill Adams, David Elesh, and Alice Robbin, eds. Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin, 1970.

5. Rokkan, 1962.

6. Stein Rokkan, "International Efforts to Develop Networks of Data Archives," Social Science Information 4:3 (1965), pp. 9-13. One cannot help but imagine how excited Rokkan would be by the Nesstar project, one of

whose sponsors is the NSD, and which embodies, in an evolutionary way, his early innovative ideas. For further information, see: http://www.nesstar.org/.

7. Reports on the work of the Standing Committee on Social Science Data Archives appeared periodically in Social Science Information including in 6:4 (1967), pp. 179-180; 6:6 (1967), pp. 71-76; 8:2 (1969), pp. 141-145; 9:6 (1970),pp. 179-186.

8. Council of Social Science Data Archives. Social Science Data Archives. 1967.

9. One person who was an exception to this was Ralph L. Bisco, whose participation in the ISSC's Standing Committee devolved from his role as Executive Director of the U.S. CSSDA. Bisco died in 1970.

10. "Report on the Fifth Administrative Meeting [of the SSCDA], Social Science Information 8:2 (1969), p. 144.

11. Alice Robbin, in telephone conversation with the author,April 1999.

12. See for example, David Nasatir, Data Archives for the Social Sciences: Purposes, Operations, and Problems. Paris: UNESCO. 1973.

13. There are several variations to the organizational name in materials from the early days of IASSIST: ASSIST, International ASSIST, I-ASSIST, and IASSIST. The author has attempted to be faithful to the usage in the context under discussion, but has also reverted to the dominant usage following adoption of its constitution, i.e., IASSIST.

14. Ekkehard Mochmann's International Social Science Data Service: Scope and Accessibility (Report for the International Social Science Council (ISSC)), Cologne, 2002 includes a brief description of the distinction between IFDO and IASSIST on p. 9.

15. The IASSIST Newsletter became the IASSIST Quarterly in 1982.

16. A wealth of information related to IASSIST's accomplishments can be reviewed from its website www. iassistdata.org.

Appendix A

The Conference on Data Archives and Program Library Services

**Toronto,Canada
August 21-22, 1974**

In conjunction with the 8th World Congress of Sociology

Convened by the Chairman of the International Social Science Council's Standing Committee on Social Science Data, Erwin K. Scheuch, Institut fur Vergleichende Sozial-forschung, Cologne; and two of its Task Force Chairmen, Michael T. Aiken, Department of Sociology, University of Wisconsin; and Hagen Stegemann, Zentralarchiv, Cologne. Invitations (over 300) were sent by the Data and Program Library Service, University of Wisconsin, Madison. Sixty people, from Australia, Latin and North America, India, the Middle East, and Europe registered for the Conference.

Panel Discussions with audience participation. Each topical session was prepared by one or two coordinators, and their invited discussants.

Session 1: QUALITY OF THE DATA BASE: THE ISSUE OF DATA GENERATION
Coordinators: Carolyn Geda, Inter-University Consortium for Political Research [ICPR], Ann Arbor, MI; and Frank Aarebrot, The Christian Michelsen Institute, Bergen
Discussants: Per Nielsen, Danish Data Archives, DDA, Copenhagen; Erwin Rose and Mark Karhausen, Zentralarchiv fur Empirische Sozialforschung, Cologne

Session 2: PROBLEMS OF INVENTORYING DATA: CLASSIFICATION SCHEMES
Coordinator: Ekkehard Mochmann, Zentralarchiv, Cologne
Discussants: Sue Dodd, Institute for Research in Social Science, University of North Carolina; Paul R. Voss, Roper Public Opinion Research Center, Williamstown, MA; Per Nielsen, Danish Data Archives, DDA, Copenhagen; Carolyn Geda, ICPR, Ann Arbor, MI; and Paul Peters, Social Sciences Information Utilization Laboratory, Pittsburgh, PA

Session 3: INCREASING THE UTILIZATION OF DATA ARCHIVES
Coordinator: Lorraine Borman, Vogelbeck Computing Center, Northwestern Univ., Evanston, IL
Discussants: Tom Atkinson, Institute for Behavioral Research, York University, Ontario; Richard A. Hay, Jr., Northwestern Univ., Evanston, IL; Mark Karhausen and Erwin Rose, Zentralarchiv, Cologne

Session 4: SPECIFIC PROBLEMS FACING THE DATA ARCHIVE
Coordinator: Ramkrishna Mukherjee, Indian Statistical

Institute, Calcutta

Sub-Session 4a: **THE LIBRARY AND INFORMATION CENTER AND THE EMERGING SOCIAL SCIENCE DATA NETWORK** -- Paul Peters, Social Sciences Information Utilization Laboratory, Pittsburgh, PA
Sub-Session 4b: **INTRODUCING THE ACCESS AND USE OF MACHINE-READABLE DATA TO THE TRADITIONAL LIBRARY** -- Judith Rowe, Social Science User Services, Princeton Univ., Princeton, NJ
Sub-Session 4c: **DATA AVAILABILITY AND DIFFUSION IN THE THIRD WORLD: LATIN AMERICA, A CASE IN POINT -**- Manuel Carvajal, Latin American Data Bank, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL

Session 5: THE PROBLEM OF OWNERSHIP AND DIFFUSION OF DATA
Coordinator: Joseph Bonmariage, Belgian Archives for the Social Sciences, Louvain
Discussants: Evert Ladd, Social Science Data Center, University of Connecticut, Storrs, CT; Warren Miller, ICPR, Ann Arbor, MI; Hagen Stegemann, Zentralarchiv, Cologne

Session 6: EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION
Coordinator: Erwin K. Scheuch, Institut fur Vergleichende Sozialforschung, Cologne
Discussants: Hagen Stegemann, Zentralarchiv,Cologne; Michael Aiken, Department of Sociology, University of Wisconsin, Madison.

The final session summarized the problem areas identified during the earlier sessions, suggesting topics for further work:
1. Need for professionalization and training of data archivists -- both upgrading of current data archive professionals and training of professionals for emerging data archives, generally and especially in Third World nations;
2. Confidentiality and the role of the archive: development of a position on confidential data;
3. Establishment of standards for ownership and diffusion of data;
4. Establishment of standards for classification of data files and data descriptors;
5. Establishment of standards for text documentation of data files;
6. Cooperation and exchange between traditional libraries and data archives;
7. A mechanism or organization to permit consideration of these problems in greater depth.

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All of the above comes directly from: Alice Robbin, "The Conference on Data Archives and Program Library Services," SOCIAL SCIENCE INFORMATION XIV:2, 1975,

pp. 197-201.

The same volume also includes an article by James C. Taylor, "Session on Program Library Services," (pp. 202-205). It discusses the session concerning computer program abstracting and information clearinghouse services that was also part of the above-described conference.

Appendix B

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ACTION GROUP COORDINATORS

CLASSIFICATION

Canada- Mohan Sharma, Humanities & Social Science Library, University of Alberta, Rutherford North, Edmonton, Alberta

Europe- Ekkehard Mochmann, Zentralarchiv für Empirische Sozialforschung, Bachemer Strasse 40, 5 Köln 41, Federal Republic of Germany

United States- Sue Dodd, Data Library, Institute for Research in Social Science, Manning Hall, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, North Carolina 27514

DATA ACQUISITION

Canada- Pierre Lacasse, Centre de recherches en aménagement régional, Université de Sherbrooke, Sherbrooke, Québec

Europe- Marcia Taylor, Social Science Research Council Survey Archive, University of Essex, Wivenhoe Park, P. O. Box 23, Colchester, Essex, England C04 3S0

United States- not activated

DATA ARCHIVE DEVELOPMENT

Canada- Laine Ruus, Data Library, Computing Centre, University of British Columbia, 2075 Wesbrook Place, Vancouver, British Columbia V6T 1W5

Europe- not activated

United States- Alice Robbin, Data and Program Library Service, 4452 Social Science Building, University of Wisconsin-Madison, Wisconsin 53706

DATA ARCHIVE REGISTRY

Canada- Lisa Lasko, Canadian Consortium for Social Research, Institute for Behavioral Research, York University, 4700 Keele Street, Downsview, Ontario M3J 1P3

Europe- Joseph Bonmariage, Belgian Archives for the Social Sciences, University of Louvain, SH-2, 1348 Louvain-la-Neuve, Belgium

United States- John Kolp, Regional Social Science Data Archive, University of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa 52242

DATA DOCUMENTATION

Canada- Dave L. Salley, Management and Central Services Group, Standards Division, Statistics Canada, Tunney's Pasture, Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0T6

Europe- Cees Middendorp, Steinmetzarchief, Kleine-Gartmanplantsoen 10, Amsterdam-C., Netherlands

United States- Sheldon Laube, C.M. Leinwond & Associates, 5010 Stewart Court, College A/C, Maryland 20740

DATA ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

Canada- Greg Morrison, Social Science Data Archive, Department of Sociology, Carleton University, Ottawa, Ontario K1S 5E6

Europe- Eric Tannenbaum, Social Science Research Council Survey Archive, University of Essex, Wivenhoe Park, P. O. Box 23, Colchester, Essex, England C04 3S0

United States- William Gammell, Social Science Data Center, University of Connecticut, Storrs, Connecticut 06268

PROCESS-PRODUCED DATA

Canada- John DeVries, Social Science Data Archives, Department of Sociology, Carleton University, Ottawa, Ontario K1S 5B6

Europe- Paul Müller, Institute for Applied Social Research, University of Cologne, Greinstrasse 2, 5000-Köln 41, Federal Republic of Germany

United States- Donald Harrison, National Archives (NNR), Washington, D.C. 20408