

Editor's Notes

Welcome to the IASSIST Quarterly - IQ vol. 27 issue 1. Three articles are presented in this issue.

The article from Ken Reed, Betsy Blunsdon, Nicola McNeil (Deakin University, Victoria, Australia) and Steven McEachern (University of Ballarat, Victoria, Australia) was presented at the IASSIST conference (May 2003, Ottawa) in the session with the title "Strengthening Numbers: measurement, aggregation and policy". The Reed, Blunsdon, McNeil & McEachern article has the title "Integrating public domain data to construct community profiles". The paper describes the construction of a database of community characteristics at the postcode level. A community is described by variables in the areas of economic, social, political and cultural characteristics. These publicly available data from a wide variety of sources are in the project collated and integrated. The data are supporting multi-level research enabling the contextualization of individual behavior by data on the context in which people live their daily lives, such as the neighborhood, school, community or region. There is a great deal of data available in the public domain, but these are collected for a wide range of purposes, and with great variation in the units of analysis. The project on local areas in Victoria, Australia relates to other neighborhood projects in the USA (Los Angeles and Chicago). The database has information on the years 1996 and 2001, which are years in which there was both a national census and a national election. From a variety of sources data is included on businesses, crime and suicide, licensed premises, information about religious institutions, schools, recreational facilities, cultural organizations and services.

The second paper is also from the May 2003 IASSIST conference in Ottawa. The paper gives an insight into a new archive by the authors Hannele Keckman-Koivuniemi and Mari Kleemola, both research officers at Finnish Social Science Data Archive. The title of the paper is "Data Processing in FSD: Challenges in a New Archive". The Finnish data archive started in 1999 situated at the University of Tampere and funded by the Ministry of Education. The archive has about thirteen employees and has archived about 400 studies. The archive is a social science data archive and receives data files in SPSS, Excel, SAS or ASCII formats. Intensive data processing is carried out at the FSD in order to make the data corresponding the original questionnaire. The data is documented in SPSS files, the integrated documentation is obviously considered important, but a more extensive documentation is also made through the use of the DDI.

In the last article from one of the IASSIST key figures Chuck Humphrey - past president of IASSIST and an active person at almost every IASSIST conference – you

are invited to take a look into the major accomplishments of IASSIST in the past decade. This article is for both newcomers and old members of IASSIST. While looking back Chuck Humphrey is at the same time into the process of setting the goals for the future of IASSIST. In the past IASSIST has been active in helping to set up data archives and in obtaining members outside the traditional geographical areas of IASSIST (North America, Europe (Western) and Australia). The Outreach program that started in 1996 has brought in many new members to IASSIST conferences and spread the information about IASSIST. In the communication room the website on the Internet was the biggest move in the past. Apart from delivering services directly to the members, IASSIST has also been active as participants and initiators of metadata standards like the Data Documentation Initiative (DDI). Many more points are made in the article. Read the article and contribute by articles to the IQ or by stating your opinion on the IASSIST mailing list.

Remember to visit the IASSIST website on www.IASSISTdata.org.

Papers for the IASSIST Quarterly are most welcome. Please contact the editor (kbr@sam.sdu.dk).

Karsten Boye Rasmussen, November 2003.