

United States Secretariat Report

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The United States Secretariat has received positive letters of intent from 170 people, more than half of whom are already involved in Action Group activity. By popular demand, we are organizing a North American working conference in Florida this February. The accommodations will be pleasant and inexpensive and the meeting will provide an opportunity for the AG's to work intensively on their projects. Full details will be sent out shortly. I would like to take this opportunity to thank each of our AG coordinators for the enthusiastic efforts they have already expended and to encourage all of you not only to join IASSIST, but to participate in its activities.

ACTION GROUP REPORTS

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- David Nasatir, Behavioral Sciences Graduate Program, California State College, Domingus Hills, California 90747

Mandate

A directory containing names, addresses, types of holdings, and dissemination policies of existing data archives and libraries throughout the world will be compiled. A supplementary directory listing archival personnel and other individuals with relevant expertise would be developed. In addition, a central location would be designated to maintain all published lists of archival holdings and study descriptions. These documents would be produced as reference documents for users of archives or institutions interested in consulting with individuals in the field of archiving.

Activities and Plans

With respect to the first part of the mandate, the Action Group will focus initially on developing the directory of data archives and data libraries.

Certain definitional problems are now being addressed by members of the US Action Group: What do we mean by a Social Science Data Archive? How does it differ from a Social Science Data Library? Joseph Bonmariage has suggested that there are different levels of production and dissemination. The issue of what constitutes "social science" has been raised. David Nasitir suggested that "everything is (or can be) grist for the social scientific mill." He has proposed that by social science we mean "used by social scientists" rather than "produced by social scientists." This broadens the definition to include, for example, original or secondary distributors of process-produced data, a major social science resource.

The directory would be developed in machine-readable form in order to facilitate updating and would either be published annually or available on a subscription basis. It will include entries for both archives and libraries and would include an appendix listing known organizations for which no further information is available.

A questionnaire is being prepared for distribution by the first of the year and a preliminary version of the directory should be ready in April, 1977. In the meantime, a "primitive bibliography" of existing data archive "registries" is being compiled which might appear in the directory in the form of an annotated bibliography.

#### DATA ACQUISITION

- Canada- Pierre Lacasse, Centre d' 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 CO4 3SD
- United States- Donald Harrison, National Archives (NNR), Washington, D.C. 20408

#### Mandate

This Action Group addresses the problems of data acquisition for archives with particular emphasis on the necessary relationship between the collectors and creators of data and the archives. Recommended procedures for the acquisition of data would be developed with the intent of assisting researchers at critical points during the data collection process to ensure and promote the transfer of high quality data to the public domain for further academic investigation. The group will also survey different acquisition policies already in use, with attention to both legal and procedural problems connected with the acquisition and de-acquisition of data.

[Editor's Note: The original mandate included the statement, "A survey of confidentiality laws, implications, and problems existing in machine-readable data would be conducted. A report summarizing the survey and resolving the problems when possible would be produced." This activity has been transferred to the Action Group on Process-Produced Data. The under-lined section of the mandate of the Data Acquisition Action Group reflects an enlarging of the scope of activities to be undertaken.]