

## Editor's Notes

Welcome to the fourth issue of the IASSIST Quarterly, vol. 30.

The 34th IASSIST annual conference will take place at Stanford University, Palo Alto, California, USA, May 27-30, 2008 with the theme "Technology of Data: Collection, Communication, Access and Preservation". The conference will examine the role of technology and tools in various aspects of the data life cycle. See the call for papers in this issue of the IQ.

At the IASSIST 2007 conference in Montreal - the best conference ever - one of the presentations in the session "Data Services mash-ups: Maps, Research and Everything!" was Rachael Barlow from Trinity College in Hartford, CT presenting "Maps that Mash: Daring, Dangerous, or Dumb?". The article is now called "Mashing Maps". Barlow introduced a class at Trinity College - a small, liberal-arts college - to the facilities of Google maps mash-ups; the idea of the class was to attempt to do something meaningful with data for people living in the local community Hartford, Connecticut. The students in the class created several mash-ups, for example one group of students mapped food resources in Hartford, everything from community gardens to grocery stores to food pantries. Some maps are shown in the article. As a sociologist Rachael Barlow investigated the effects of the Trinity College class, where the production of the mash-ups made a cooperative connection between the faculty and students inside the college's walls and the general community members outside those walls. She found that the connection improved the image of the college and also that the creation of the mash-ups created a demand for similar work from other local organizations. Barlow concludes that "mash-ups succeeded not only in mixing up online content and tools, but also people; in this case the students, local organizations, faculty, administration, and media that participated in the project's upstream and downstream processes". Those were certainly very successful mix-ups.

At the same 2007 conference - as you remember "the best ever" - in the session "Data Beyond Numbers: Using Data Creatively for Research", Jinfang Niu from University of Michigan presented what is now her paper on "Reward and Punishment Mechanism for Research Data Sharing". The author is defining the problems in the concept of data as a public good: "In the data sharing case, data producers make efforts to prepare the data for deposit, but the benefit of the data preparation largely goes to secondary users. In addition, data producers are at risk of being harmed by the misuse and misinterpretation of data by unqualified users, or by being charged with misconduct. That makes free-riding even more attractive. To motivate data producers

to prepare and share data, there must be some incentive mechanisms". To add rigidity to the analysis Jinfang Niu presents some mathematical modeling of the issue. (A very bold reviewer accepted the challenge of the mathematics.) As many of the IQ readers are working in data libraries and data archives, it could be easy simply to demand that all research data should be made available for the public. And this can be enforced by not releasing the last portion of grant money until that requirement is met, as in "trust is good, but control is better". However, you could argue that the backside is that data that were better forgotten are now carried on indefinitely in archives. However, don't expect that the mathematics can make the definitive judgment concerning whether to keep or to reject/scrap data. But do expect to get enlightened on the issues of reward and punishment, including a proposal to enforce citation of datasets - an issue IASSIST has promoted since the foundation of the organization.

In the same session Janet Stamatel from University at Albany presented some very interesting thoughts on "The Importance of Data Visualization in Data Literacy". However, approached by one of the other presenters at the same session (this editor), Janet Stamatel preferred to work a bit more on the issue before publishing her presented thoughts on data visualization. So we as readers can look forward to that. In our talks it turned out that Janet Stamatel also had presented at the 2006 IASSIST conference - presently the next-best ever - and she agreed to publish her paper as an article in the IQ with the title: "An Overview of Publicly Available Quantitative Cross-National Crime Data". The article is a specialist article that "reviews the content, data collection methods, geographic and temporal coverage, and accessibility of three main sources of publicly available, quantitative cross-national crime data, with a particular emphasis on recent changes with respect to data availability. These sources are the International Police Organization (Interpol), the United Nations Crime Surveys, and the European Sourcebook". If your subject area is not in crime data, then the article can be read as an important contribution to the issue of globalization, that also emphasizes the problems of validity in cross-national data when the author remarks "researchers have noted considerable inconsistencies across the sources".

Remember to have a look at the website <http://iassistdata.org> and the IASSIST blog - the IASSIST Communiqué - at <http://iassistblog.org>.

Articles for the IASSIST Quarterly are very welcome. Articles can be papers from IASSIST conferences, from other conferences, from local presentations, discussion input, etc. Contact the editor via e-mail: [kbr@sam.sdu.dk](mailto:kbr@sam.sdu.dk).

Karsten Boye Rasmussen, November 2007