

Editor's Notes

Welcome to the IASSIST Quarterly vol. 26 issue 3. Three articles are presented in this issue.

At the Amsterdam conference in 2001 in the session with the theme “Thematic Archives” the paper titled “Social science information service in Poland. An attempt to present the state of art” was presented. The authors of the paper are Teresa Wildhardt from the Cracow Pedagogical University Main Library and Anna Sokolowska-Gogut from Cracow University of Economics, Main Library. The paper addresses the questions: 1) Can we observe any direct relation between transformation and growing demand for social science information service? If so 2) What kind of information is searched for most frequently? and 3) Are social science information services ready to supply users with necessary information? The paper tries to answer these questions by analyzing a questionnaire that was answered by 30 scientific libraries in Poland and contains a brief characterization of information sources, staff and categories of users. Special regard has been given to Polish Central Statistical Office (CSO). The staff members are well educated in the relevant subject areas and have technical knowledge on how to obtain information from a variety of sources and are servicing a range of users from individual students and researchers to various kinds of institutions. The paper also describes the many information services from the CSO. The paper concludes among other things that the information need has increased in Poland since 1990 and that the main obstacle is the scarcity of funding.

The following paper is by James Reid, GeoServices Delivery Team at EDINA, Edinburgh University Data Library in Scotland. The paper entitled “geoXwalk – A Gazetteer Server and Service for UK Academia” was presented at the 2002 joint Digital Libraries Conference in July 2002 in Portland, Oregon. The geoXwalk project was conceived as a development project to build a shared service that would service the JISC IE (The Joint Information Systems Committee – Information Environment) by providing a mechanism for geographic searching of information resources. The paper cites the UK’s National Geospatial Data Framework (NGDF) in their estimation that as much as eighty per cent of the information collected in the UK today is geo-referenced in some form. Geography is frequently used as a search parameter, and there is an increasing demand from users, data services, archives, libraries, and museums for more powerful geographic searching. However, there are serious obstacles to meeting this demand. Clearly, no single system of spatial units and coding will suit all purposes, as people conceptualize geographic space in different ways and different servers deploy differing geographic naming schemes. Ideally, users should not be forced to have to

explicitly convert from one ‘world’ view to another. The described product are able to perform these translations (or ‘cross-walks’ – hence the name geoXwalk). The technical issues are described in the paper but are also mentioning some outstanding issues that will require further research.

The last paper concerns the UK Census. This paper is related to the paper “Let us bring you to your census: recent developments in UK census data provision” by Lucy Bell in IASSIST Quarterly 26-2. The title of the paper is “Learning and Teaching with the UK Census” and is authored by Dr Mark Brown, Deputy Director CCSR (Centre for Census and Survey Research), University of Manchester, and Cressida Chappell, Head of the History Data Service, UK Data Archive, University of Essex, and Dr Jackie Carter, CHCC Project Manager, MIMAS, Manchester Computing, also at University of Manchester. The paper states that the UK academic community has access to an electronic Collection of Historical and Contemporary Census Data and Resources (CHCC). Individual datasets have been used extensively in research but they have been widely under-used in learning and teaching. To address this issue, the Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC), under its Learning and Teaching Programme, has funded a project to develop learning and teaching materials. The units are designed to encourage a “pick and mix” approach offering for the teachers. The units can be used for both classroom-based and online learning, and can thus be used both by teachers and directly by students for independent learning. Several units are described in the paper. The project incorporates user-friendly web-interfaces and draws upon other projects such as the DDI and NESSTAR. Several web-sites are mentioned in the paper and further information can be found at <http://www.chcc.ac.uk>.

Access IASSIST at the web on www.IASSISTdata.org.

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

Karsten Boye Rasmussen, February 2003