

ICES-III – The Third International Conference on Establishment Surveys: Focuses on Survey Methods for Business, Farms, and Institutions Stephen Cohen

It hardly seems like seven years has passed since ICES-II, fourteen years since ICES-I. We have learnt a lot over the last seven years since ICES-II. Come to ICES-III to learn about the latest developments on survey methods for businesses, farms, and institutions. ICES-III will take place June 18–21, 2007 in central Montreal, Quebec, Canada. The conference promises to be a stimulating and full examination of the current state of the art for surveying businesses, farms, and institutions. Both the invited and contributed programs cover a spectrum of interesting and applicable subjects, including:

- The efficient use of administrative data in business surveys
- Advances in disclosure protection
- Using linearization variance estimators for survey estimates
- Electronic data collection
- Updating business registers
- Factors affecting establishment survey participation
- Using tax data in estimation

There will be two full-day short courses and two half-day short courses before the start of the conference. The conference will be opened by a keynote address by Robert W. Edwards of the International Monetary Fund. In addition to the invited and contributed program there will be eight

introductory overview lectures, poster sessions, software demonstrations, and a closing dinner followed by a panel discussion. After the conference, a CD-ROM of presented papers will be sent to all participants

The complete invited and contributed programs will be available December 18, 2006 at

www.amstat.org/meetings/ices/2007/index.cfm?fuseaction=program.

The conference—jointly sponsored by the ASA, the International Association of Survey Statisticians, the Statistical Society of Canada, the ASA Section on Survey Research Methods, and the ASA Section on Government Statistics—is slated for Hyatt Regency Montréal. Although Montréal is a city rich in history, art, culture, learning, and sports, ICES-III planners still have lined up a social program that includes a tour of Montréal and Notre-Dame Basilica, beer tasting, a dinner cruise, and walking tours. Complete information can be found at www.amstat.org/meetings/ices/2007/index.cfm on December 18, 2006.

To register online and view the entire invited and contributed programs and social program, visit www.amstat.org/meetings/ices/2007/index.cfm on December 18, 2006. Remember to register early to take advantage of the reduced registration and short course fees. Hotel reservations open December 18, 2006, and close May 17, 2007. For further information, send an email to ices3@census.gov.

Executive Committee Reports

Report from the Past Section Chair Roger Tourangeau

The past year was another great year for the section. The Joint Statistical Meetings were a big success, with SRMS sponsoring a total of 45 sessions (7 invited, 14 topic-contributed, and 24 contributed), encompassing a total of 266 papers. Our congratulations to David Judkins and Steve Heeringa for their work in organizing these

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sessions. Besides the sessions, SRMS co-sponsored three short courses — all of them well-received — taught by Partha Lahiri, Bruce Spencer, and myself. Thanks on behalf of the section to Rachel Caspar for recruiting these instructors and to Partha and Bruce for conducting their classes. We also continued our practice of supporting students at the conference. This year, the section made nine travel awards, enabling nine graduate students to attend JSM. In addition, we continued to co-sponsor the student paper awards with the Social Statistics and Government sections. Five students won awards for their papers: Hukum Chandra (University of Southampton), Yan Li (Joint Program in Survey Methodology), Joel Hanson (University of California, Berkeley), Huilin Li (University of Maryland), and Pushpal Mukhopadhyay (Iowa State). In addition, Mario Callegaro from the University of Nebraska won the E.C. Bryant Award. Congratulations to all the winners and thanks to Ginnie Lessler and David Judkins, who oversaw these awards. Our annual business meeting and mixer at the meeting were a lot of fun, in no small part due to the generous support of *Marketing Systems Group*, who helped pay for the food and drink. Thanks to our friends at Marketing Systems Group.

The Section has been asked by ASA to revise its charter and William Kalsbeek, our new Section Chair, has taken the lead on this task. The Section Executive Committee has approved some changes in the charter. The next step is for the section membership to ratify the proposed changes, so stay tuned. My thanks to Bill for taking on this assignment.

Our section has continued to support special conferences on topics of interest to our members. The next one — the Third International Conference on Economic Surveys (ICES III) — will take place in Montreal June 18 to June 21. The section has also agreed to contribute in support of a conference on cross-cultural and cross-national surveys to be held in Berlin in 2008. Finally, the Section endorsed in principle a proposal to establish a new journal for survey methods research. We will keep you apprised as this proposal takes more concrete shape.

Several members of the Executive Committee completed their terms as of December 31. I offer the thanks of a grateful nation to Rachel Caspar (outgoing Education Officer), Stephen Cohen (Representative on the Council of Sections), David Judkins (Program Chair), Ginnie Lesser (Treasurer), Sarah Nusser (Past Chair), and Stuart Scott (Publications Chair). In my view, each performed their tasks brilliantly (well, usually) and gave freely of their time. Thanks as well to Brian Meekins, who is stepping down as Editor of the Newsletter and to Wendy Alvey for her annual updating the SRMS brochure.

It has been a privilege and a pleasure to serve as Section Chair, and I am grateful to have had the opportunity. Best wishes to Bill Kalsbeek and the new team as they take over the reins!

Message from the Past Program Chair Dave Judkins

Dear SRMS members, I learned a lot in the process of organizing our 2006 program and found it to be very satisfying work. Thank you for giving me the opportunity. In terms of the work, there was a fair bit to do. The most difficult task was judging the 13 papers submitted to the student paper competition. After that, there was the organization of 45 sessions of 266 papers. We had 28 papers in 7 invited sessions, 70 in 14 topic-contributed sessions, and 168 in 24 contributed sessions. In addition to the SRMS program chair and ASA staff, the other people who are important to making the sessions run smoothly are the session chairs. We had 45 members step forward to play this role, and this year they worked harder than usual. They all brought laptops with them, preloaded with the speaker's presentations. As a result, I think that the sessions ran more smoothly than we have seen since the days when everyone used overhead transparencies. I am sure you all join me in extended hearty thanks to them for their work. Besides keeping the sessions on schedule, most of them also graded the presentations and counted attendance. I thought you all might be interested in some of statistics from their reports.

First, we had a 16% nonresponse rate on chair reports. Nonresponse was highest among chairs of topic-contributed sessions. Table 1 shows the grades (on a scale from 1 to 5) that the chairs assigned to the papers.

Table 1. Session Type by Chair's Paper Grade

Session Type	Grade					Total
	Low 1	2	3	4	High 5	
Frequency Row Pct	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Contributed	0 0.0	12 7.7	53 34.2	66 42.6	24 15.5	155
Topic-Contributed	0 0.0	0 0.0	0 0.0	14 40.0	21 60.0	35
Invited	1 3.6	0 0.0	2 7.1	18 64.3	7 25.0	28
Total	1 0.5	12 5.5	55 25.2	98 45.0	52 23.9	218 100.0

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Almost all invited and topic-contributed papers were given grades of 4 or 5. A little over 40 percent of the contributed papers were graded as 2's or 3's. The rank correlation between session type (score 1 through 3) and grade is 0.37, so the general system of trying to identify stronger papers in advance and give their presenters more time seems to be working. Whether because of my grouping or the natural variation in chair leniency, the intraclass correlation on grades was very high – about 0.5 after controlling on session type.

Table 2 gives statistics about session attendance. (There are 44 sessions rather than 45 represented in the table because the student paper session had the Social Statistics Section as the primary sponsor.) None of our rooms reached capacity. I guess that it is good that people never had to stand, but perhaps we should book smaller rooms to save overall costs. On the round tables, Steve organized six, but only two were well-subscribed. It seems that we should only organize two or three of these per year.

Table 2. Attendance Statistics by Session Type

Session Type	N	N	Mean	Std Dev	Minimum	Maximum
Contributed	24	23	52.1	27.8	19	125
Invited	7	7	74.3	36.3	19	117
RND Lunch	6	3	7.3	3.8	3	10
Topic Contributed	13	7	70.0	36.1	27	128

Thinking about other issues for future years, there has been considerable discussion among ASA staffers and ASA leadership about whether the number of parallel sessions has become too large. I also heard many complaints about 7 papers per contributed session. It would be nice if we could just have 6, leaving room for floor discussion. However, that would require more parallel sessions and thus more rooms. As it stands, there are few convention centers in the U.S. large enough to host all our parallel sessions. It would also be nice if the walking distances within the centers were not so long.

The two potential solutions that have received the most attention are refereeing of abstracts and conversion of some talks into posters. Invited papers (and to a lesser extent, topic-contributed papers) are already refereed. Based on Table 1, this process seems to be fairly effective. Of course, the chairs of invited and topic-contributed sessions are frequently also the organizers of the sessions and may thus be a little indulgent in their grading. Nonetheless, it seems likely that a screening

process could be developed that would intercept a fair number of the 65 papers that were graded as 2's or 3's. It would take some work. Some egos would be bruised. It might be a little harder for young statisticians and those outside of the mainstream to make themselves heard. Maybe posters could be left unrefereed for them. Well, these are now issues for future program chairs.

Report from the Section Chair

William Kalsbeek

As we begin 2007 I'm pleased to report that the Survey Research Methods Section remains on solid ground and headed in the right direction, thanks in part to the inspired (and always entertaining) leadership in 2006 of Roger Tourangeau. Great job, Roger, and thanks! And while I'm passing around accolades, let me also recognize some notable contributions by other former members of the Executive Committee who have just completed their terms of service:

- Steve (H.) Cohen for his always-diligent representation of our section's interests to the ASA Council of Sections in the last three years.
- Dave Judkins for his excellent work in helping with the JSM 2005 program and in organizing a wonderful JSM 2006 program,
- Ginny Lesser for her devoted attention to managing the Section's finances for the past two years, and.
- Brian Meekins for most ably serving as editor of the Section's newsletter since 2004.

I'm really looking forward to working with the new and continuing members of the Committee this year. I especially want to thank Laura Flicker and Emily McFarlane from RTI International for their willingness to put together this newsletter.

Several upcoming events promise to make 2007 an interesting and informative year for SRMS members. One is the Third International Conference on Establishment Surveys (ICES-III) in June. The broad range of planned sessions on the application of survey methods to studies of businesses, farms, and institutions is sure to make this year's ICES as successful as its predecessors. Then in August the SRMS program for JSM 2007, being planned by Steve Heeringa, will continue our long tradition of bringing relevant contemporary research to the annual meetings. As in 2006, with its 45 SRMS sessions and 266 presented papers, the upcoming 2007 program will further solidify our section's reputation as being one of the most active in the ASA. In keeping with recent attempts to include important recent developments in the JSM program, an invited session and perhaps a topic contributed session will

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address some of the difficult issues faced in surveys that are conducted around or during warfare, natural disasters, and other catastrophic events. Also in the planning stage for March is a workshop on accommodating the impact of catastrophic events on existing national surveys. This event has been developed with the help a 2006 strategic initiative grant awarded to Steve Cohen. All of these future opportunities are products of an ASA section that is committed to remaining current and responsive to society's continuing need for information about itself.

One of my goals as Chair this year is for those of us on the Executive Committee to hear more about issues/concerns you may have regarding the future of the survey research profession. The issues I'm thinking about here are not so much the scientific ones that we address or debate in our papers and presentations (e.g., addressing declining response rates, dealing with missing data, sampling rare and elusive populations, improving estimation strategies, etc.), but rather those more far-reaching issues that will affect the continuing viability and growth of our discipline (e.g., attracting and training new students in the field, enabling young professionals to succeed in both academic and non-academic settings, maintaining high professional standards in our work, finding new roles for our profession in society, etc.). My hope in learning these things is that the Committee will be able to more effectively serve your interests by our efforts --- so let me hear from you!

Please include with each of your issues/concerns a few sentences explaining why you think it's important. I intend to take all of your responses and summarize them for the Committee, and then to write up my findings from this exercise in a future issue of this newsletter. You can contact me at: kalsbeek_srms@unc.edu

Meanwhile, best wishes for a healthy and happy new year -- and may all of your survey errors be small ones.

Report from the Program Chair and Program Chair Elect Steve Heeringa and David Marker

As we enter 2007, we encourage you to look ahead to the 2007 Joint Statistical Meetings that will be held July 29-August 2, 2007 in Salt Lake City, Utah. The theme for JSM2007 is "Harnessing the Power of Information." SRMS is sponsoring nine Invited sessions at JSM 2007 and is looking for your ideas for Topic Contributed sessions and Roundtable luncheons (and coffees).

Here is a schedule of key dates for the 2007 JSM authors and conference participants:

- **December 1, 2006** - Online submission of contributed abstracts and speaker registration opens.
- **December 18, 2006** - Invited program finalized and available to view via the online program
- **January 22, 2007** - Mail-in deadline for contributed abstracts and speaker registration
- **February 1, 2007** - Last day to submit contributed abstracts and speaker registration.
- **March 26, 2007** - All participants are notified of acceptance of abstract and date and time they will present at JSM.
- **March 26 - April 11, 2007** - Speakers can edit previously submitted abstracts online.
- **April 11, 2007** - Last day to edit abstracts.
- **May 1, 2007** - JSM main registration opens.
- **May 10, 2007** - Draft manuscripts due to session chairs.
- **May 29, 2007** - Preliminary program posted on the JSM web site in a downloadable PDF file.
- **June 21, 2007** (midnight Eastern Daylight Time). Last day for Early Bird Registration to be received at the ASA office by this date.
- **June 22-July 12, 2007** - Advance Registration (increased fees apply).
- **July 2, 2007** - Hotel reservations deadline.
- **July 15, 2007** - Downloadable PDF version of the Final Program available on JSM web site.
- **July 28 - August 2, 2007** - Onsite registration (increased fees apply).

Invited sessions

The SRMS 2007 Invited paper program spans a range of methodological and statistical topics that are important in today's world of survey research design, data collection and analysis. Here is the list of invited session titles and the names of SRMS colleagues who have devoted time and energy to organize the speakers and discussants for the individual sessions:

- The Role of Statistical Standards in Federal Surveys (Pam McGovern)
- A Sampling Revolution? List vs. Area Frames for Probability Sampling (Colm O'Muircheartaigh)

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- Analyzing Multiple Response Categorical Data from Complex Samples (Tom Loughlin)
- Resampling Methods in Small Area Estimation (Ferry Butar)
- Confronting the Realities of Massive Imputation in Complex Surveys (Alan Zaslavsky)
- Improving the Agricultural Resources Management Survey (Tom Plewes)
- Web Panel Surveys- A Solution to Declining Response Rates (Karol Krotki)
- Topics on Survey Design and Inference In Honor of JNK Rao's 70th Birthday and 50 Years of Contributions (Paul Levy)
- War and Death in Iraq- A review of the Iraq Casualty Studies (Matthew Marler)

We would like to draw special attention to the final invited session that Paul Levy has organized in honor of Jon Rao's 70th birthday. This session will be a celebration to honor an SRMS colleague who has contributed so much to both theoretical developments and practical applications in the field of survey statistics. In addition, we have worked with the Alan Rossman, Program Chair for JSM2007, to sponsor a special invited session on the controversial series of population based studies of casualties and "excess deaths" resulting from the war in Iraq. The final program for the 2007 SRMS Invited sessions will be publicly available on the 2007 JSM website after December 18.

Our best wishes for the new year to all of our SRMS colleagues. We look forward to seeing you in Salt Lake City at the 2007 Joint Statistical meetings.

Report of Outgoing Publications Officer

Stuart Scott

With this issue, Laura Flicker (lflicker@rti.org) and Emily McFarlane (emcfarlane@rti.org), both of RTI, take on editorship of the Newsletter. Also, we welcome Eric Rancourt (RANCOUR@statcan.ca), Statistics Canada, who serves as Publications Officer for 2007 and 2008. Contact any of these individuals to publicize activities that may be of interest to section members.

The Newsletter is just for us and quickly gives us a good picture of what is going on through its feature articles, alerts for upcoming meetings, and description of section activities/awards. Section members can contact Eric about contributing articles to the *Amstat News*, which

offers broader outreach and greater frequency. ASA offers us one free page in each monthly issue.

Let me pay tribute to Tony An, SAS Institute, who continues to serve as our webmaster. For several years, he has faithfully transferred SRMS articles from JSM to our online proceedings. This is an easy way to get articles all the way back to 1978. Tony continues to lobby ASA to permit immediate transfer of articles from the ASA Proceedings CD. The current two-year lag policy means that the 2004 proceedings cannot be moved to our website until ASA releases its 2006 proceedings. Our section plans to bring this issue up with the Council of Sections early next year.

In addition, our website,

<http://www.amstat.org/sections/SRMS/index.html>, contains current section officers and other background on the section.

Finally, thanks to our outgoing Newsletter Editor, Brian Meekins, BLS. In his three-year tenure, he has given us high-quality feature articles and covered well our activities by badgering those of us on the board to submit our news.

Section News

Outgoing Section Officers

A hearty thanks to:

Sarah Nusser, Chair-Elect, Chair, and Past Chair.

Dave Judkins, Program Chair-Elect, and Program Chair.

Stuart Scott, Publications Officer

Virginia Lesser, Treasurer

Rachel Caspar, Education Officer

Stephen Cohen, Council of Sections Representative

Brian Meekins, Newsletter Editor

Incoming Section Officers

We welcome the following new SRMS officers:

Mary Mulry, Chair-Elect

David Marker, Program Chair-Elect

Eric Rancourt, Publications Officer

Breda Munoz, Treasurer

Leyla Mohadjer, Education Officer

Nora Cate Schaeffer, Council of Sections Representative

We look forward to your service to the section. Contact information for section officers can be found on Page 7.

Standing Committee Report: Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System

by Mike Elliott

The Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) is run as part of a cooperative grant program between the 50 states, District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands and the Behavioral Surveillance Branch at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. BRFSS is thus a collection of 54 RDD telephone surveys operated by each of the system partners. In 2005 the BRFSS collected over 350,000 completed interviews.

The Survey Research Methods Section Committee on BRFSS meets annually with BSB-CDC staff to discuss survey design issues. The SRMS committee consists of Michael Elliott (chair, University of Michigan), Donna Brogan (retired from Emory University), Amy Ferketich (Ohio State University), Paul Lavrakas (Nielsen Media Research), Jim Lepkowski (University of Michigan), Cynthia Nelson (Northern Illinois University), Michael Larsen (Iowa State University), and Stanley Presser (University of Maryland).

Every other year these meetings include a national panel of survey experts, as was the case this year for the November 16-17 meeting between the Committee and CDC in Atlanta. Stephen Blumberg from the National Center for Health Statistics at CDC spoke on the rapid increase of cell-phone households during the past 3 years. Recent research indicates that more than 10% of all households nationwide now lack a land-line telephone, with that fraction rising to nearly one-fourth for households with residents 18-24 years of age. These are similar to the levels of the 1960's when RDD surveys

became scientifically valid because of high telephone penetration; however, unlike the 1960's, land-line coverage is likely to decline throughout the remainder of the decade.

Dr. Colm O'Muircheartaigh from The National Opinion Research Center discussed methods to include these households into sampling frames, as well as other methods of combining modes of data collection to improve response rates among households still using land lines. Much of the subsequent discussion focused on supplementing or embedding existing RDD methodologies in a larger set of mixed-mode methods. Recent improvements in the quality of postal listings means that such listing could be used as a sampling frame. Modes could be mixed either in parallel – contacting by telephone all households with known telephone numbers, while relying on mail and/or face-to-face interviewers for the remainder; or in series: attempting all sampled subjects by mail, then following up with subjects for whom phone numbers can be obtained for calls, and finally with face-to-face interviews for the remaining nonrespondents. Subsampling or double-sampling methods could be incorporated to make these approaches financially practical. Alternatively, statistical adjustments similar to those used to represent non-telephone household (by weighting up subjects with transient telephone service) could easily be adapted to try to adjust estimates obtained from an RDD survey to better represent a population that included cell-phone-only households. The CDC is continuing to pursue and test innovative methods to deal with these and other challenges to public health data collection to maintain data quality and validity as well as to ensure the longevity of critical data collection systems such as the BRFSS.

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New Executive Member Bios

Publications Officer, Eric Rancourt is currently Assistant Director of the Business Survey Methods Division at Statistics Canada. I have been at STC for 16 years. I am also the production manager of Survey Methodology Journal and Editor of a newsletter called the Imputation Bulletin. I just completed a 2-year chairmanship as Methodology research coordinator at STC. I am an ISI member, and I currently serve as Webmaster for the IASS. Aside from that, I just completed my term as Past President of the Statistical Society of Ottawa; before that I was secretary, president-elect, and president. In the 90's, I was publication officer for the Survey methods section of the Statistical Society of Canada for three years. I have a BSc in Statistics (Université Laval, 1990) and a BA in ancient studies (Ottawa, 2001). I love everything about survey methodology, with particular interest in nonresponse, imputation, and modeling.

Council of Sections Representative, Nora Cate Schaeffer is Professor of Sociology at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, where she also serves as Faculty Director of the University of Wisconsin Survey Center. She is currently a member of the Committee on National Statistics of the National Research Council, and the *Public Opinion Quarterly* Advisory Board of the American Association for Public Opinion Research. In the past, she has served on the Panel to Review Research and Development Statistics at the National Science Foundation and the Panel to Evaluate Alternative Census Methods for the National Research Council; the American Statistical Association Technical Advisory Committee on the Survey of Income and Program Participation; the Technical Review Committee for the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth; the National Science Foundation Advisory Committee for the Social, Behavioral, and Economic Sciences; and the governing Council of the American Association for Public Opinion Research. She has also served on the editorial boards of *Public Opinion Quarterly*, *Sociological Methods and Research*, and *Sociological Methodology*.



Mission Statement

The mission of the Section on Survey Research Methods is to promote the improvement of survey practice and the understanding of survey methods by encouraging both theoretical and applied research on survey-related topics and by disseminating information on survey methods.

Areas of interest for the Section include all that employ survey methodology as a focus or as a prime tool of investigation. Of special interest are:

- ❖ Theoretical foundations of sampling;
- ❖ Sample design and estimation;
- ❖ Nonsampling errors and data collection methods;
- ❖ Analysis and presentation of survey data;
- ❖ Education of the public and students on the importance of scientific survey research;
- ❖ Publication and dissemination of survey research findings; and
- ❖ Ethics related to survey conduct and standards for survey practice.

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