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A Message From the Section Chair

Rod Little



Dear fellow survey researchers! I appreciate the opportunity to update you on some activities of the Survey Research Methods Section.

Last year Mary Mulry and I formed a task force to look at publication issues in the section, and the task force ... being survey researchers ... proposed to survey section members on the topic (what a shock!). In April a survey was carried out on a systematic random sample of section members (thanks to Ryan Bell and Rebecca Nichols in the ASA Office for their hard work on this). Of 341 members surveyed, 169 responded, a response rate of 50%. Of these respondents, 46% described themselves as academics, 24% as affiliated with government, and the remainder as affiliated with industry or other. Here is a summary of some of the responses.

A sizeable majority of 71% (95% CI 64%-78%) thought more survey research methods papers should be published in refereed journals. Most respondents, 72% (65%-79%), thought employers considers/rewards refereed publications about the right amount, but a substantial minority (23%) thought refereed publications should be rewarded more.

A slight majority (55%) of respondents reported conducting survey methods research that is suitable for submission to refereed journals, and three quarters of these people had submitted research to a refereed journal in the last two years. Nineteen respondents (25% of the relevant group) reported not submitting suitable survey methods research manuscripts to refereed journals. The main reasons cited were that their job description did not provide time for writing papers (11) or that the review process was too slow (7).

We asked how well the current set of refereed journals and other refereed publication outlets for survey research methods meet the needs of SRMS members. A majority of 58% (50%-66%) was satisfied, but a sizeable minority of 34% replied "not well enough".

Respondents were asked their degree of support for a proposal for the SRMS to start a new refereed journal for survey methods, in cooperation with the ASA and other professional societies. The response was very positive, with 51% indicating strong support and 33% being somewhat supportive. Only 5 respondents (3%) opposed the suggestion. Slightly lower but still strong degrees of support were registered for questions on whether SRMS should sponsor workshops and sessions at the Joint Statistical Meetings to improve skills in writing and refereeing survey methods articles.

Overall I am pleased with the survey, although naturally I would have preferred a higher response rate. Some additional analyses will be conducted to compare major subgroups. The task force will now discuss next steps in the light of these findings, and I welcome your comments and perspectives on these results.

In other news, Elaine Zanutto has organized an excellent roster of survey methods sections at the Joint Statistical Meetings. Given space constraints at the Washington Convention Center, regular papers with permission to convert to a poster were converted, resulting in 49 posters being eligible for our poster competition. (Yikes! That's a lot to judge!) I hope to see a great turnout of our section members at the JSM, and encourage you to come to the poster sessions, view the posters, and meet with friends and colleagues.

Also, check out the short courses and tutorials for the JSM, including courses on the analysis of cross-classified categorical data given by Steve Fienberg, model-based survey sampling by Alan Dorfman and Richard Valliant, the bootstrap for complex surveys by Stan Kolenikov, and tutorials on replication methods for survey data in SAS (Tony An) and survey data analysis with STATA (Jeffrey Pitblado). Lots of great material here.

A special thanks to the hard-working executive committee. I'd like in particular to thank Laura Flicker and Emily McFarlane for their great service in editing the newsletter, and Steven Pedlow and Ting Yan for agreeing to take over from Laura and Emily. Finally, thanks to all you (misguided) people who voted me in as Vice President of the ASA – I'll try to justify your confidence in me. I'd buy you all drinks, but given the state of the economy, you'll have to be satisfied with a simple "thank you".

If you have thoughts about the section, feel free to drop me a line or email me at rlittle@umich.edu. See you all at the JSM!

Report from the Publications Officer

Jean Opsomer



As the incoming Publications Officer in the section, I am taking over the position previously held by Eric Rancourt. I want to thank both Eric and his predecessor, Stuart Scott, for having done an excellent job in this position and for providing me with the necessary information to bring me up to speed. Those are big shoes to fill indeed, but I will do my best!

More important than the change in Publications Officer, the section has new SRMS Newsletter co-editors. Emily McFarlane and Laura Flicker of RTI are stepping down after many years, and Steven Pedlow and Ting Yan are starting as co-editors beginning with the current issue. Steven is Senior Survey Statistician and Ting is Senior Survey Methodologist at NORC. So welcome on board Steven and Ting, and thank you Emily and Laura for producing a consistently informative and attractive section newsletter.

Tony An continues to maintain the section's website. As in previous years, Tony also oversees the conversion and posting of the SRMS Proceedings on our website, and the 2008 proceedings have been recently added. I want to thank Melissa Bingham for doing the painstaking work of converting the papers from the ASA-provided CD to a web-accessible form. Melissa recently graduated with a PhD in Statistics from Iowa State University and is starting as an Assistant Professor of Statistics in the Math Department at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse.

Finally, I invite all members to submit articles, topics and ideas for continuing to improve our publication activities. Entries for either the SRMS Newsletter or the SRMS Amstat News column are especially welcome. Feel free to email me (jopsomer@stat.colostate.edu) with questions or suggestions for topics.

See you at the JSM!

Report from the Council of Sections Representatives

Nora Cate Schaeffer and Rachel Harter



The Council of Sections last fall approved the formation of two new sections: Section for Statistical Programmers and Analysts and the Section on Statistical Learning and Data Mining. The Committee on Meetings has not allowed new sections to have their own invited session at JSM for a two-year period following creation of the section, so their invited sessions are still in the future. The Council of Sections Governing Board (COSGB) has approved a new Interest Group: Statistics in Business Schools.

At the JSM in 2008, Steve Pierson of the ASA indicated that the presence of the JSM in Washington, DC would be used as an opportunity to educate legislators and staff about the role of statistics. A recent communication from the COSGB has notified us that Thursday of JSM 2009 will be a Capitol Hill day where a group will visit their state representatives' office to promote issues (that have yet to be selected) of importance to the ASA. If you would like to suggest issues that would be of interest for congressional visits now is the time to voice them to any member of the SRMS Executive Council or to Steve Pierson (pierson@amstat.org). Section members interested in participating should contact Steve who will be providing training for these visits prior to the meeting day.

The ASA approved a new position paper in December entitled "Data Access and Personal Privacy: Appropriate Methods of Disclosure Control." This is the latest in a series of position papers approved by the ASA and available at:

<http://www.amstat.org/outreach/boardstatements.cfm>.

An ASA committee headed by Mary Batcher has produced a proposal for voluntary accreditation on two levels, with no testing involved, similar to the system used by the Statistical Society of Canada. An Executive Committee headed by John Kettenring is reviewing the proposal.

The Meetings Strategic Plan Work Group, as recently reported to the COSGB (through Nat Schenker), is examining whether ASA should sponsor thematic meetings. Such meetings could be held in places where JSM is too large and which might be more accessible to statisticians who find it difficult to attend the JSM.

Sastry Pantula, the ASA President-Elect, has selected the theme for JSM 2010: Statistics—A Key to Innovation in a Data-Centric World. He is asking for section assistance in suggesting individuals for committee appointments, emphasizing diversity.

JSM 2009: Report from the Program Chair

Elaine Zanutto



The Survey Research Methods Section has planned a very strong program for this summer's JSM. We have sponsored or co-sponsored 68 sessions: 15 invited paper sessions, 4 invited panels, 29 topic contributed sessions, 19 contributed paper sessions, and a poster session with approximately 40 posters. In addition we are sponsoring three continuing education courses:

- The Analysis of Cross-Classified Categorical Data, Saturday at 8:30am (CE-05C)
- Model-Based Survey Sampling: Theory and Practice, Sunday at 8:30am (CE-11C)
- Bootstrap for Complex Surveys, Tuesday at 1:00pm. (CE-29C)

SRMS will also sponsor five roundtable discussions over lunch (listed below). Please sign up to attend these (if space remains) when you show up in DC.

- Fitting Models and Estimating Model Parameters Using Data from Complex Surveys, led by Jean Opsomer and Jay Breidt, Monday 12:30pm (ML26)
- Health Surveys and the Survey Statistician, led by Novie Younger, Monday 12:30 pm (ML27)
- Models for the Characterization and Management of Costs and Risks During Changes in Survey Design, led by John Eltinge, Tuesday 12:30 pm (TL28)
- Imputation Methods for Complex Survey Data: Best Practices and Next Steps, led by Michael Larsen, Wednesday, 12:30pm (WL27)
- ASA Advocacy Day, led by Tim Hesterberg, Wednesday, 12:30pm (WL28)

We will hold our open business meeting from 6:00 to 7:30 pm on Wednesday in Meeting Room 4 of the Renaissance Washington, DC Hotel.

SMRS is offering a total of \$1,000 in prize money to the best SRMS poster presentations. All of our posters will be on display all-day on Tuesday, but the authors will be available to talk about their posters during the 8:30-10:20 time slot. Please stop by and see these dynamic presentations. The winning posters will be announced at our business meeting.

There will be a memorial session honoring Daniel G. Horvitz, a leader in the development of statistical theory for and the practice of survey research, on Tuesday at 2:00 pm. We look forward to seeing you at these and the other sessions listed below. I've only listed the invited sessions and invited panels below, to see all the sessions we have sponsored, go to the JSM website for the program, select SRMS, and get a print out.

See you in Washington, DC!

Invited paper sessions:

- The Use of Paradata in Federal Government Surveys, Sunday 2:00-3:50 (#6)
- Statistics in the Beltway: From Data to Policy, Sunday 2:00-3:50 (#7)
- Handling Survey Case Weights in Model-Based Methods, Sunday 4:00-5:50 (#46)
- O' Privacy, Where Art Thou? Mapping the Landscape of Data Confidentiality, Monday 8:30-10:20 (#90)
- Factors Affecting the Accuracy of the 2008 Presidential Election Polling, Monday 10:30-12:20 (#144)
- Rigorous Foundations of Data Confidentiality in Statistical Databases, Monday 2:00-3:50 (#193)
- New Developments in Survey Sampling, Tuesday 8:30-10:20 (#246)
- Recent Advances in Small-Area Statistics, Tuesday 8:30-10:20 (#248)
- Bayesian Approaches to Safety, Efficacy and Health Surveillance, Tuesday 2:00-3:50 (#342)
- Memorial for Daniel G. Horvitz: Pioneering Researcher and Visionary Leader, Tuesday 2:00-3:50 (#347)
- Use of Administrative Data in Policymaking, Tuesday 2:00-3:50 (#349)
- The 2010 Census: Status of the Program, Integrated Communications, Evaluations, and Coverage Measurement, Wednesday 8:30-10:20 (#394)

- Nonparametric Methods for Small-Area Estimation, Wednesday 2:00-3:50 (#492)
- Nonparametric Regression Estimators in Survey Sampling, Thursday 10:30-12:20 (#573)
- Using National Center for Health Statistics Data to Study Access to Health Care, Thursday 10:30-12:20 (#579)

Invited panels:

- Building Statistical Capacity Globally, Sunday 2:00-3:50 (#12)
- Real-Life Ethical Dilemmas Encountered in the Practice of Statistics: Resolution Leading to Policy Change, Monday 8:30-10:20 (#97)
- Future of Random-Digit-Dial Telephone Surveys, Wednesday 10:30-12:20 (#454)
- The Federal Statistical System: Opportunities and Challenges for the Next 5-10 Years, Thursday 10:30-12:20 (#584)

SRMS Election Results

For Chair Elect.....Stephen H. Cohen
 For Program Chair Elect.....Paul Beatty
 For Secretary..... Emily McFarlane
 For Council of Sections Representative..... Tony Baiqing An

Address Based Sampling: New Frontier or Current Fad?

Michael W. Link, Ph.D., The Nielsen Company



Address based sampling (ABS), which refers to the random selection of addresses from a database frame, has become the subject of intensive research of late (see Link et al 2006; Link et al 2008; Link et al 2009; Knowledge Networks 2008; Baron 2009; Dekker & Murphy 2009; McMichael et al 2009). Researchers are using ABS as a replacement for some random digit-dialed (RDD) surveys, to enhance area probability approaches, to facilitate mixed-mode designs, and as a means of sampling for online panels. It represents a new sampling foundation

upon which researchers can build a variety of data collection designs.

Although the concept of “address-based sampling” could be applied to any large, comprehensive address frame, in the U.S. it refers almost exclusively to use of the U.S. Postal Service (USPS) Delivery Sequence File (DSF). The DSF is a computerized file that contains nearly all delivery point addresses serviced by the USPS. Each delivery point is a separate record that conforms to a fixed set of standards, thereby facilitating sampling from any geography within the US. When considering all types of addresses (including post office boxes), the DSF is estimated to provide approximately 98% coverage of residential households. Although coverage in rural areas was a

concern just a few years ago (particularly areas with rural routes or “simplified addresses”), this has become far less of an issue as many of these regions convert to 911 emergency service, which requires that each serviceable dwelling have a complete “city style” address. For researchers looking for an alternative to the traditional landline frame (or landline/cell phone dual-frame) RDD methods, ABS provides a means of dealing with the shortcomings of these frames, providing access to landline and cell phone only households, as well as households with no telephone and newly emerging VoIP-only based computer phones. Because addresses are fixed in location, telephone portability is not an issue.

Another benefit of the frame is the extensive amount of information that can be matched to an address, facilitating more complex sample designs and providing information for enhanced contacting and recruiting approaches. In its ‘raw’ form, the DSF is relatively sparse. However, leading survey sample vendors offer “enhanced” versions of the frame that are augmented with a variety of address-matched indicators. For instance, a majority of addresses can be matched to a landline telephone number via commercial databases. Additionally, sample vendors can typically provide variables such as household name, Spanish surname indicator, and estimated age of the head of household, as well as geocoding and Census tract information like the percentages for racial/ethnic groups within a particular geography, median household income of the area, and even email addresses in some cases. These variables can be used to enhance the survey design, such as through sample stratification, advance mailings to households, and tailoring of materials, contact scripts, or incentives based on household characteristics.

ABS facilitates a range of potential survey designs, including: single mode mail surveys to all sampled addresses or a mail invitation to complete a mail or web survey; a dual mode design with mail surveys to all households and telephone follow-up (or first contact) for those with identifiable telephone numbers; or any combination of mail, Web, interactive voice response (IVR), telephone, and in-person interviewing. The frame has also been used to enhance area probability approaches, particularly the “counting and listing” enumeration process. This gives researchers greater flexibility to match survey mode with the goals and target population for their study.

Address-based approaches do, however, have drawbacks. DSF information cannot be obtained directly from the USPS, but must be purchased through private vendors. The quality and completeness of the address information varies widely depending on how often the company updates the listings and the degree to which the listings are augmented with information from other databases. The DSF contains address types (such as post office boxes and multi-drop addresses), which may be problematic for in-person and telephone surveys where a street address is required to locate the household or an associated telephone number.

From an operational perspective, ABS can limit the ability of a research organization to conduct quick turnaround studies. While a majority of addresses can be “matched” to a telephone number, the remaining sample must be contacted/recruited first by mail regardless of the actual survey mode used for data collection. This process takes time. If limited to mail-only, some surveys may also need to be adjusted in terms of length and difficulty. Use of a Web survey option and/or a call-in number to a CATI interviewer can alleviate this problem. However, Web access is not universal and very few respondents are likely to call in to complete a survey with

the latter design. Additionally, some respondent groups do not appear to respond to mail recruitment appeals as readily as others. For instance, Hispanics who speak primarily Spanish (rather than English or a mix) appear less likely to participate in surveys when recruitment is solely by mail.

In sum, ABS opens a new frontier in survey research, offering a largely unexplored set of sample design and data collection opportunities. It provides a stable, data rich sample frame upon which any number of data collection approaches can be launched. Like nearly all areas of research, ABS comes with its own set of unique challenges -- many of which will likely be overcome over time with more research. In terms of utility, however, researchers have only scratched the surface. The growing use of ABS as a methodology for major private industry and government sponsored studies shows us that ABS will be with us for quite some time.

References

Barron, M. (2009). "Multimode Surveys using Address-Based Sampling: The Design and Preliminary Experience of REACH US." Paper presented at the 64th Annual Conference of the American Association for Public Opinion Research, Hollywood, FL.

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McMichael, Jo., Ridenhour, J., Shook-Sa, B., & Iannacchione, V. (2009). "Evaluation of Address-Based Sampling (ABS) Frame Supplementation Methods for In-Person Household Surveys." Paper presented at the 64th Annual Conference of the American Association for Public Opinion Research, Hollywood, FL.

Announcements

SRMS Student Travel Award Winners

We would like to congratulate the two student travel award winners for 2009. SRMS awards \$400 in travel reimbursement for each awardee, and covers expenses to attend a continuing education course at the conference. The winners for this year are:

Burcu Eke from the School of Mathematical and Statistical Sciences, Arizona State University
Brady West from the Program in Survey Methodology, U Michigan

E.C. Bryant Scholarship Award Winner

We also would like to congratulate **Qixuan Chen**, Department of Biostatistics, University of Michigan on winning the E.C. Bryant Scholarship Award.

2010 Waksberg Award

The journal Survey Methodology has established an annual invited paper series in honor of Joseph Waksberg to recognize his contributions to survey methodology. Each year a prominent survey statistician is chosen to write a paper that reviews the development and current state of an important topic in the field of survey methodology. The paper reflects the mixture of theory and practice that characterized Waksberg's work. Previous winners have been Gad Nathan (2001), Wayne Fuller (2002), Tim Holt (2003), Norman Bradburn (2004), J.N.K. Rao (2005), Alastair Scott (2006), and Carl-Erik Särndal (2007), Mary Thompson (2008), and Graham Kalton (2009).

The winner of the 2010 Waksberg Award is **Dr. Ivan P. Fellegi**, Canada's Chief Statistician Emiretus. Dr. Fellegi will give the 2010 Waksberg Invited Address at the Statistics Canada Symposium to be held in the autumn of 2010.

The author of the 2011 Waksberg paper will be selected by a four-person committee appointed by Survey Methodology and the American Statistical Association. Nomination of individuals to be considered as authors or suggestions for topics should be sent before February 28, 2010 to the chair of the committee, Dan Kasprzyk (DKasprzyk@Mathematica-Mpr.com).



XXVth International Methodology Symposium



Statistics
Canada

Statistique
Canada

October 27-30, 2009,

Gatineau, Quebec, Canada

Longitudinal Surveys: from Design to Analysis **Early Bird Registration until September 16th**

The International Methodology Symposium, which marks its **25th anniversary event** this year, will take place at the Palais des Congrès conference centre in Gatineau (5 minutes from downtown Ottawa) from October 27-30, 2009.

This Symposium, entitled “**Longitudinal Surveys: from Design to Analysis**”, invites members of the community who are interested in statistical or methodological issues specific to longitudinal surveys to attend, whether they are from private, governmental or university research organizations and so on. In addition, a special call is extended to all those who have attended past Symposia and who wish to celebrate this 25th anniversary with us.

Symposium highlights are:

- One full-day of **workshops** on Tuesday, October 27th
 - a) *Some Selected Topics on Analysis of Longitudinal Survey Data* (Georgia Roberts and Milorad Kovacevic from Statistics Canada)
 - b) *Over 15 Years of Longitudinal Surveys at Statistics Canada: Lessons and Innovations* (Michelle Simard and François Brisebois from Statistics Canada)
 - c) *Multilevel Modeling of Longitudinal Data* (Sophia Rabe-Hesketh from Graduate School of Education, University of California, Berkeley and Anders Skrdal from the Division of Epidemiology, Norwegian Institute of Public Health)
- **Peter Lynn**, Institute for Social and Economic Research, University of Essex, Colchester, UK. as the keynote speaker on Wednesday, October 28th
- **Graham Kalton**, Westat, Rockville, MD U.S.A. as the Waksberg Award speaker on Thursday, October 29th
- **Visual display on the 25th anniversary event**
- An **evening banquet** on Thursday, October 29th at the Canadian Museum of Civilization
- Following the symposium, a **CD-ROM** of the presented papers will be sent to all conference participants

The Symposium also anticipates a stimulating program of more than 60 invited and contributed presentations from Wednesday October 28th to Friday, October 30th, including various topics such as:

- Sampling Frames
- Data Collection Issues
- Use of Administrative Data
- Edit and Imputation
- Weighting and Estimation
- Dissemination and Data Access
- Longitudinal Data Analysis
- Measurement Errors
- Attrition and Nonresponse
- Confidentiality, Privacy and Ethical Issues
- Challenges Related to Economic Longitudinal Surveys
- Longitudinal Survey Redesign

Visit our Internet site for details on the program, workshops, registration, accommodation, tourism information and more:

<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/conferences/symposium2009/index-eng.htm>

SRMS Mission Statement



SRMS has 1500 members, of which over 100 are based outside of North America and is one of the largest ASA Sections. The SRMS mission 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.

Not a member yet? Here is how you can join:

- If you are not an ASA member, go to the membership page of the ASA and fill the application at www.amstat.org/membership/index.cfm?fuseaction=becomeamember. Then sign up for the SRMS section as part of your membership.
- If you are already an ASA member, just call customer service at 1-888-231-3473 to add SRMS membership.

The SRMS has produced material and resources that are available on our website including:

- ❖ The “What is a Survey?” series for non-specialists, free of charge
- ❖ The SRMSNET Mailing List
- ❖ List of other related associations
- ❖ Survey Analysis Software (under Links and Resources)
- ❖ Universities and Laboratories
- ❖ ...and much more.

For more information, including links to specific officers, check out the SRMS website at: www.amstat.org/sections/SRMS/index.html

There is also a link from the ASA website at www.amstat.org