This is the second newsletter from the British Columbia Interuniversity Research Data Centre (BCIRDC).

This newsletter will be of interest to faculty and graduate students interested in accessing Statistics Canada household data, and especially the new longitudinal surveys.

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The BCIRDC welcomes researchers!

The BCIRDC has begun welcoming faculty and graduate students from Simon Fraser University, the University of British Columbia and the University of Victoria. Orientation sessions for researchers preparing to use the centre are underway, and inquiries from researchers interested in finding out more about the centre are always welcome. To contact the BCIRDC please call 604-822-0263 or send an email to bcirdc@interchange.ubc.ca. Further information is also available at our website: http://data.library.ubc.ca/rdc/.

First Interuniversity Research Data Seminar on the Workplace and Employee Survey on October 17th

If you are interested in studying workplace and employee dynamics, you will want to attend the first Interuniversity Research Data Seminar. Howard Krebs and Ted Wannell from Statistics Canada will be here to discuss the Workplace and Employee Survey (WES). This new longitudinal survey follows businesses over time and provides a rich source of information on business innovation, human resource practices and many other areas. Together with interviews with workers, this survey provides a unique source of
data for linking events in workplaces with workers’ outcomes, and linking worker characteristics with workplace outcomes.

The presentation will cover what information is collected by the WES, the research that has been conducted and that is possible using WES, and how to access this rich data source.

**Interuniversity Research Data Seminar on the Workplace and Employee Survey**

**When:** Wednesday, October 17th from 4:00 pm to 5:00 pm  
**Where:** Walter Koerner Library, room 216, University of British Columbia

If you plan to attend this seminar, please contact Lee Grenon at bcirdc@interchange.ubc.ca or 604-822-0263.

For further information please contact the BCIRDC. Stay tuned for future IRD Seminars. Suggestions for seminars are always welcome. We are looking for researchers using Statistics Canada data or techniques for analyzing complex survey data to be presenters with the IRD Seminar series. Presenting at an IRD seminar is a great way to network and problem solve with other researchers using Statistics Canada data from a wide range of disciplines.

The Interuniversity Research Data Seminar series is sponsored by the BCIRDC and the UBC Data Services.

**Presentation on the Research Data Centre on October 9th**

The next presentation on the Research Data Centre will be part of the UBC Department of Statistics seminar series. The presentation will cover:  
What is the Research Data Centre?  
What data and services are available at the RDC?  
What research has been conducted and what is possible at a RDC?  
How to access the centre?

**Presentation on the Research Data Centre**  
**When:** Tuesday, October 9th from 4:00 pm to 5:00 pm  
**Where:** Leonard Klinck Building, room 301, University of British Columbia

If you plan to attend the presentation please send a note to Jenny Bryan, UBC Department of Statistics, at jenny@stat.ubc.ca. For further details, please contact the BCIRDC.

We are looking for other venues to introduce researchers to the British Columbia Interuniversity Research Data Centre. To schedule a presentation on the RDC at your department or as part of a seminar series, please contact Lee Grenon at 604-822-0263 or by email at bcirdc@interchange.ubc.ca.
New from Statistics Canada

*Trends in Early Retirement* shows that rates of early retirement have tapered off after peaking in 1997. The report paints a statistical portrait of workers who retire before the age of 60. For further information visit: [http://www.statcan.ca/Daily/English/010919/d010919c.htm](http://www.statcan.ca/Daily/English/010919/d010919c.htm).

*Generosity in Canada: Trends in Personal Gifts and Charitable Donations Over Three Decades (1969-1997)* shows that Canadians’ generosity has been rising slowly, both in constant dollars and as a proportion of household income. The rise in donations to charitable organizations is slowing, however, while giving gifts to individuals is accelerating. For further information visit: [http://www.statcan.ca/Daily/English/010917/d010917c.htm](http://www.statcan.ca/Daily/English/010917/d010917c.htm).

*Adult Education Participation in North America: International Perspectives* reports that individuals with relatively little schooling and those with poor literacy were least likely to participate in adult education programs in Canada and the United States. For further information visit: [http://www.statcan.ca/Daily/English/010907/d010907a.htm](http://www.statcan.ca/Daily/English/010907/d010907a.htm).

*Employer and Employee Perspectives on Human Resource Practices* shows how important that human resource policies such as training, variable pay and employee involvement practices are in facilitating change in the workplace. For further information visit: [http://www.statcan.ca/Daily/English/010906/d010906d.htm](http://www.statcan.ca/Daily/English/010906/d010906d.htm).

*Survey of Financial Security: Estimating the Value of Employer Pension Plan Benefits* describes the methodology that the SFS will use to estimate the value of employer-sponsored registered pension plan benefits for various groups of people. For further information visit: [http://www.statcan.ca/Daily/English/010905/d010905c.htm](http://www.statcan.ca/Daily/English/010905/d010905c.htm).

Access to full microdata files

The centre is now open and ready to provide access for approved projects to the full microdata files for the:

- National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth
- National Population Health Survey
- Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics

Access to confidential microdata from other Statistics Canada surveys can also be arranged for approved projects.

Microdata files for the Youth in Transition Survey and the employee component of the Workplace and Employee Survey are expected to be available at the BCIRDC over the next several months.

Access to the centre is provided to researchers with a project approved through a special application and peer review program of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research
Council (SSHRC) and Statistics Canada. See below for further information on the application process.

The BCIRDC is a comprehensive research facility
Since researchers are required to access and analyze the data within the centre, the BCIRDC offers a comprehensive research environment with a closed local area network consisting of a powerful Novell server that supports eight PC workstations and two Macintosh workstations. Each of the new workstations has a range of statistical analysis software available, and additional software will be added as required.

The PC workstations have dual processors with Windows 2000 desktop operating system, and currently includes:
- EQS for Windows
- Gauss 3.6
- HLM 5
- IMSL NT
- Intercooled Stata 7
- Limdep 7
- Lisrel 8.5
- Maple 7
- MATLAB 6.1
- MS Office applications
- SAS 8.02
- Shazam 9
- S-PLUS 2000
- SPSS 10.1
- SUDAAN 8
- SYSTAT 10
- WinRATS 5

The Macintosh workstations use the Mac OS 9.1 operating system and currently include:
- EQS
- Gauss 3.6
- MacRATS 5
- Maple 7
- MATLAB 6.1
- MS Office
- S-PLUS 2000
- SAS 6.1
- SPSS 10.1
- Stata 7

Additional software programs will soon be available at the centre. If you require a software program that the centre does not have currently, we will do our best to make it available.
The RDC staff is here to help

A staff member is available in the centre to provide you with information on the RDC program, applying for access, the Statistics Canada data, and to assist with the disclosure control process for removing analytic results from the centre. The disclosure control process ensures that no confidential information on respondents leaves the centre. The regular staff person is Lee Grenon from Statistics Canada.

Team projects are encouraged

The RDC program encourages researchers to collaborate on team projects. The centre can support both individual and team research projects. Collaborations among researchers from different disciplines allows for enriched and broadened research. As well, collaborations between faculty and graduate students offer valuable research experience to new researchers. We can also facilitate team projects conducted in more than one RDC when team members are located outside of British Columbia.

Operating hours

During the academic year, the centre is open from 8:30 am to 12:00 pm and from 12:30 pm to 4:30 pm. The centre will be closed on Monday, October 8th, Monday, November 12th, and between Christmas and New Year’s.

The operating hours for the centre when researchers will have access will vary slightly over the course of the year in line with the Koerner Library hours. As well, the centre will be closed to researchers for short periods when a staff member is not available.

Official opening of the BCIRDC and national launch of the RDC Program

Both the official opening ceremony for the BCIRDC and the official national launch of the RDC Program will be this autumn. Further information on these events will be circulated later.

Background to the BCIRDC

The BCIRDC is an interuniversity facility and service of Simon Fraser University, the University of British Columbia, and the University of Victoria. The establishment and continuing development of the centre is overseen by an interuniversity committee that is chaired by Dr. Craig Riddell, UBC Department of Economics. The infrastructure funding for the BCIRDC and several other Research Data Centres is provided by the Canadian Foundation for Innovation. The centre is part of a national network of Research Data Centres (RDC) established as part of the Canadian Initiative on Social Statistics (CISS). This initiative is a collaborative program between SSHRC and Statistics Canada to strengthen our country’s social research capacity, support policy relevant research, and to provide insights on important issues to the Canadian public. Specifically, the RDCs
provide increased use of Statistics Canada’s rich data for academic and policy relevant research.

Currently, five RDCs are open at McMaster University, the University of Alberta, the University of British Columbia, the University of Calgary, and the University of Montreal. Other RDCs will soon be opening at Dalhousie University, the University of New Brunswick, the University of Toronto and the University of Waterloo.

What is a Research Data Centre?

For several years, researchers have had access to Statistics Canada’s public use microdata files (PUMF) through the Data Liberation Initiative at each participating university. The PUMFs are cross sectional data sets that have been modified by suppressing and combining more sensitive information to maintain the confidentiality of all respondents. Since, the new longitudinal survey data of Statistics Canada are not available through public use files, the RDCs have been established to ensure that the research potential of these new data sets are realized. The new longitudinal surveys are a rich source of information for analyzing many different issues such as those related to children, youth, the economy, health and health care. For example, the new data could be used for examining why families move into or out of low-income living situations; significant aspects of the home and school environment that contribute to child development; and the impact that factors like stress and physical activity may have on health.

The university-based centres are secure physical locations at which quantitative social science research is conducted. Each centre operates as an extension of Statistics Canada offices. Data files used by researchers at the centre have been stripped of all identifying information such as names, addresses and telephone numbers. Each centre is subject to the same security provisions as all Statistics Canada offices. Researchers conduct their work under the terms of the Statistics Act. This means that researchers access the data within the centre, that computers containing data are not linked to external networks, that each researcher takes an oath to protect the confidentiality of respondents, and that an empirical report will be produced for Statistics Canada at the completion of the project.

How to apply for access to the BCIRDC

Researchers interested in using the British Columbia Interuniversity Research Data Centre or any of the other Research Data Centres should visit the SSHRC web site at: http://www.sshrc.ca/rdc/english/overview.html. The application includes a research project proposal that is peer reviewed on the basis of academic merit and need for access to the confidential microdata. Researchers who propose a project that can be accomplished using a public use microdata file will be asked to contact the Data Liberation Initiative staff at their university. Since the application process can take up to eight weeks, researchers should submit their applications well before planning to begin accessing the centre.
What happens after approval is given for access to the RDC?

SSHRC will notify each researcher when the application for access has been approved. The RDC staff person will provide an orientation session to familiarize the researcher with the facility and the requirements for doing research at the RDC.

Researchers will have access to the RDC during normal business hours. For the duration of the approved project, each researcher is a ‘deemed employee’ of Statistics Canada, and takes an Oath of Office under the Statistics Act.

At the completion of the project, the researcher is required to produce a report of the empirical findings for Statistics Canada. This report may be included in a Statistics Canada research paper series. The researcher retains full right to publish their findings in any journal or other publication.

For further information

For information on the British Columbia Interuniversity Research Data Centre please contact Lee Grenon at:
Telephone: (604) 822-0263
Email: bcirdc@interchange.ubc.ca

As well, the BCIRDC website is still under development, but provides some general information currently at http://data.library.ubc.ca/rdc. Further information and links will be added shortly.

For information on how to apply for access to the BCIRDC and additional information on the Research Data Centres Program please visit the SSHRC website at: http://www.sshrc.ca/rdc/english/overview.html.

The SSHRC website for applying to access the BCIRDC or any other RDC is at: http://www.sshrc.ca/rdc/english/applicants.html.

For information on Statistics Canada surveys please visit: http://www.statcan.ca.

The BCIRDC steering committee can be contacted through:
Dr. Craig Riddell, Committee Chair
UBC Department of Economics
Email: criddell@interchange.ubc.ca

How to subscribe or unsubscribe
A monthly newsletter will be circulated to keep you up to date on developments at the BCIRDC. If you wish to be included on the distribution list please send an email message to: bcirdc@interchange.ubc.ca and write SUBSCRIBE on the subject line. To remove your name from the newsletter list please reply to bcirdc@interchange.ubc.ca and write
UNSUBSCRIBE on the subject line. Please forward this newsletter to faculty and graduates students who may be interested in learning more about the BCIRDC.

Please send us your comments and suggestions
Your comments and suggestions for improving the BCIRDC are welcomed. Please contact Lee Grenon or Craig Riddell to let us know what you think.

Suggestions and comments on the BCIRDC newsletter are also welcome. Please contact the office at 604-822-0263 with your suggestions and comments.