



IN THIS ISSUE

The CDHA Component of  
DISC ..... 1  
Introducing Janet Eisenhauer  
Smith ..... 2  
Introducing Lu Chou ..... 2  
DISC Current Awareness and  
Google Search ..... 3  
Crossroads Corner ..... 4

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DISC News contains articles about local, national and international data issues. It is published twice a semester by the library staff and sent to faculty, graduate students, and librarians, with a focus on the Social Science departments.

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This issue of DISC News is online at:  
<http://www.disc.wisc.edu/pubs/Newsletters/apr07news.html>

**Please Note**

DISC will be closed:  
Mon. May 28 - Memorial Day  
Wed. July 4 - Independence Day  
Mon. September 3 - Labor Day

**THE CDHA COMPONENT OF DISC**

*by Janet Eisenhauer Smith & Joanne Juhnke*

In the February 2007 issue of the new *DISC News*, we introduced DISC as a new organization providing social science data services at UW-Madison formerly offered by the Data Program and Library Service (DPLS), the CDE Data Information Services, and the data cores of the Center for Demography of Health and Aging (CDHA). We also introduced Jack Solock, formerly of CDE and now DISC's director; and Cindy Severt, formerly of DPLS. In this issue, we introduce Janet Eisenhauer Smith and Lu Chou, and in this article, we introduce the CDHA component of DISC.

CDHA (<http://www.ssc.wisc.edu/cdha/>) is a demographic research center at UW-Madison funded by the National Institute on Aging. The mission of CDHA is to build a major research program in the demography of health and aging, forging links between social demography and biomedical and epidemiological research. Affiliated faculty come from the departments of Sociology, Economics, Rural Sociology, Social Work, Psychology, History, Population Health Sciences, Statistics, and Child and Family Studies.

**DISC is working on ways to make available to the wider campus our CDHA expertise in licensing and securing sensitive or restricted data.**

The five major research projects associated with CDHA are:

- The Wisconsin Longitudinal Survey (WLS): project information and public-use data available at <http://www.ssc.wisc.edu/wlsresearch/>
- The National Survey of Families and Households (NSFH): project information available at <http://www.ssc.wisc.edu/nsfh/home.htm>, with public-use data via the BADGIR archive
- Health, Wellbeing and Aging in Latin America and the Caribbean (SABE): project information available at <http://www.ssc.wisc.edu/sabe/>, with public-use data via the BADGIR archive
- Puerto Rican Elderly Health Conditions (PREHCO): project information and documentation available at <http://prehco.rcm.upr.edu/>
- Wisconsin Assets and Income Studies (WAIS): project information and documentation available at <http://www.ssc.wisc.edu/wais/>.

The data-services functions of CDHA (known as “cores” in the NIA grant structure) include support for external research resources and dissemination, and for a statistical data enclave. These elements are now part of DISC and are led by Janet Eisenhauer Smith.

*Continued on p. 3*

## INTRODUCING... JANET EISENHAUER SMITH



Dr. Janet Eisenhauer Smith is the Data Analyst/Archivist for the Center for the Demography of Health & Aging (CDHA), and brings her leadership of CDHA's data-related functions to join with the other entities that have merged to become the Data & Information Services Center (DISC). CDHA is funded by a Center Grant from the National Institute on Aging.

Janet earned her Ph.D. in Agricultural and Applied Economics in 1996, and has been creating, managing, and analyzing survey data for the past 20 years. She advises faculty and research staff on statistical methods for disclosure limitation and other issues related to the protection of human subjects. She also advises on data protection and encryption standards, geocoding, archival standards for data documentation such as the Data Documentation Initiative (DDI), web-based systems for the analysis of public-use data, and methods for securely distributing restricted data.

Janet founded and administers BADGIR, UW-Madison's public-use online Nesstar-based data archive (online at <http://nesstar.ssc.wisc.edu/>). She designed and manages CDHA's offline ultra-secure data archive (OLDR) and remote computing service (WISR). She helps researchers obtain licenses for restricted data produced at the UW-Madison, the other 12 NIA Aging Demography centers, federal agencies, and local government, among others. To assist UW-Madison researchers in using such restricted data, she has designed a low-cost secure computing enclave. She is the UW-Madison's representative to the DDI Alliance. Janet is also a member of the Task Force on Confidentiality of the Association of Public Data Users (APDU), and was elected to the APDU Board in January 2004. She helped to initiate the move to a leaner meaner APDU, which now actively advocates for access, usability, and quality of data produced by federal agencies.

## INTRODUCING... LU CHOU



Lu Chou has worked at DPLS since 1990. In her 17 years tenure, she initiated and implemented many projects. In 1992, she participated in an OCLC (Online Computer Library Center) Internet resources project developing new guidelines for cataloging electronic files on the Internet, an experience which has been valuable to her over the years of managing the DPLS online catalog.

Lu has contributed to the evolution of the DPLS web site since its debut in 1994. When the DPLS online data archive was added in 1996, Lu worked with the principal investigators and supervised students creating study pages to disseminate locally produced datasets on the Internet. In 1997, she was in charge of weeding and format conversion for over 600 9-track magnetic tapes, whose data is now stored on CD-ROM. Lu supervised a local pilot project in 1999 on the Data Document Initiative (DDI) which is now a metadata standard in documenting social science datasets. In 2002, Lu designed and implemented three ASP applications for the DPLS web site. She joined the Better Access to Data for Global Interdisciplinary Research (BADGIR) consortium and converted 17 DPLS archival studies, adding them to the BADGIR catalog in 2003.

In October of 2005 Lu accepted a part-time data librarian position at the Center of Demography for Health and Aging (CDHA), in addition to her position at DPLS. She maintains several databases and web sites related to economic and demographic research on population aging at CDHA.

Lu enjoys the various aspects of her job at DISC. She gets to do reference work, data acquisition, technical support, teaching, cataloging, and networking with colleagues locally and internationally. Fortunately, they don't all have to be done simultaneously!

## THE CDHA COMPONENT OF DISC

*Continued from p. 1*

CDHA researchers often either use or generate sensitive data on health and aging, involving confidentiality issues for survey respondents. To allow CDHA members to store and access sensitive data while maintaining appropriate data security, CDHA maintains both a secure archive and a secure means of accessing the archive remotely.

The secure archive is called OLDR (Offline Longitudinal Data Repository), and uses primarily physical means to maintain data security. The actual data repository consists of a stand-alone PC with removable system and data drives. The PC is stored in a dedicated office that is secured with a system of motion sensors and an alarm. When not in use, the system and data drives are removed from the PC and stored in safes that are securely mounted to a concrete wall.

The remote computing system is called WISR (Wisconsin's Indirect Statistics Remotely) and provides a secure remote computing environment for CDHA researchers to access sensitive data files stored on OLDR. Researchers submit SAS, STATA, or SPSS code via e-mail. Input code and statistical output generated by that code are reviewed for potential confidentiality problems with the help of statistical-disclosure software. The statistical output is then modified appropriately if necessary to preserve confidentiality, and returned to the researcher via e-mail.

For archiving public-use data, CDHA spearheaded and maintains the BADGIR archive, freely available online at <http://nesstar.ssc.wisc.edu/>, with contributions from CDE and the former DPLS. BADGIR (Better Access to Data for Global Interdisciplinary Research) is powered by a software suite called Nesstar which allows users to browse or search data documentation and univariate summary statistics (such as mean or frequency counts). Registered users can also create cross-tabulations that can be downloaded in Excel format, and perform regression analyses. Registered users who are interested in performing more sophisticated multivariate analyses can also create and download customized data sets that can be imported into a variety of statistical packages (e.g., SPSS, SAS, and STATA).

As part of DISC, CDHA's data staff will continue to provide the same services as before to the unique constituency of researchers and staff working on CDHA grant-supported research. Our new DISC organization continues to explore how we can bring the expertise and experience of our component staff members and operations to enhance services for all our constituencies, including the UW-Madison campus as a whole. In particular, DISC is working on ways to make available to the wider campus our CDHA expertise in licensing and securing sensitive or restricted data, to be described in detail in a future issue of *DISC News*.

## DISC CURRENT AWARENESS & GOOGLE SEARCH

*by Joanne Jubnke*

A recently-developed tool from search giant Google has helped DISC make our Current Awareness reports searchable.

Every week, DISC publishes the Current Awareness in Aging Report (CAAR) and the Current Social Science Research Reports (CSSRR - Sociology, Health, and Economics). Back issues of both reports are archived under the auspices of DISC:

- CAAR is at <http://www.ssc.wisc.edu/cdha/pubs/caar.html>
- CSSRR is at <http://www.disc.wisc.edu/reports/cssrindex.html>

Both sets of back issues are now searchable, using the Google Custom Search Engine (CSE) tool.

Anyone willing to go through Google's free registration process can create their own Google CSE. Each Google CSE allows users to determine which portion of Google's massive search index they want to search, and then makes the search of that custom subset available to other users. The subset can be as small as a portion of a single domain, or as large as whatever number of domains the user chooses to add. The Google CSE tool is set up for collaborative work as well, so that you can choose to allow additional contributors to your particular Google CSE.

For more about Google CSE, see <http://www.google.com/coop/cse/>.

*Crossroads Corner highlights web sites recently added to the searchable Internet Crossroads in Social Science Data, available on the DISC web site. This issue's Crossroads Corner introduces three sites on the theme of minority groups and diversity.*

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### **Minorities at Risk (MAR)**

The Minorities at Risk project, located at the University of Maryland's Center for International Development and Conflict Management, tracks 284 politically-active ethnic groups worldwide from 1945 to 2003. The project focuses on ethnopolitical groups that experience discriminatory treatment in relation to other groups in society, and that mobilize for political action on the basis of their identity and self-defined interests. The MAR site is online at <http://www.cidcm.umd.edu/mar/>.

The data section of the site includes both qualitative and quantitative elements. The qualitative component consists of reports on risk assessments and analytic summaries for each of the groups in the project, as well as chronologies for each group's history. The variables in the quantitative data address such aspects as group characteristics, organization, discrimination, collective interests, and conflict behavior. The main MAR dataset can be downloaded either as an ASCII text file, or through a Windows software program called the Minorities At Risk Data Generation and Management Program (MARGene). The site also includes a Discrimination Dataset, available in SPSS or Excel, that records overall levels of political and economic discrimination for all groups in the Minorities at Risk Project.

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### **Minority Data Resource Center at ICPSR**

The Minority Data Resource Center (MDRC) is a new addition to ICPSR's growing collection of special-purpose archives, showcasing existing ICPSR data. The focus of the MDRC is data for comparative analysis of issues affecting racial and ethnic minority populations in

the United States. The subject coverage of the selected studies runs the gamut from education to housing, poverty, and political participation.

MDRC data falls into two general categories:

- Studies that focus specifically on minority populations, such as the National Black Election Studies series.
- Studies with large enough sample sizes or ethnic/racial oversampling to permit meaningful analysis of issues that affect race and ethnic minority populations, such as the American Housing Survey series.

The MDRC is available to UW-Madison users at <http://www.icpsr.umich.edu/MDRC/>, courtesy of our campus ICPSR membership. A one-time free registration is required for downloading data or online analysis.

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### **DiversityData**

The DiversityData web site, available at <http://www.diversitydata.org/>, is a project of the Harvard School of Public Health. The project is aimed at users who are interested in profiling and comparing United States metropolitan areas in terms of quality of life, with an emphasis on diversity issues. The site encourages researchers, policymakers and community advocates to make use of the data to advocate for policy action and social change.

Visitors to the site can examine metropolitan areas on a range of social measures such as education, housing opportunities, economic opportunities, residential integration, and health, using data from multiple sources. The emphasis on diversity applies to various racial/ethnic, income and nativity groups.

The strength of DiversityData is its user-friendly menus and its display of profiles, rankings and maps. The site currently only offers a single year worth of data for any variable, and focuses on data display rather than download.