



WSS NEWS

WASHINGTON STATISTICAL SOCIETY

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CALLING FOR VOLUNTEERS!

The coordinators for the WSS K-12 Student Poster competition are looking for volunteers for judging the poster competition this year.

The Washington Statistical Society, in collaboration with The American Statistical Association runs a Statistical Poster Competition for school children in grades K-12 in the Washington DC metro area. This is part of the Poster competition run by ASA with the WSS judging and awarding prizes to local children. There are four age groups and children may work singly or in small groups under the supervision of a teacher or guide. Winning entries of the WSS competition are automatically advanced to the second round of the national competition where they may win additional prizes and recognition. Local area winners and their guides/teachers are invited to attend the WSS annual dinner as guests to receive their prizes. Our aim is to encourage a new generation of children to explore the exciting world of math and statistics.

Please let me know if you are interested in serving as a judge. The judging will be held at the Westat conference center in Rockville. It usually involves a 3-4 hour commitment in the afternoon. Last year, the judging was held from 1-5pm on a Saturday afternoon for example. This year, the judging will be held on either 4/25 or 4/26 (Saturday or Sunday). If you are interested, email Barnali Das at barnalidas@westat.com and please indicate which of those dates will work for you. For questions or more information please contact Barnali Das at barnalidas@westat.com.

SEMINARS

Title: Costs vs Benefits: The 2014 Content Review of the American Community Survey (Rescheduled from 17 February 2015)

Date/Time: March 30, 2015
12:30– 1:30 pm

Speaker: Jim Treat, US Census Bureau

Chair: Jennifer Park

Sponsor: Methodology Section and Public Policy

Location: Bureau of Labor Statistics Conference Center

To be placed on the seminar attendance list at the Bureau of Labor Statistics, you need to e-mail your name, affiliation, and seminar name to wss_seminar@bls.gov (underscore after 'wss') by noon at least 2 days in advance of the seminar, or call 202-691-7524 and leave a message. Bring a photo ID to the seminar. BLS is located at 2 Massachusetts Avenue, NE. Use the Red Line to Union Station. Parking in the area of BLS is available at Union Station. For parking information see <http://www.unionstationdc.com/parking>. No validation is available from BLS for reduced parking rates.

Abstract: The American Community Survey (ACS) is the largest survey in the Nation, annually collecting demographic, social, and economic statistics for small areas and small populations, and providing 1-, 3-, and 5-year data products for virtually every community across the country. In an effort to ensure the least burden on the public at the greatest benefit, the Census Bureau conducted in 2014 a content review of all 72 household and person-based questions on the survey. This discussion will present the results of that review, including the methodological approach used and decision criteria employed. Lastly, we will present the results of the analysis, including the seven questions identified as candidates for removal, and next steps in the process to finalize any survey changes.

POC: gary.b.chappell@census.gov

WebEx event address:

<https://dol.webex.com/dol/j.php?MTID=m9d6cd343b954e8630929e1f5efbe9238>

For Audio:

Call-in toll-free number (Verizon): 1-866-747-9048 (US)

Call-in number (Verizon): 1-517-233-2139

(US) Attendee access code: 938 454 2

The Joint Program in Survey Methodology Distinguished Lecture

Web Surveys, Online Panels, and Paradata: Automating Responsive Design



Allan L. McCutcheon

Donald O. Clifton Chair of Survey Science
Professor of Statistics
Professor of Survey Research and Methodology
University of Nebraska-Lincoln

The rising cost of telephone survey data collection, declining telephone survey response rates, and the speed of online survey data collection are leading many researchers to explore the use of web surveys and online panels. While these relatively new modes of data collection present their own set of challenges (e.g., assuring probability, or at least representative, sampling), they also present a new set of opportunities for survey researchers. This presentation will focus on an ongoing, five-year research project that is part of the NSF/Census Research Network (NCRN) involving online, probability-based panels in multi-mode surveys. The research is exploring the use of data and paradata from the internet portion of the survey to develop a machine-learning, 'smart agent' to implement near real-time adaptive/responsive design for online panels and other web surveys in an effort to reduce survey breakoff and panel attrition, and to improve data quality. The project draws on contributions from a team of survey methodologists, statisticians, and computer science engineers, and the cooperation of a leading industry partner (Gallup).

Friday, April 10, 2015; 3:00-4:30 PM

2205 LeFrak Hall
University of Maryland, College Park

Discussants:

Thomas A. Louis, U.S. Census Bureau and Johns Hopkins University
James Wagner, University of Michigan

Please join us for a reception afterwards.
www.jpsm.umd.edu



**THE JOINT PROGRAM IN
SURVEY METHODOLOGY**



COLLEGE OF
BEHAVIORAL &
SOCIAL SCIENCES

Statistical Poster Competition

Title: **Disclosure Avoidance Techniques at the U.S. Census Bureau: Current Practices and Research**

Dates/Time: **April 21, 2015**
12:30– 1:30 pm

Speakers: Bei Wang, Census Bureau
William Wisniewski, Census Bureau

Chair: Chris Chapman, Bureau of Labor Statistics

Sponsor: Methodology Section

Location: Bureau of Labor Statistics Conference Center

To be placed on the seminar attendance list at the Bureau of Labor Statistics, you need to e-mail your name, affiliation, and seminar name to wss_seminar@bls.gov (underscore after 'wss') by noon at least 2 days in advance of the seminar, or call 202-691-7524 and leave a message. Bring a photo ID to the seminar. BLS is located at 2 Massachusetts Avenue, NE. Use the Red Line to Union Station. Parking in the area of BLS is available at Union Station. For parking information see <http://www.unionstationdc.com/parking>. No validation is available from BLS for reduced parking rates.

Abstracts:**Design a Disclosure Application System: iPrivacyProtection**

The Census Bureau has developed an LP based cell suppression software for 2012 Econ census. The new system is the result of a 3 year research effort and is more robust and effective than previous systems. The opportunity exists now, while the internal design is fresh and still being modified, to develop a front end product that is useful for everyone.

The ultimate goal is to design an effective Disclosure Application System, called iPrivacyProtection. The system shall release the burden on programmers, eliminate manual errors, and provide new tools for the user. Here, the user is generally the data producer who provides disclosure avoidance data released to the public.

A Disclosure Application System (iPrivacyProtection) is an interactive application system that helps users, both programmers and analysts, apply cell suppression methodology, generate suppression pattern, and review suppression data, by putting the power of data protection into the hands of a user –the data producer– to select the best protective pattern.

A disclosure application generally includes two parts, a core processor and a graphic user interface (GUI). The first part is to generate disclosure-applied data. Depending on disclosure methodology used, that can be cell suppression, noise, or something else. The second part is to allow user to control the process. Our current disclosure process requires a 3-tier operation, which involves a diverse set of units from separate divisions. The normal disclosure production circle includes several areas' efforts. One group gathers requirements from another group (subject area) and helps to prepare disclosure input data. The programming area applies the disclosure and converts disclosure output data into a user preferred data format. Finally, subject area reviews. This manual circle could be repeated many times due to requirement changes, data changes etc. It often creates errors during transactions and requires a great deal of resource coordination. An automated iPrivacyProtection requires no coordination among different areas, eliminates manual transactions, and maintains data integrity. Most important, the user, the data producer, is in control of the process. Users can change the parameters associated with their requirements, apply disclosure program to generate disclosure-applied data. Finally, the data can be saved and reviewed.

I'll walk you through the iPrivacyProtection in this talk.

-Bei Wang, U.S. Bureau of the Census

Disclosure Avoidance Techniques at the U.S. Census Bureau: Current Practices and Research

The U.S. Census Bureau collects its survey and census data under U.S. Code Title 13, which promises confidentiality to its respondents. The agency also has the responsibility of releasing data for the purpose of statistical analysis. In common with most national statistical institutes, the Census Bureau's goal is to release as much high quality data as possible while maintaining the pledge of confidentiality. We apply disclosure avoidance techniques prior to releasing our data products publicly to protect the confidentiality of our respondents and their data. This talk discusses the various types of data we release, the disclosure review process, restricted access procedures, disclosure avoidance techniques currently being used, and current disclosure avoidance research.

-William Wisniewski, U.S. Bureau of the Census

POC: chapman.chris@bls.gov

WebEx:

<https://dol.webex.com/dol/j.php?MTID=m69a620d8696b01c99fd54a831f149d88>

Audio:

Call-in toll-free number (Verizon): 1-866-747-9048 (US)

Call-in number (Verizon): 1-517-233-2139

(US) Attendee access code: 938 454 2

Particular computer configurations may not be compatible with WebEx.

PLEASE FORWARD THIS ANNOUNCEMENT TO OTHERS WHO MIGHT BE INTERESTED IN THE TOPIC

Title: Teaching Precursors to Data Science in Introductory and Second Courses in Statistics

Dates/Time: April 28, 2015
3:15– 4:30 pm
Informal reception to follow at East Street Café at Union Station

Speakers: Nicholas J. Horton, Professor of Statistics, Amherst College

Chair: Steve H. Cohen, Senior Fellow, NORC

Sponsor: WSS Statistics Education Committee

Location: Offices of Mathematica-MPR 1101 1st Street NE, 12th Floor, Washington DC 20002

Once in the building, take the elevators to the 12th floor and inform the secretary that you are attending the WSS seminar. Please call Mathematica's main office number (202 484-9220) if you have trouble finding the building.

By Metro: Take the Red Line to either the NoMa-Gallaudet U (used to be called New York Ave) Station or Union Station. From the NoMa-Gallaudet U Station, follow signs to exit at M Street. Then walk 1 block west on M street and 2 blocks south on 1st Street NE (the building will be on your right). From Union Station, walk north along 1st Street NE for about 4-5 blocks until you reach L Street (the building will be on your left after crossing L street).

By Car: Pay parking is available in the building parking garage, which is located 1 block east of North Capitol on L Street NE.

RSVP: To be placed on the seminar attendance list, please email Carol Joyce Blumberg at cblumberg@gmail.com.

Abstract:

Statistics students need to develop the capacity to make sense of the staggering amount of information collected in our increasingly data-centered world. Data science is an important part of modern statistics, but our introductory and second statistics courses often neglect this fact. This talk discusses ways to provide a practical foundation for students to learn to “compute with data” as defined by Nolan and Temple Lang (2010), as well as develop “data habits of mind” (Finzer, 2013). We describe how introductory and second courses can integrate two key precursors to data science: the use of reproducible analysis tools and access to large databases. By introducing students to commonplace tools for data management, visualization, and reproducible analysis in data science and applying these to real-world scenarios, we prepare them to think statistically in the era of big data.

POC:

Carol Joyce Blumberg, cblumberg@gmail.com

WebEx event address:

<https://mprwebex.mathematica-mpr.com/orion/joinmeeting.do?MK=995818462>

Meeting Number: 995-818-462. No password is required.

Audio:

For remote access via audio only or if the WebEx connection does not work, call either (609) 945-6996 or (202) 554-7500. Then enter the access code of 995-818-462.

Title: **Curb-Stoning Part III**

Date/Time: **June 9th, 2015**
12:30– 2:30 pm

Chair: Nancy Bates, Census Bureau

Sponsor: Methodology Section

Location: Offices of Mathematica-MPR (near L Street, north of Union Station)
1101 First Street NE, 12th Floor
Washington DC 20002

Schedule

Time	Speaker	Affiliation	Point of Contact
12:30	Mike Fleming	WSS	charles.fleming@bhox.com
12:40	Regina Faranda	Office of Opinion Research	FarandaRD@State.gov
1:00	M. Rita Thissen	RTI International	rthissen@rti.org
1:20	Rodrick J. Marquette	Census Bureau	Rodrick.J.Marquette@census.gov
1:40	Aref N. Dajani	Census Bureau	Aref.N.Dajani@census.gov
2:00	Fritz Scheuren*	NORC	scheuren@aol.com
	*discussant		

Abstract:

This Washington Statistical Society conference on curb-stoning is the third in a series of events on the same subject. The first event was sponsored by the WSS Methodology Section last December, and the second event was recently produced by the New England Chapter of the American Association for Public Opinion Research. Curb-stoning is a colloquialism for the practice of statistical enumerators and their supervisors to fabricate respondent data. Their techniques may be clever and even sophisticated. The speakers of this event will discuss the motives for curb-stoning, programs to detect its occurrence, and methods to discourage its practice.

The Cheater Problem Revisited: Lessons from Six Decades of State Department Polling

Nearly 70 years after Leo Crespi's paper "The Cheater Problem in Polling," the challenge of preventing, detecting, and - in those rare instances - mitigating the damage from falsification remains. In the U.S. Department of State's Office of Opinion Research, which owes its founding to Dr. Crespi and other survey pioneers, we face this issue in some of the 200 surveys we conduct in nearly 100 countries yearly. Our office has faced institutional challenges in confronting falsification, including the instinct to shy away from tarnishing all of our research in the eyes of a sometimes skeptical audience, doubly so when the stakes of representing international publics are high. We have also grappled with limited capacity, both in terms of time for uncovering possible fraud and in the technical ability to systematically do so. This presentation will underscore the need to weave the ethos of confronting falsification into the fabric of survey research, and not just in an international context. It will focus specifically on the quality control process that State's Office of Opinion Research has developed over several years. The process includes a procedural checklist that our researchers must follow before reporting data, changes to our requirements for collecting paradata and metadata, and systematic guidance on approaching field firms to deal with cases of possible fraud.

~ Regina Faranda

Acting Director, Office of Opinion Research, U.S. Department of State

Technical Aids for Deterring and Detecting Falsification of Survey Data

Quality assurance teams encounter ever-changing challenges in confirming the authenticity of interviewer-collected survey data. At RTI, several precautionary measures during and after data collection aid the monitoring of data collectors and review of data after receipt. When feasible, computer audio-recorded interviewing (CARI) allows detailed oversight of in-person surveys and augments live-monitoring of telephone interviews. Collection of global positioning system (GPS) coordinates can confirm the location of interviews conducted by field staff using mobile devices. For some surveys, on-location image-capture helps to validate authenticity. After data receipt at RTI, datasets undergo systematic review for high levels of unit or item non-response, paradata outliers, duplicate records and unexpectedly high levels of CARI refusals. The combination of these techniques provides an adaptable, multi-sourced, evidence-based process for quality assurance and control.

~ M. Rita Thissen

Department Manager, Center for Technology Solutions, Research Computing Division, RTI International, Research Triangle Park, NC 27709

Curbstoning Detection and Prevention at Census: New Initiatives

Curbstoning detection and prevention is one of several survey lifecycle quality assurance techniques conducted at Census. Recommendations from the Office of the Inspector General of the Department of Commerce, corroborated by the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, are being implemented Bureau-wide with the full backing of the Census Director. This presentation highlights new initiatives planned or currently underway to detect and prevent curbstoning at Census.

These operational initiatives include a centralized reinterview program, a redesign of the reinterview sample, implementation of Computer Audio Recorded Interviewing (CARI) pioneered by the Research Triangle Institute (RTI), and extensive use of paradata and administrative data. These curbstoning detection and prevention initiatives together will promote accurate, objective decisions made quickly and cost-effectively to ensure that our data and our employees adhere to our quality standards.

~Aref N. Dajani and Rodrick J. Marquette
U.S. Census

WebEx event address; for attendee;

<https://mprwebex.mathematica-mpr.com/orion/meeting/meetingInfo?MeetingKey=999482355&siteurl=mprwebex>

Meeting Nuber: 999 482 355

Audio/no video: **609-945-6996 (access code: 999 482 355)**

Note: Particular computer configurations might not be compatible with WebEx.

CALL FOR PAPERS

Fifth International Conference on Establishment Surveys (ICES-V)

This is to remind you that the Fifth International Conference on Establishment Surveys (ICES-V) will be held June 20-23, 2016 in Geneva, Switzerland (www.ices-v.ch). Continuing in the traditions of past ICES conferences, ICES-V intends to explore new areas of establishment statistics as well as to reflect state-of-the-art at the time of holding the conference.

The Program Committee invites you to submit a proposal for an invited paper session from January 1st, 2015 to March 31st, 2015. The Program Committee will review the proposals and notify session organizers by the beginning of June 2015 to let them know whether their proposal has been accepted.

For more information on invited sessions, including session formats, suggestions for topics, criteria, instructions and a template for submitting proposals, please consult <http://www.portal-stat.admin.ch/ices5/invited-sessions/>.

There are limited invited sessions, and the program committee is seeking sessions of a consistently high quality for ICES-V, so we request that organizers provide sufficient information to clearly demonstrate the importance of the topic and the quality of its contributions. We encourage proposals addressing one or related topics but from various angles, and incorporating presenters and perspectives from different countries and organizations, e.g., with differences in the statistical infrastructure, as well as proposals from developing countries.

Sincerely,

The ICES-V Program Committee

Daniel Assoulin, Swiss Federal Statistical Office

Pierre Lavallée, Statistics Canada

Daniel Lewis, Office for National Statistics (UK)

Darcy Miller, National Agricultural Statistics Service (USA)

Richard Penny, Statistics New Zealand

Polly Phipps, Bureau of Labor Statistics (USA) (Chair)

Michael Sinclair, Mathematica Policy Research (USA)

Ger Snijders, Statistics Netherlands

Katherine Jenny Thompson, US Census Bureau

Vanessa Torres van Grinsven, Utrecht University

See the next page for the formal announcement.



The Fifth International Conference on Establishment Surveys (ICES-V)



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

Swiss Confederation

Federal Department of Home Affairs FOHA
Federal Statistical Office FSO

Methods and Practices for Statistics
on Businesses, Farms and Institutions

20–23 June 2016

International Conference Center, Geneva, Switzerland

Call for Invited Sessions

As the fifth in the series of international conferences on establishment surveys, ICES-V is designed to look forward at key issues and methods pertaining to establishment surveys. The program committee invites you to submit a proposal for an invited paper session by 31 March 2015. The ICES-V program committee will review the proposals and notify session organizers by the beginning of June 2015 to let them know whether their proposal has been accepted.

Format of Invited Sessions

The layout of invited sessions is flexible; the only constraint is that they will last 100 minutes, including floor discussion. The session organizer may choose the format that is considered most appropriate, but should leave time for a 10–15 minute floor discussion. It is not necessary to have a discussant, but session proposals with a discussant will be preferred over those without one. Some examples of possible formats are:

- 2 papers (35 minutes, or one longer and one shorter presentation) + discussant (15 minutes) + floor discussions (15 minutes)
- 3 papers (25 minutes) + discussant (10–15 minutes) + floor discussions (10–15 minutes)
- 4 papers (20 minute sessions) + discussant (10 minutes) + floor discussions (10 minutes)
- 4 papers (20 minute sessions) + floor discussions (20 minutes)

Submission of proposals

Submission of invited session proposals will open 1 January 2015, and close 31 March 2015. Session organizers will be asked to submit a proposal describing in detail the session topic, why it is important or what has changed since ICES-IV, and include the names of session presenters/discussant, and short descriptions of each presentation. The proposal should be based on the template available at www.portal-stat.admin.ch/ices5/invited-sessions.

Session organizers will be notified by the beginning of June 2015 about the program committee's decision. If a session proposal is accepted, session organizers will be asked to upload final abstracts of each presentation to the conference system by 30 September 2015, and to submit draft versions of the corresponding invited papers by 31 March 2016. If a proposal is not accepted as an invited session, the organizer will be invited to resubmit the session as a topic contributed session. The deadline for topic contributed sessions/papers is 31 August 2015. Information about the differences between the invited and topic contributed sessions and their formats is available at www.ices-v.ch.

www.ices-v.ch
ices-v@bfs.admin.ch



Criteria for Invited Sessions

There is a limited number of slots for invited sessions. Therefore the program committee is seeking sessions of a consistently high quality for ICES-V, so they request that organizers provide sufficient information to clearly demonstrate the importance of the topic and the quality of its contributions. The program committee encourages coherent proposals, addressing one or related topics but from various angles, and incorporating presenters and perspectives from different countries and organizations, e. g., with differences in the statistical infrastructure, as well as proposals from developing countries. The list below includes topics that the program committee considers to be highly relevant and need to be discussed at ICES-V.

Suggested Topics for Invited Sessions (ordered according to the survey process)

- Establishing and updating business registers, e. g., in developing countries, considering globalization issues
- Sample design and sample coordination challenges, including non-probability sampling
- Use of new technologies and methodologies for collecting data from businesses (incl. multi-mode, questionnaire design, adaptive and responsive survey designs using paradata, use of smartphones, gamification, electronic data interchange systems)
- Survey communication, respondent relations and motivation (incl. minimizing non-response, confidentiality, survey ethics, and disclosure protection)
- Data science – usage and integration of different data sources (incl. administrative and big data, re-use of survey data, record linkage) in establishment statistics
- New techniques regarding editing and imputation
- Estimation challenges (e. g. robust, model-based, small area and variance estimation, bias and non-response issues in estimation)
- Treatment of economic time series (seasonal adjustment, benchmarking, etc.)
- Quality issues and trade-off with costs, response burden, and timeliness of establishment statistics
- Management issues regarding running business surveys and producing business statistics (incl. generalized survey systems, IT issues, process monitoring, use of paradata)
- Producing establishment statistics in developing countries
- The impact of globalisation on producing statistics (e. g. collecting data from businesses in a globalized world, defining the business population and business sample frame, estimation challenges, producing new statistics, etc.)
- Unit problem(s) – identification of statistical units and inference about the effects (of misidentification/misclassification) on estimates
- The position of an NSI in the modern information market (incl. changing relationships with respondents and other producers of statistics, producing new statistics, and dissemination issues)

Timeline for Invited Sessions

- Invited proposal submission: open from **1 January 2015** → closing date **31 March 2015**
- Notification of acceptance to session organizers: by **1 June 2015**
- Invited abstract submission: open from **1 July 2015** → closing date: **30 September 2015**
- Invited draft paper submission: open from **1 February 2016** → closing date: **31 March 2016**
- Conference: **20–23 June 2016**, Geneva, Switzerland
- Submission of final paper for proceedings → closing date: **30 September 2016**

Invited session proposal submissions and inquiries may be directed to ices-v.invited@bfs.admin.ch.

Washington Statistical Society

Member Spotlight

Introducing your fellow members and showcasing the diversity of the WSS membership



Meet WSS Member Taylor Lewis...

1. Where do you work and what do you do?

I am a mathematical statistician for the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM), where the bulk of my time is spent working on the Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS). I also consult with other divisions within the agency on various research projects. Often my role is to propose the specific statistical method(s) to be used in the study or to design the sample for a survey or an audit of some kind.

2. What attracted you to your current position?

OPM offers a remarkably flexible work environment. I feel very fortunate to have been granted generous telecommuting arrangements and, at times, an unconventional work schedule, so that I could maintain full-time employment while pursuing a doctorate from the Joint Program in Survey Methodology (JPSM) at the University of Maryland. Plus, I felt the FEVS would be an ideal survey to use for my dissertation research, and being on the inside certainly makes life easier when trying to secure the pertinent permissions and assemble all necessary data.

3. Finish this sentence: "I joined WSS to..."

...network and stay connected with former colleagues.

4. What was your first job?

Working behind the counter at Firehook Bakery in Old Town, Alexandria.

5. Why did you join the statistics profession?

When I was in middle school, my brother and I were addicted to the Madden NFL football video game on the Sega Genesis console. We kept detailed record books on things like most rushing yards, passing yards, receiving yards, sacks, interceptions, etc. I realized then that I had a passion for statistics.

6. What profession other than your own would you like to attempt?

I have been a lifelong fan of *Saturday Night Live* (seeing a live recording is on my bucket list!) and I always got a big kick out of putting together humorous skits in high school and college. So perhaps I would try to make it as a writer on a sketch comedy show or sitcom.

7. If you could give your 18-year-old self one piece of advice, what would it be?

Although I know you are proud to demonstrate your recently acquired ability to grow facial hair, you must shave off those muttonchops!

8. Finish this sentence: "On an ideal Saturday, I would..."?

On an ideal Saturday, I would be leisurely strolling through a quaint, medieval city in Europe with my wife, Katie, our daughter, Tessa, and our standard schnauzer, Willow.

9. Have you had any great career mentors? If so, what made them great?

I worked for Glenn White at Ernst & Young as a summer intern before my last year as an undergraduate statistics major at Virginia Tech. Although my time there was brief, Glenn has remained in touch over the last decade, proving to be a great mentor and friend. In particular, I have benefited from his encouraging me to attend WSS events, his introducing me to countless well-respected professionals in the DC area, his writing letters of recommendation on my behalf, and his honest responses to my (sometimes naïve) questions.

10. Is there anything else you would like to share with the WSS members.

I suspect I am in the vast minority of WSS members who are actually native to the Washington, DC, area. I grew up in Alexandria, Virginia.

SPOTLIGHT A WSS MEMBER!

Washington Statistical Society's Spotlight on Members Program

The WSS Board of Directors has established a program to highlight members who have made or are making notable contributions to the work of their organization or their professional field of expertise. We know that WSS members are doing interesting work in the fields of statistics, survey methodology, and the social sciences. Through this program, we hope to spotlight the accomplishments of our fellow WSS members.

This is our first request for nominations, to be featured in an upcoming issue of WSS News. We are interested in featuring members at all levels of the employment spectrum including recent graduates, mid-career employees, and those seasoned veterans.

Please feel free to nominate more than one person or a team working together. You may also nominate yourself as well. The nominees must be members of the WSS and not currently affiliated with the Board.

Please provide us with the following information about your nominee or nominees.

1. Your name, email address, and telephone number
2. Name or names of nominee(s)
3. Organizational affiliation
4. Job title
5. Their contact information including email address and telephone number
6. A brief narrative describing the reasons for your nomination
7. A photo of the nominee, although not required, would be greatly appreciated

Please submit your nominations or direct any questions to, John Finamore (jfinamore@nsf.gov), member of the WSS Board.

We look forward to hearing from you.

STUDENT CORNER

Scholars & Statisticians Happy Hour. The Scholars & Statisticians Happy Hour is open to both area Statistics students and working Statisticians from Industry, Government, and Academia. They are a good way for students to learn more about our field and to make contacts. We decided to make this a monthly event; from now on, Scholars & Statisticians Happy Hour will take place the first Wednesday of each month, 6-8pm at KramerBooks bar in Dupont Circle.

On 4 February 2015 the WSS had its second Scholars & Statisticians Happy Hour. Several hearty souls braved the extreme cold to come out and talk about R vs SAS, Time Series Analysis, and what it's like to work at Census and Fish and Wildlife as a Statistician. Here are the photos:

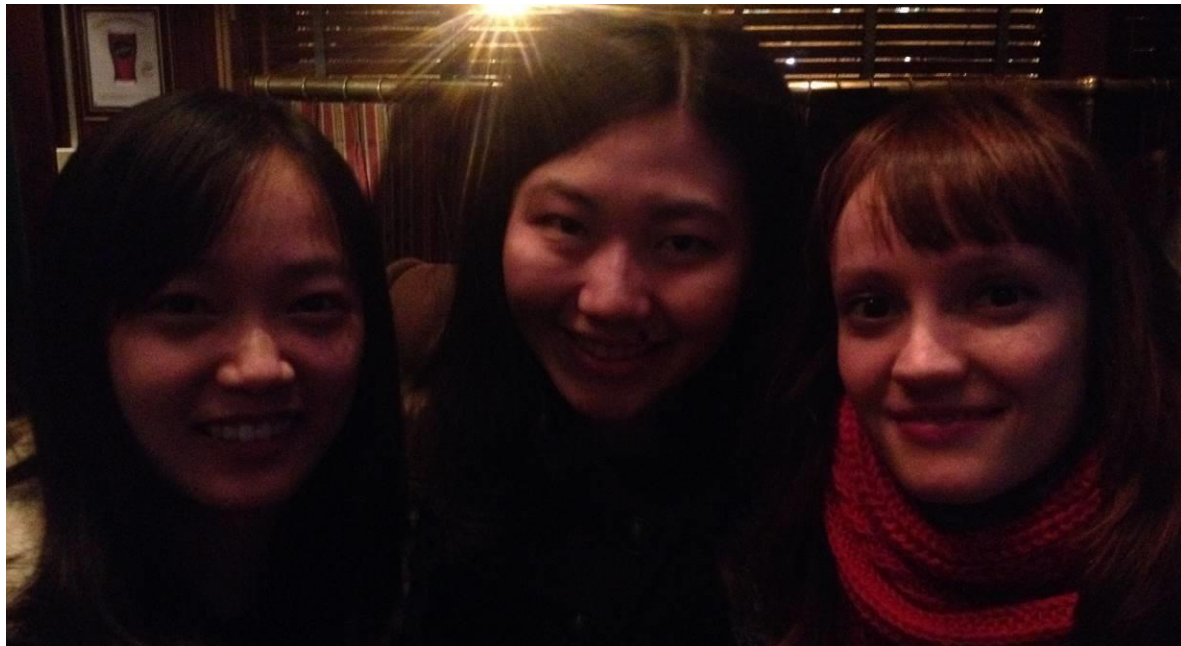


Figure 1. The Scholars (Kelly, Evelyn & Kat)



Figure 2. The Statisticians (Tim, Chuck & Mark)

Science Fair Judges Needed. WSS is looking for Statistics students who can help judge local Science Fairs. This is a lot of fun, only requires a few hours, and helps encourage the kids to pursue studies in STEM. Next month there will be five Science Fairs at which you can help. If you're interested, please contact Dhuly Chowdhury (dchowdhury@rti.org):

Saturday, March 7, 9:30 AM - 12 PM

Northern Virginia Regional Science and Engineering Fair
Head judge (confirmed): Mike Fay

Saturday, March 21, 8:30 AM

Prince George's Area Science Fair
Head judge (confirmed): Promod Chandhok

Saturday, March 21, 6:45 AM-12:30 PM

Fairfax County Regional Science and Engineering Fair
Head judge: Mike Fleming

Saturday, March 14, 9:30 AM-5 PM

Montgomery County Science Fair

Head judge (confirmed): Mike Messner

Saturday, March 28, 8 AM-12 PM

DC STEM Fair

Head judge: Lee Abramson

~ WSS Student Rep, Tim Allen (tim.allen@fema.dhs.gov)

SEEKING AWARD NOMINATIONS

Roger Herriot Award

Roger Herriot was the Associate Commissioner of Statistical Standards and Methodology at the U.S. National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) when he died in 1994. Prior to his service at NCES, he also held several positions at the U.S. Census Bureau, including Chief of the Population Division. Soon after his death, the Social Statistics and Government Statistics Sections of the American Statistical Association (ASA) along with the Washington Statistical Society (a chapter of ASA) established the Roger Herriot Award for Innovation in Federal Statistics. The award is intended to recognize individuals or teams who, like Roger, develop unique and innovative approaches to the solution of statistical problems in federal data collection programs.

Nominations are sought for the **2015 Roger Herriot Award for Innovation in Federal Statistics**. The award is intended to reflect the special characteristics that marked Roger Herriot's career including:

- Dedication to the issues of measurement;
- Improvements in the efficiency of data collection programs; and
- Improvements and use of statistical data for policy analysis.

The award is not limited to senior members of an organization, nor is it to be considered as a culmination of a long period of service. Individuals or teams at all levels within Federal statistical agencies, other government organizations, nonprofit organizations, the private sector, and the academic community may be nominated on the basis of their contributions. As innovation often requires or results from teamwork, team nominations are encouraged. Team innovations often are more lasting, resulting in real paradigm shifts, not just one-off improvements. For an example, see the 1998 Herriot (team) award.

The recipient of the 2013 Roger Herriot Award will be chosen by a committee comprising representatives of the Social Statistics and Government Statistics Sections of the American Statistical Association, and of the Washington Statistical Society. Roger Herriot was associated with, and strongly supportive of, these organizations during his career. The award consists of a \$1,000 honorarium and a framed citation, which will be presented at a ceremony at the Joint Statistical Meetings in August 2013. The Washington Statistical Society will also host a seminar given by the winner on a subject of his or her own choosing.

Past Award Recipients:

1995 - Joseph Waksberg (Westat)
1996 - Monroe Sirken (National Center for Health Statistics)
1997 - Constance Citro (National Academy of Sciences)
1998 - Roderick Harrison (U.S. Census Bureau), Clyde Tucker (Bureau of Labor Statistics)
1999 - Thomas Jabine (SSA, EIA, CNSTAT)
2000 - Donald Dillman (Washington State University)
2001 - Jeanne Griffith (OMB, NCES, NSF)
2002 - Daniel Weinberg (U. S. Census Bureau)
2003 - David Banks (FDA, BTS, NIST)
2004 - Paula Schneider (U.S. Census Bureau)
2005 - Robert E. Fay III (U.S. Census Bureau)
2006 - Nathaniel Schenker (National Center for Health Statistics)
2007 - Nancy J. Kirkendall (Office of Management and Budget)
2008 - Elizabeth Martin (U.S. Census Bureau)
2009 - Lynda Carlson (National Science Foundation)
2010 - Katharine Abraham (University of Maryland)
2011 - Michael Messner (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency)
2012 - Paul Biemer (RTI International)
2013 - Exact Match Team (Social Security Administration, Census Bureau, and Internal Revenue Service)
2014 - Longitudinal Employer Household Dynamics study; Abowd, Haltiwanger, Lane

Nominations for the 2015 award will be accepted beginning in **January 2015**. Nomination packages should contain:

- A cover letter from the nominator that includes references to specific examples of the nominee's contributions to innovation in Federal statistics. These contributions can be to methodology, procedure, organization, administration, or other areas of Federal statistics, and need not have been made by or while a Federal employee.
- Up to six additional letters in support that demonstrate the innovativeness of each contribution.
- A current vita for the nominee with current contact information. For team nominations, the vitae of all team members should be included.

The committee may consider nominations made for prior years, but it encourages resubmission of those nominations with updated information.

For more information, contact Fritz Scheuren, Chair of the 2016 Roger Herriot Award Committee, at 202-320-3446 or Scheuren@aol.com. **Completed packages must be received by April 1, 2015.** Electronic submissions in MS-Word or as a "pdf" file are strongly encouraged.

GET INVOLVED WITH WSS!

The Washington Statistical Society, in collaboration with The American Statistical Association runs a Statistical Poster Competition for school children in grades K-12 in the Washington DC metro area. This is part of the Poster competition run by ASA with the WSS judging and awarding prizes to local children. There are four age groups and children may work singly or in small groups under the supervision of a teacher or guide.

Winning entries of the WSS competition are automatically advanced to the second round of the national competition where they may win addition prizes and recognition. Local area winners and their guides/teachers are invited to attend the WSS annual dinner as guests to receive their prizes.

Our aim is to encourage a new generation of children to explore the exciting world of math and statistics. The deadline for entries is **April 1 2015**. For additional information or questions please contact Barnali Das (barnalidas@westat.com).

See next page for more information about the competition.



ANNUAL POSTER COMPETITION FOR K-12 STUDENTS



Entries must be postmarked by the deadline date: **April 1, 2015.**

Call for Entries

The *American Statistical Association* (ASA) has an annual poster competition for students in Grades K-12, with separate winners in Grades K-3, 4-6, 7-9 and 10-12. The aim is to increase statistical awareness and understanding via a statistical poster containing two or more related graphics that summarize a set of data, look at the data from different points of view, and answer specific questions about the data in a coherent manner.

The *Washington Statistical Society* (WSS), a chapter of the American Statistical Association (ASA), is awarding prizes for the competition in the Washington DC metropolitan area. Winners of this local competition will then be entered into the national competition.

Objectives

Enhance students' understanding of:

- ▶ the use of statistics in the real world
- ▶ how statistics are used to analyze information
- ▶ the importance of graphical displays
- ▶ how to prepare a coherent poster presentation

Entry Rules & Guidelines

This local competition follows the rules and evaluation process for the national competition at:

<http://www.amstat.org/education/posterprojects/index.cfm>.

The deadline for submission of entries is **April 1** of each year. Note: Although the forms and posters are sent to the ASA national office, they will be judged separately from the posters from other regions.

Further questions can be directed to Barnali Das at (301) 279-4593 or barnalidas@westat.com.

Eligibility

- ▶ Grades K-12
- ▶ Residence in the Washington DC metropolitan area

Evaluation

- ▶ **Overall impact** – Eye-catching appeal, visual attractiveness, and ability to draw the viewer to investigate the individual graphs
- ▶ **Clarity** – Demonstration of important relationships and patterns in a clear and coherent manner
- ▶ **Appropriateness** – Appropriate graphics for the data
- ▶ **Creativity!**

Prizes & Awards

WSS Poster Competition winners will be awarded as follows:

INDIVIDUAL ENTRIES

1st Prize:	\$100
2nd Prize & 3rd Prize:	\$50

TEAM ENTRIES

1st Prize: \$50 for each team member, up to a maximum of \$200.

2nd Prize & 3rd Prize: \$25 for each team member, up to a maximum of \$100.

Winners and their teachers/academic supervisors will also be invited to attend the annual WSS awards dinner. For team entries, a maximum of four students per entry will be provided with free meals, although additional students may attend the dinner at their own cost.

Prizes & Awards cont'd.

Winners will also have their submissions sent to the national ASA poster competition.

National winners will receive additional prizes as described at:

<http://www.amstat.org/education/posterprojects/prizes.cfm>

Useful Resources about What Makes a Successful Poster

- ▶ Webinar at:

<http://www.amstat.org/education/posterprojects/PosterCompetitionWebinar12-3-07.wmv>

- ▶ Comments from judges of the 2013 competition at:

http://www.amstat.org/education/posterprojects/2013Posters_Observations.pdf

- ▶ Winning posters from recent competitions at:

<http://www.amstat.org/education/posterprojects/prizes.cfm>

The WSS and ASA also have competitions for written papers/projects with significant statistical content/analyses. Details for those competitions are at:

- ▶ WSS Curtis Jacobs Memorial Prize: <http://washstat.org/jacobs.pdf>

- ▶ ASA: <http://www.amstat.org/education/posterprojects/index.cfm>



The Washington Statistical Society Mentoring Program

By meeting others in our profession we can quickly learn the ropes, advance our careers, and contribute to the statistical profession. To facilitate engagement and to encourage the transfer of valuable experience between Washington Statistical Society (WSS) members, the WSS is starting a mentoring program in 2015. (The program is also open to nonmembers, but they would eventually become WSS members through this program.) Matching mentors and mentees offers a great opportunity for mentees to develop as statisticians, mentors to “give back” to newer members of our profession, and for everyone to stay connected to the WSS. We are currently looking for mentors and mentees for 2015.

What are the benefits of a mentoring program?

The WSS Mentorship Initiative was inspired by and draws on the mentoring initiative underway throughout ASA that encourages chapters and sections to consider mentoring programs (“President’s Corner”, AMSTAT News, February, 2015). It also suggests the initiation of a regular acknowledgement, such as the annual selection, of an outstanding mentor. The WSS is a leader in this regard having started the Jeanne Griffith award program more than a decade ago. The potential benefits of participating in the program are described well by the ASA Committee on Applied Statisticians:

For mentors: (1) a connection with skills and perspectives of recently trained professionals, (2) development and enhancement of communication and leadership skills, and (3) satisfaction of passing on skills and knowledge that can enhance the career and personal growth of the mentee and contribute to maturity of the profession. The program may answer important questions including: How do you identify and introduce opportunity to others? How do you describe your own experiences to others to encourage them to take more strategic risks? How do you teach others to network effectively? Mentors usually get more from their relationships by learning something along the way about the new challenges of their mentees.

For mentees: 1) a role model, but more accurately a sounding board, for questions about methods of analysis and communication of results, 2) a source of perspective, encouragement, and motivation leading to greater self-confidence and esteem. Help in establishing professional development plans, career goals and acceleration of their achievement; and 3) a source of professional/social contacts with other applied statisticians in the field—“plugs you into the power network”. The mentoring program may answer important questions including: How do you create opportunities for yourself? How do you promote yourself? How do you network with others? How did you get to where you want to be? What are next steps?

How does the WSS Mentoring Program work?

If you are an Interested, first complete a simple application form on the WSS website (below). The information will be used to match a mentor to a mentee, taking into account their stage of career, area of statistical expertise, and goals for mentoring. The WSS Mentoring Program committee will host a kickoff meeting in the Spring of 2015 to get the program off to a great start with guidance and suggestions about productive and fruitful ways to interact. Program materials will be provided to help guide the mentors and mentees through potential conversations, although the topics discussed are up to the mentor and mentees themselves. The program will continue through the correspondence between the mentor and mentee for at least six months into the Fall of 2015. Those in the program will meet either on the phone, on Skype, or face-to-face with their mentees a few times during the time period. Participants will be asked to complete a short evaluation survey at the end of that period to learn and improve on the program. The main purpose of the survey will be to assess our mentor-mentee matching system. The survey responses will be completely de-identified to ensure anonymity. We encourage mentors and mentees to continue to meet after the formal program period if it is mutually productive.

How do I get started?

Please complete the application form at the WSS website, WashingtonStatisticalSociety.org/mentoring/ by **April 17, 2015**. If you are interested, but have questions about the program, contact one of the committee members: Mark Otto (Mark.Otto@FWS.Gov), Jaki McCarthy (Jaki.mccarthy@nass.usda.gov), Dhuly Chowdhury (DChowdhury@RTI.org), or Tom Krenzke (TomKrenzke@Westat.Com).
--Submitted by the WSS mentoring committee members

SAS IS NOW FREE!

SAS is now free for anyone in the world that is interested in learning, teaching or using SAS for non-commercial purposes.

See the information below. For those who are interested in teaching SAS and/or connected to a University, please note our free teaching material and training opportunities.

For more general information about this program, called SAS Analytics U, please [CLICK HERE](#).

There are two ways to access this free software.

Free University Edition

The [University Edition](#) software offering, despite the name, is available for use by any learner anywhere in the world for **non-commercial** use. It can be used for academic research and for academic teaching. University Edition runs within a virtual machine, therefore it will run on PCs, Macs and Linux operating systems.

University Edition has the new [SAS Studio](#) interface which allows users to write code or utilize a set of guided tasks which will write the code for you for a pre-determined set of analyzes. There are free [video tutorials](#) and teaching materials to introduce you to this interface.

There are four SAS products under University Edition; BASE SAS, SAS/STAT, SAS/IML and Access to PC Files. All of these are full versions of the products and are not limited or “student” versions. The size of the data you can analyze depends on the storage and memory of the machine on which it runs since it is running locally.

University Edition can be used for preparing for SAS Certification, learning the SAS programming language and learning statistical concepts from basic to advanced. What is not included in University Edition is support for other languages, the high performance procedures nor the ODS graphics. Graphing capabilities as part of the 9.4 procedures are included with the procedures.

Free SAS OnDemand for Academics

SAS also provides access to another free product for non-commercial learning activities. SAS Studio which is available through [SAS OnDemand for Academics](#) is cloud based access to SAS. As this is cloud access and not downloadable, learners have access to four additional pieces of SAS software with this offering. SAS/ETS (time series), SAS/OR (operations research), SAS/QC (quality control), SAS/Graph (more configurable graphing options) and the high performance procedures are available through this offering. The same tutorials and free e-learning available as well.

Also available through SAS OnDemand for Academics is access to SAS Enterprise Miner, SAS Forecast Server and SAS Enterprise Guide. These are available for academic teaching or for student research. This requires a professor to set up a course space and invite students to register for access.

A broadband internet connection is required as the actual processing is done on remote SAS servers. A busy ISP or overloaded campus wireless network or other slow internet connection beyond our control can affect performance.

Here is the link to the support site that has the new registration instructions. <http://support.sas.com/ondemand/steps.html>

Associated Learning Materials

SAS provides a variety of teaching and learning materials at no cost.

- Free access to a selection of online self-paced e-learning courses that teach the use of the software and SAS programming.
 - Free [SAS Programming 1 e-Course](#)
 - Free [Statistics 1 e-Course](#)
 - Free [Introduction to Statistical Concepts e-Course](#)
- Free online video tutorials if you want quick, just in time instructions
 - SAS Studio interface tutorials <http://support.sas.com/training/tutorial/>
 - SAS Programming language tutorials <http://support.sas.com/training/tutorial/#s1=4>

Teaching Materials

Professors and PhD students have free access to the materials we use to teach our public training courses; including PowerPoint Slides, instructor notes and data sets. More information and a list of the available materials are located [here](#).

Professor Workshops and training

The full training calendar for 2015 has not been completed. Please be sure to follow up with me regarding the dates, times and locations. These trainings typically take place in January and July. A list of the 2014 offering can be seen [here](#).

SAS [Visual Analytics](#) and SAS [Visual Statistics](#) software are available for teaching at **no cost**, through a partnership with [Teradata University Network \(TUN\)](#). Professors and students must register with TUN but access is free. On the SAS pages on TUN, there are user guides, a scripted demo and some sample exercises. At the present time, you are unable to load your own data but there are 12 data sets available for you to use.

There are also sets of [teaching materials](#) available at no cost as well. The Visual Analytics courses are:

- [SAS Visual Analytics for Professors](#)
- [SAS Visual Analytics: Fast Track](#)
- [SAS Visual Analytics: Getting Started](#)

POC: **Joshua T. Hewitt** | Academic Outreach and Collaborations Manager
SAS | Education Practice
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COURSES & WORKSHOPS

New Master's Program in Analytics/Data Science Georgetown University

Georgetown University will start a new Masters program in Analytics with a concentration in Data Science in the fall of 2015. This is a 30 credit, 10 course residential program for professional preparation which is offered jointly by the Departments of Computer Science and of Mathematics and Statistics. The program is suitable for full-time as well as for part-time study.

There are five required courses including Intro to Data Analytics, Massive Data Fundamentals, Statistical Learning Theory, Visualization, Probability with Statistical Computing.

Five additional elective courses may be chosen from a broad array of Masters level courses at these two departments, such as Optimization, Information Retrieval, Bayesian Statistics, or Text Mining. Applicants should have completed multivariable calculus, linear algebra, an additional proof based mathematics or statistics course, and a course in calculus-based statistics. They should also have coding experience in a high level programming or scripting language (e.g. C++, R or Python).

The deadline for applications is **April 1, 2015**. More information may be found at the program website, <http://gradanalytics.georgetown.edu>, or by contacting the program director at the coordinates below:

Hans Engler
Director of Graduate Studies, Analytics
gradanalytics@georgetown.edu
Graduate School of Arts and Sciences.
3520 Prospect Street NW, Suite 400
Washington, DC 20057

Forthcoming Info-Metrics Institute Training/Tutorial Short Classes American University, Washington, DC

Nonparametric Kernel Methods for Practitioners across the Sciences

May 18 - 22, 2015

Jeffrey S. Racine (McMaster University)

Interdisciplinary Applications of Microeconometrics

May 25 - 29, 2015

William Greene (New York University)

For specific topics studied in these classes see our web page:

<http://www.american.edu/cas/economics/info-metrics/econometrics.cfm>

Registration opens soon. Space is limited. To register in advance or for more information on these courses, please visit our Info-Metrics Summer Program web page, or contact Yang Liu at info-metrics@american.edu.

Info-Metrics Institute

American University

4400 Massachusetts Ave NW, Kreeger 104

Washington, DC 20016-8029

<http://www.american.edu/info-metrics>

**Practical Tools for Sampling and Weighting Survey Samples
MARCH 30-31, 2015**

Presented by Richard L. Valliant and Jill A. Dever

Registration and Payment Due by March 16, 2015

https://projects.isr.umich.edu/jpsm/html_content.cfm?CourseID=033015

**Introduction to Survey Management
APRIL 16-17, 2015**

Bureau of Labor Statistics Conference Center, Washington DC 20212

Presented by Steven G. Heeringa and Nancy Gebler

Registration and Payment Due by April 2, 2015

https://projects.isr.umich.edu/jpsm/html_content.cfm?CourseID=041615

**Total Survey Error
MAY 4-5, 2015**

Presented by Paul P. Biemer and Lars Lyberg

Registration and Payment Due by April 20, 2015

https://projects.isr.umich.edu/jpsm/html_content.cfm?CourseID=050415

**Introduction to Survey Estimation
MAY 28-29, 2015**

Presented by David Morganstein and Sunghee Lee

Registration and Payment Due by May 14, 2015

https://projects.isr.umich.edu/jpsm/html_content.cfm?CourseID=052815

**Practical Tools for Nonresponse Bias Studies
SEPTEMBER 18, 2015**

Presented by Jill Montaquila and Kristen Olson

Registration and Payment Due by September 4, 2015

https://projects.isr.umich.edu/jpsm/html_content.cfm?CourseID=091815

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Elizabeth Johnson ejohns40@gmu.edu

FROM THE WSS NEWS EDITOR

Items for publication in the **April, 2015** issue of WSS NEWS will be accepted thru the **30th** of **preceding month**.

Email items to wss.editor@gmail.com.

The authors are responsible for verifying the contents of their submissions. Submissions requiring extensive revisions on length and/or contents will be returned.

Please submit all materials as an attachment in **MS WORD** or **plain text**. Submissions in any other format will be returned.

PLEASE DO NOT SUBMIT YOUR ITEMS IN PDF OR IN THE BODY OF AN EMAIL.



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