International Association for Social Science
Information Services & Technology

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REGIONAL REPORT

CANADA 🇨🇦

2011/2012

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Regional Secretary for Canada

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TIES THAT BIND

Although the Canadian *Data Liberation Initiative* (DLI) celebrated its fifteenth "formal" anniversary in October 2011, its roots run deeper. The project began as a pilot project and is now celebrated for its success. The DLI identified, brought together and unified Canadian researchers and research providers into a vibrant network – ties that bind. Canadian researchers, from coast to coast, have moved forward and their accomplishments are to be recognized and celebrated on a grand scale. The work continues and we look forward to bigger and better accomplishments.

Now, the history of the *Data Liberation Initiative* has been written by two of the people who know its story as well, perhaps better, than anyone else – co-founders Ernie Boyko and Wendy Watkins. Read *The Canadian Data Liberation Initiative. An Idea worth Considering?*[1]

Additionally, Ernie and Wendy are preparing an entry for the upcoming *Encyclopedia of Quality of Life Research*, Alex C. Michalos, editor.

We look forward to the next fifteen years of the *Data Liberation Initiative* as well as the chronicles which will accompany them.   Ties that bind.

DATA FORECAST: BLEAK – CENSUS, BUDGET AND TERMINATED SURVEYS

In 2011, Canada suffered a severely compromised *Census* with the elimination of a mandatory long form. This year the Conservative government's budget cuts have slashed deeply into Canada's national statistical agency, resulting in the layoff of a substantial number of employees and the termination of many surveys. Rather than invest in the production of data to monitor the lives of Canadians during these volatile times, the Government has chosen to eliminate data that would reveal the undercurrents shaping society and the economy.

NATIONAL

CANADIAN ASSOCIATION OF PUBLIC DATA USERS (CAPDU)

It was a fairly quiet year for CAPDU and now discussions are underway as to what role CAPDU plays amidst all of the other overlapping data groups. CAPDU played a major role in sharing information surrounding the cancellation of the *2011 Census of Canada Long-Form Survey*.

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[1] Boyko, Ernie and Wendy Watkins. 2011. "The Canadian Data Liberation Initiative. An Idea Worth Considering?" International Household Survey Network, IHSN Working Paper No 006.

Today, there are new challenges surrounding data due to cuts at Statistics Canada and the cancellation of funding to the *First Nations Statistical Institute* by March 2014, to name but two. Generally, there is recognition that CAPDU is needed for advocacy purposes and it is likely that CAPDU will become more active in the near future.

CANADIAN ASSOCIATION OF RESEARCH LIBRARIES (CARL)

IASSIST members Michelle Edwards, Wendy Watkins and Chuck Humphrey participated on the *Data Infrastructure Modeling Subcommittee* for the *Canadian Association of Research Libraries*. This subcommittee produced a business case for a proposal to the *Canadian Foundation for Innovation* to build a national research data management infrastructure. This proposal was endorsed by the September 2011 national *Data Summit* and final steps were in place to submit a multi-institutional application when the Vice Presidents of Research from 15 universities torpedoed the proposal in October 2011. The CARL directors chose not to compete without the support of the VP-Rs.

CANADIAN INTERNATIONAL POLAR YEAR (IPY) DATA ASSEMBLY CENTRE NETWORK

 The *Network* completed its implementation of a preservation backbone between *ScholarsPortal* at the University of Toronto and the University of Alberta Libraries. In April 2012, this national network rebranded itself to become *the Canadian Polar Data Network* and is completing a governance structure to move forward as a permanent data infrastructure for research data in the Canadian Arctic. IASSIST members Bo Wandschneider and Chuck Humphrey have been involved in this development.

DATA LIBERATION INITIATIVE

Ongoing staff changes have been taking place this spring at the DLI. By the end of Fall 2012, with the exception of one person, the DLI will have an entirely new staff.

The current top two priorities for the DLI are related to knowledge transfer and moving to new technology. A new repository is needed; the *Listserv* is not supported anymore, thereby necessitating a move to up-to-date technology; improved accessibility to the Website is needed.

Tagging PUMFs in DDI format is temporarily on hold due to staffing issues and efforts to make the transition to a new person (circa July) go as smoothly as possible will be taken. DLI also works with the DDI Centre at Statistics Canada where master files in the Research Data Centres are being tagged in DDI format. This project will end December 31, 2012 which creates the need to investigate ways in which, at least partially, automation can be implemented in creating DDI format records.

Statistics Canada has made its data free as of February 2012. The DLI remains as vital as ever as it provides valuable and essential training and support to the data and the academic data community. The licence will be adjusted to reflect changes. Note: there are series of products that remain available only through the DLI which include the *Canadian Institute for Health Information* (CIHI)

data sets and other PUMFs. It is not yet known how the postal code files and data at the postal code level will be affected.

RESEARCH DATA STRATEGY WORKING GROUP

A national *Data Summit* was held in Canada on September 14-15, 2011 in Ottawa. Organized by the *Research Data Strategy Working Group*, this event brought together 160 top-level representatives from organizations that produce, manage or use research data to discuss a vision for data management in Canada and to develop next steps in actualizing such a vision. A final report from this event was released in January 2012, *Mapping the Data Landscape: Report of the 2011 Canadian Research Data Summit.* Coming out of this Summit, Chad Gaffield, President of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, emerged as a national spokesperson for research data.

PROVINCIAL

BRITISH COLUMBIA

Open Data Society of BC

On May 28, the Open Data Society of BC was announced on the *OpenDataBC* Beta web site: http://www.opendatabc.ca/announcement.html.   This grassroots organization was formed to support the open data community in British Columbia. It is a non-profit, member-driven organization created to promote and support open data initiatives.

ALBERTA

University of Alberta

Larry Laliberte began working as a GIS Librarian at the end of March, in time for the *Campus Data Summit*. Larry brings welcomed experience in this role, having worked in this capacity at the University for Manitoba for several years.

At the *Campus Data Summit*, the University of Alberta Libraries, working in collaboration with the *Canadian Circumpolar Institute* (CCI), hosted the first of four events on campus to begin a conversation among research stakeholders around data management and preservation. The four events focus on research in different domains across campus. The first, held on March 22-23, 2012, brought together researchers from the biosciences and the North. The other three events will be for (a) the humanities & social sciences, (b) health & medicine and (c) engineering & the physical sciences. Each of these events has its own program committee that includes participation from researchers, the Libraries, CCI and other units on campus that support research, such as, AICT, VP-Research Office, Research Services and the Research Ethics Office. We are looking for better coordinated ways of supporting researchers on campus, including institutional policy changes to support data management and preservation. The website for the first event is

http://datasummit.library.ualberta.ca. A survey on data sharing and management is being run concurrently with these events.

SASKATCHEWAN

University of Regina

GIS services were expanded. A GIS Technician is now working twenty-one hours per week with the hiring of a GIS Technician.   Titus Olowokudejo, is available to assist students, staff and faculty with incorporating GIS in to their work. He brings more than eight years of experience as a GIS expert and consultant in both university and industry settings.

Spatial And Numeric Data Services held their 2nd Annual *GIS and Data Expo* in November 2011. It was larger than the first year's event and the 2012 edition is in the organizing and planning stages.

ONTARIO

Ontario Council of University Libraries (OCUL)

OCUL released *Scholars GeoPortal* (http://geo.scholarsportal.info) on March 1, 2012.

Scholars GeoPortal was awarded the 2012 Ontario Library and Information Technology Association (OLITA) *Award for Technical Innovation.* The geospatial data discovery tool enables Ontario's university students and researchers to enrich their teaching and research by engaging with OCUL's growing collection of geospatial data. The portal offers search, preview, query, download and sharing functionality for datasets licensed by Ontario university libraries, covering such topics as land use, transportation networks, census boundaries, geology, soils, points of interest (such as healthcare facilities, schools, and airports), air photos, and more.

Scholars GeoPortal is the result of a 3-year OCUL project supported by the Government of Ontario through its *OntarioBuys* initiative. A collaborative effort including the work of OCUL members and faculty from across the province, the *Scholars Portal* team, and partners from the Ontario government, this new platform is powered by ESRI's *ArcGIS* suite of software.

Scholars GeoPortal's features include: geographic searching by place names and addresses, or by drawing a box on the map; adding data to the map view & manipulating the transparency and draw order of layers on the map; selecting from a variety of base maps; identifying individual features on the map; viewing and querying attribute tables; annotating the map by marking and labeling points and shapes of interest; saving maps to your user account; printing, exporting, or sharing (linking to) your map; downloading data in a variety of formats and projections, as well as, both French and English language interfaces.

Scholars GeoPortal's collections currently include data from Statistics Canada (through *the Data Liberation Initiative*), Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources (through the *Ontario Geospatial Data Exchange*), and DMTI Spatial Inc. Data from these providers are continually being added to the portal.

Leanne Hindmarch leanne@scholarsportal.info can be contacted for more information.

University of Guelph

Michelle Edwards became the Academic Director for the University of Guelph Branch Research Data Centre (affiliated with the Southwestern Ontario Research Data Centre at the University of Waterloo) http://www.statcan.gc.ca/rdc-cdr/index-eng.htm.

University of Ottawa

Susan Mowers began a research study with Chuck Humphrey to conduct a *Survey of Research Data Management Practices and Needs in Canada*. The purpose is twofold, to update evidence gathered in two previous surveys on the subject (Humphrey, 2001 and Perry, 2006) and to expand the survey to cover university researchers in all disciplines. Currently ethics approval has been obtained to proceed on this multi-site survey, and pilot testing is completed.

University of Windsor

The Academic Data Centre added a Geospatial and Data Analyst. Carina Luo will be of great help in expanding support for GIS on campus.

INTERNATIONAL

ASSOCIATION OF RESEARCH LIBRARIES (ARL)

Canadian IASSIST members Jeff Moon, Berenica Vejvoda and Chuck Humphrey were involved in the *ARL e-Science Institute* that was conducted between July 2011 and January 2012. Jeff and Berenica were members of their institution's e-Science teams developing a strategic agenda for their campuses, while Chuck was on the Institute's instructional staff. U.S. IASSIST members also on the instructional staff were Jake Carlson and Nancy McGovern.

CONSORTIA ADVANCING STANDARDS IN RESEARCH ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION (CASRAI)

CASRAI, a Canadian-based standards body developing semantic dictionaries for research administrative information, released a video on *YouTube* that communicates clearly the use of metadata for multiple purposes in research (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gmx7U9-i3Gg). CASRAI is now collaborating with JISC in the UK and working on a project to define a semantic dictionary for a data management plan template. Also, VIVO (vivoweb.org) in the US is now partnering with CASRAI.

GLOBAL RESEARCH DATA INFRASTRUCTURE (GRDI) 2020 WORKSHOP ON THE BIG DATA CHALLENGES

In October 2011, Chuck Humphrey made two presentations at the *GRDI 2020 Research Data Infrastructure 2020 workshop on the Big Data Challenges*. The background report for this event was the GRDI2020 Roadmap, which has as a primary theme an "interoperable science ecosystem" consisting of digital data libraries, digital data archives and digital research libraries. This is an institutionally based approach to research data infrastructure that capitalizes on technology.

ICPSR (INTER-UNIVERSITY CONSORTIUM FOR POLITICAL AND SOCIAL RESEARCH)

ICPSR Council

Jeff Moon, Queen's University Library completed a four-year term as Council Member. Marilyn Andrews, University of Regina Library was elected to Council for the period 2012-2016.

William H. Flanigan Award

At the 2011 Biennial Official Representatives Meeting in Ann Arbor, Laine Ruus was awarded the *William H. Flanigan Award for Distinguished Service* as an ICPSR Official Representative.
http://www.icpsr.umich.edu/icpsrweb/content/ICPSR/or/awards/ruus.html
Congratulations on this well-deserved award, Laine.

OECD (ORGANISATION FOR ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT)

The **OECD Global Science Forum Data and Infrastructure for the Social Sciences** released their final report *Changing Science: New Data for Understanding the Human* Condition in April 2012. The output of this eighteen-month study places a key report on social science data on the international stage amongst the growing number of international and national reports on data management infrastructure, such as, *Riding the Wave: How Europe can gain from the rising tide of scientific data; Harnessing the Power of Digial Data for Science and Society* and *Global Research Data Infrastructures: the GRDI 2020 vision*. Several IASSIST members were on this panel, including Sami Borg, Bjorn Henrichsen, Myron Gutmann, Roxane Silberman and Chuck Humphrey from Canada.

CONCLUSION

Another extremely busy year with highs and lows, challenges and successes has been completed. The report is a composite of submissions from numerous colleagues and I thank all of them for their contributions. Any errors or omissions are mine.