SWOT Analysis of SSRI Data, Programming & Statistics

December 6, 2012

Strengths

- Familiarity with Social Science research methods and data
- Wide range of skills within group
- Skills sets overlap providing a certain amount of backup
- Easy to access/hire support, especially short-term, "tag-team" work
- Being embedded in the administrative/research teams builds strong working relationships with faculty, staff, students
- Expertise in issues related to use and management of restricted data
- Web Developer/Content Provider model taking hold

Weaknesses

- Wider range of skills in a wider range of disciplines are required to tackle Social Science research questions
- No clear boundaries or focus on services that should be offered
- Will need more 21st century data science expertise to meet needs
- Coming up with appropriate, effective content for web and other media
- "Gaps" in funding are a burden on the Institute

Challenges

- Protective (suppressive?) stance on programming services prohibits adequate marketing efforts
- Impact of outsourcing services is not well understood
- Colleges and units at PSU have fragmented and uneven access to statistical and programming (both research and administrative)
- Administrative programming needs continue to grow; analytics needed
- Can be difficult to collaborate with other units both inside and outside SSRI
- Current consultation services underused; conversely there is growing demand for statistical *practitioners*

Opportunities

- Staff turnover due to retirements over next few years
- Research Data Center
- Building relationships with other units like UL, HMC, OVPR, etc allows us to help mold their services to fit our researchers needs and provide a wider array of services efficiently
- Growing recognition of the field of "Data Science" (usually defined as the intersection of Programming, Statistical and Substantive skills)

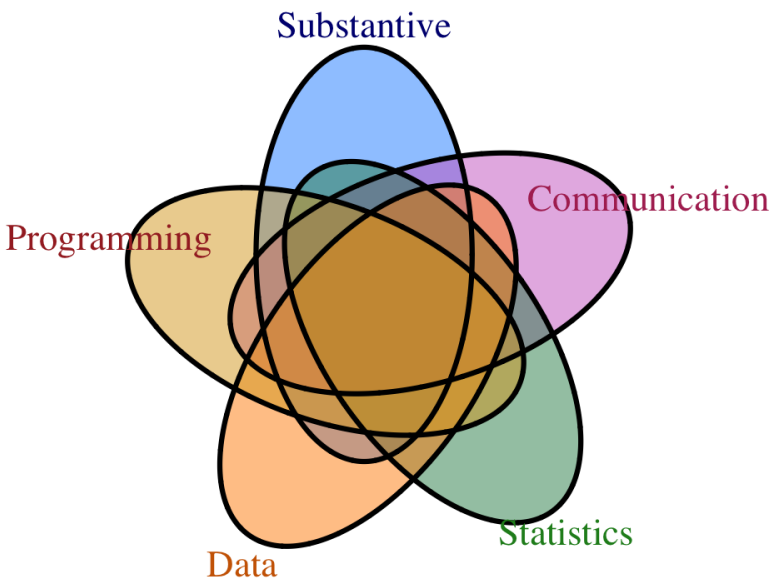

Figure 1: SSRI Research Support Skill Sets