DATA ACCESS DIVISION NEWSLETTER
SPRING 2022 EDITION

A MESSAGE TO OUR STAFF AND CLIENTS

With the arrival of spring and warmer weather, the Data Access Division (DAD) would like to take a moment to thank its staff for continuing to show hard work and dedication, as the effort continues to collectively lead the division and its programs towards a path of success. We would also like to extend our gratitude to all our clients and partners for their continued support and trust. We remain devoted to continuing our work in providing our researchers and clients real-time access to data and services in order to best serve data needs of all Canadians.

CELEBRATING ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND FOCUS FOR THE UPCOMING YEAR

DAD would like to highlight and celebrate some of its greatest accomplishments within the last few months. The Self-Serve Access (SSA) section received approval for each institution to have two Real Time Remote Access (RTRA) accounts, and has completed its part in this Public Use Microdata Files (PUMFs) online project initiative. In collaboration with the Research Data Centre (RDC), the Canadian Research Data Centre Network (CRDCN) hosted another successful conference with over 400 registrants for the 2021 conference. The Virtual Data Lab (vDL) officially launched into production as of October 2021. This was a significant achievement and will allow Statistics Canada to be better positioned to advance its user-centricity by introducing this new mode of access as it will enhance StatCan's existing access methods and will expand microdata offerings to accredited researchers.

For the upcoming year, DAD will continue to focus on collaboration efforts with various teams and partners, and on leveraging new technologies to help drive Statistics Canada's modernizations efforts. Efforts will continue on developing the Virtual Research Data Centre (vRDC), increasing business data holdings in the RDCs, continuing to migrate existing researchers and strive towards onboarding new researchers into the vDL, and ramping up engagement with existing and new stakeholders in response to the Division's new data access and marketing plan rollout.

For more information, please visit the Data Access Division website.

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DATA LIBERATION INITIATIVE UPDATES

We are very pleased and excited to announce that StatCan has selected [Rich Data Services (RDS)](#) platform to replace its Nesstar server for the delivery of data and metadata to its research communities. This initiative will further support the agency's modernization efforts.

Various enhancements and new features will be introduced in RDS to further strengthen the platform and meet the agency's and users' needs, including multilingual support for metadata and the RDS Explorer/TabEngine user interfaces, bi-variate regression analysis, and compliance with 508 / WCAG accessibility requirements.

RDS will also integrate with other systems, such as Colectica and MTNA's Aria platform, which StatCan is readily using for managing its classifications. RDS will provide technical assistance for the migration of existing datasets from Nesstar.

Note that Nesstar has been decommissioned based on advice from Canadian Centre for Cyber Security and Statistics Canada IT security team due to a cyber security vulnerability. Nesstar was unable to offer a patch that met Statistics Canada requirements. In the meantime, we are happy to help with any requests related to Nesstar tabulations or downloads.

PROGRAM REVIEW

Intergage undertook extensive consultations with members in October and November2021.

This included interview consultations with approximately 25 advisory body members, subject matter experts and StatCan staff regarding the DLI program including what's working, what's not working, and opportunities for improvement and potential risks.

The findings were presented by Jennifer Smith from Intergage at the National Training on November 22, 2021. Intergage is now working on a report and plan in collaboration with a working group which includes members of the DLI Executive Committee.

PUBLIC USE MICRODATA FILES ONLINE PROJECT

The Self-serve Access (SSA) section has completed its part in this initiative. The StatCan Dissemination team is now working on putting all older PUMFs online in a downloadable format. Newly released PUMFs are being added to the website as they become available. Digital Object Identifiers (DOIs) are being assigned to the PUMFs as they are made available.

CUSTOM TABULATIONS

Statistics Canada (StatCan) is offering a limited number of free custom tabulations for Data Liberation Initiative (DLI) members courtesy of the Data Service Centres. The initiative is aimed at students working on research projects who may not have the funds to request custom tabulations. Completed custom tabulations will be returned to the

requesting librarian, the researcher and posted to the Electronic File Transfer (EFT). Expected turnaround time for custom tabulations will depend on the nature of the request but in general should take between two weeks and two months.

We ask that you submit the details of the custom tabulation request to the DLI StatCan team: statcan.maddli-damidd.statcan@statcan.gc.ca

DLI EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The DLI Executive Committee has the pleasure to announce the following representatives:

- Co-chair: **Siobhan Hanratty** from University of New Brunswick.
- Co-chair: **Elizabeth Hill** from Western University.
- Western Region: **Sarah Rutley** from the University of Saskatchewan.

The Atlantic seat still remains vacant.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

The Professional Development Committee (PDC) sent a call-out to the Listserv in March 2021 for a volunteer to represent the Quebec region. This seat still remains vacant.

PDC initiatives:

- DLI Training Repository – a sub-committee of the PDC is working on transitioning from CUDO to Scholars Portal Dataverse

- Training – discussions have started on what training may look like in 2022

STATISTICS CANADA TRAINING

Statistics Canada (StatCan) provides training for all levels of data users using different platforms, as well as other data services such as customized products. The training is provided by the Data Service Centres. Over the past year, they have expanded many of their offerings. See below for the most up-to-date information:

- Workshop series - Our Workshop Series provides you with direct access to Statistics Canada's extensive survey methodology and analysis experience.
- Webinars - The Webinar series covers a broad range of topics from the Census program to navigating the Statistics Canada website.
- Data literacy - The training is aimed at those who are new to data or those who have some experience with data but may need a refresher or want to expand their knowledge. We invite you to check out our Learning catalogue to learn more about our offerings including a great collection of short videos. Be sure to check back regularly as we will be continuing to release new training.
- Statistics: Power from Data! – **Updated on September 2, 2021**, this training tool for students, teachers and the general population will help in getting the most from statistics. This resource aims to help readers:
  - Gain confidence in using statistical information

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o Appreciate the importance of statistical information in today's society

o Make critical use of information that is presented to them

These goals are at the heart of Statistics Canada's mission to assist Canadians with informed decision-making based on data.

A list of all DLI products is available on the website:
https://www.statcan.ca/eng/microdata/dli

DATA RELEASES TO DLI JANUARY-MARCH 2022:

- Social Policy Simulation Database and Model (SPSD/M) – version 29.0
- National Travel Survey (NTS) 2020
- Canadian Income Survey (CIS) 2018
- Canadian Income Survey (CIS) 2019
- General Social Survey (GSS) Cycle 34
- General Social Survey (GSS) Cycle 35
- Labour Force Survey (LFS) - monthly

REAL TIME REMOTE ACCESS UPDATES

StatCan will continue to offer DLI members one free Real Time Remote Access (RTRA) account ($5,000 value/per institution). RTRA is an online, real-time tool to create custom tabulations. RTRA users can calculate frequencies, means, percentiles, percent distribution, proportions, ratios, and shares on social and administrative data.

RDC researchers have had their access extended to March 31, 2023.

43 new users subscribed between July and December 2021.

SAS ASSISTANT

The SSA section is continuing its work on adding more surveys and creating pre-recorded webinars.

A list of all RTRA products is available on the website:
https://www.statcan.ca/eng/microdata/rtra

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RESEARCH DATA CENTRES UPDATE

In order to ensure the safety of Statistics Canada staff and researchers, RDCs continue to operate with COVID-19 restrictions.

Work on the vRDC is ongoing with the preparation for the build and rollout. While there have been procurement challenges, equipment has started to arrive and the remaining equipment is on its way. The team has been focused on establishing a work plan and timeline for the rollout of the project to each of the RDCs. This has included a survey to all Academic Directors to gather feedback on timing and preparations.

The business working group of the vRDC Project has also been hard at work. Discussions are well underway to establish a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that will allow both physical access to Statistics Canada data in an RDC as well as outside an RDC in another authorized workspace. Work also progresses on the letters of agreements and invoicing that will occur in the vRDC environment and determining the necessary risk sharing agreements.

NEW RESEARCH DATA CENTRES HOLDINGS

A total of thirty products were added to our data holdings in the third quarter of the 2021/2022 fiscal year. These include one new administrative data file, five new surveys, twelve new integrated data files, and updates to twelve data files.

HIGHLIGHTS OF DATA FILES ADDED FROM OCTOBER TO DECEMBER 2021

- Survey on Sexual Misconduct at Work (SSMW) 2020
- Canadian Food Environment Database (Can-FED) 2018
- Education and Labour Market Longitudinal Platform (ELMLP): Canada Education Savings Program (CESP) data linked to T1FF, Census of Population Keys 2016, and Longitudinal Administrative Databank
- General Social Survey - Family (GSS) Linked to T1FF
- Canadian Social Survey – Well-being, Activities and Perception of Time 2021 (CSS-WAPT)

For a complete list of data available in RDCs and government access centres, visit

https://www.statcan.gc.ca/eng/microdata/data-centres/data

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ACCESS TO BUSINESS DATA

Access to business data in RDCs continues to progress. This winter the local RDC analysts have begun vetting output for business data projects. We thank our colleagues from the Government Access Program (FRDC) who have been supporting the RDCs during this transition. Our RDC and FRDC staff on the Vetting Committee created resources to support researchers working with business data in the centres. These include a detailed business data handbook, a revised vetting orientation and a macro for researchers to use to run the confidentiality tests.

NEW TRAINING INITIATIVES

A series of training videos have been produced by our Research Data Centre staff to help support researchers who are preparing their analytical output for release. These videos are part of the *Confidentiality Vetting Support Series* and present examples of how to use different statistical software packages to perform the analyses required for researchers working with confidential microdata.

- Confidentiality Vetting support: Dominance and homogeneity using R
- Confidentiality Vetting Support: Proportion and Round Tool using SAS
- Confidentiality Vetting Support: Rounding Proportions using Stata

- Confidentiality Vetting Support: Dominance and Homogeneity using SAS
- Confidentiality Vetting Support: Dominance and Homogeneity using the tcensus function (Stata)
- Confidentiality Vetting Support: Rounding proportions using Rounder – An R Shiny App
- Confidentiality Vetting Support: Histogram Output in Stata

These short 5 to 10 minute videos are available in English and French and will soon be available on the Statistics Canada website under training and events:

https://www.statcan.gc.ca/en/microdata/data-centres/training-events

VIRTUAL DATA LAB

The Virtual Data Lab (vDL) has launched for select federal and provincial clients in the FRDC program! The vDL allows for the use of "authorized workspaces" where qualifying microdata projects may be accessed outside of the FRDC physical location. The vDL improves

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users experience of microdata access while maintaining secure disclosure control. Researchers will be able to access many StatCan household and business surveys and administrative data holdings in this new virtual environment.

The vDL transition is occurring over three waves, with existing partners with eligible projects being transitioned in waves 1 and 2. StatCan is working with federal departments, provincial ministries and non-government organizations to transition all eligible projects into the new technology. All existing eligible projects will be transitioned by the end of summer 2022.

To be eligible for the vDL, each department, ministry or organization will require an MOU, Section 10 or organizational agreement and accreditation for their respective organization and researchers. Projects will also need a microdata research contract in place and the project data sets must have a Confidentially Classification Tool (CCT) score of 7 or less.

Once a department has been onboarded into the vDL, new eligible projects will also be able to be accessed in the vDL.

We will be reaching out to federal departments and provincial ministries over the next few months to discuss their transitions to the vDL.

Questions or comments? Visit our website: www.statcan.gc.ca/eng/help/microdata.
Don't forget to follow us on social media!

Facebook | Instagram | LinkedIn | Reddit | Twitter | YouTube

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