

# DATA ACCESS DIVISION NEWSLETTER

## SUMMER 2021 EDITION

### MESSAGE TO OUR STAFF AND CLIENTS

With the arrival of summer and the increasing vaccination rate, we wish our community a speedy recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Data Access Division (DAD) would like to take a moment to thank its staff for the continued hard work and dedication demonstrated by each and every member, leading to the success of the program. With your effort and collaboration, we have achieved a lot in the first quarter of the fiscal year.

We would also like to thank our clients for their continued support and trust, as we are grateful to be part of such a strong community. We remain devoted to working on important projects that will be deployed in the fall.

We wish our staff and clients a wonderful summer vacation, and enjoy the warm weather. 😊



# DATA ACCESS DIVISION NEWSLETTER

## SELF-SERVE ACCESS

### DATA LIBERATION INITIATIVE UPDATES

The Self-Serve Access (SSA) section has started the onboarding process of Data Liberation Initiative (DLI) member institutions to Real Time Remote Access (RTRA).

The pre-recorded webinars and other resources are saved on the [GCcollab](#) group. Once you have created your account, please request membership to the following group: **StatCan - Real Time Remote Access (RTRA)**. The pre-recorded webinars have also been saved on the DLI electronic file transfer folder to provide you with immediate access. If the account holder is not a DLI contact, the learning material must be accessed from GCcollab.

Training sessions were held on the following dates:

- June 28, 2021: English session
- June 30, 2021: French session
- July 20, 2021: English session
- July 22, 2021: French session
- August 17, 2021: English session
- August 19, 2021: French session

More training sessions will be made available as needed.

### EXTERNAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The External Advisory Committee sent a call-out in February to the Listserv for volunteers. The Atlantic and the co-chair seats remain vacant.

### PROGRAM REVIEW

A request for proposal process is underway to hire a consultant to complete a strategic review of the program.

### PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

#### COMMITTEE

The chair of the Professional Development Committee (PDC), Alex Cooper, sent a reminder in July to the Listserv, requesting volunteers to present, submit a short lightning talk video, submit a topic, or suggest a Statistics Canada division to hear from for the national training in November. The deadline for submissions was Friday, July 30.

The PDC sent a call-out to the Listserv in March for a volunteer to represent the Quebec region. This seat remains vacant.

The PDC is working on several initiatives:

- Contacts and Alternates Survey – a revised version will be sent to the PDC for their comments in August.
- DLI Training Repository – the committee is looking at options.
- Training – a working group is in place to discuss training needs and coordinate with other data-centric organizations such as the Canadian Research Data Network (CRDCN) and Portage.

# DATA ACCESS DIVISION NEWSLETTER

## SELF-SERVE ACCESS

### NESSTAR REPLACEMENT

The SSA section is collaborating with Materials and Contracting Services, Information Technology (IT) and a business relations manager at StatCan in the procurement of a new platform to replace Nesstar.

The SSA section is also collaborating with the Colectica team in StatCan. The plan is to migrate the metadata already available in Nesstar (both public use microdata file [PUMF] and Masterfile) to Colectica because of its availability in the Data Documentation Initiative format.

### PUBLIC USE MICRODATA FILES ONLINE PROJECT

The SSA section is continuing its work on putting older PUMFs online in a downloadable format. Newly released PUMFs are being added to the website as they become available. Digital object identifiers are being assigned to the PUMFs as they are made available.

#### DATA RELEASES TO DLI APRIL TO JULY 2021:

- Canadian Perspectives Survey Series 6: Substance Use and Stigma During the Pandemic, PUMF
- Impacts of COVID-19 on Health Care Workers: Infection Prevention and Control, PUMF
- Visitor Travel Survey Microdata File
- Labour Force Survey: PUMF
- Social Policy Simulation Database and Model (SPSD/M)

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

### REAL TIME REMOTE ACCESS UPDATES

Research Data Centre (RDC) researchers have had their access extended to March 31, 2022.

A total of 19 new users subscribed between April and June 2021.

### SAS ASSISTANT

The SSA section is continuing its work on adding more surveys.

#### DATA RELEASES TO RTRA APRIL TO JULY 2021:

- Canadian Community Health Survey (CCHS) 2017
- Canadian Community Health Survey (CCHS) 2018
- Canadian Community Health Survey (CCHS) 2017-2018
- Survey on Maternal Health (SMH) 2018
- Canadian Health Measures Survey (CHMS) – Cycle 5
- Canadian Income Survey (CIS) 2019
- Canadian Income Survey (CIS) 2019 – Disability

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

# DATA ACCESS DIVISION NEWSLETTER

## RESEARCH DATA CENTRES

### RESEARCH DATA CENTRES UPDATE

On June 9 and 10, the 2021 CRDCN National Policy Challenge, in partnership with SAS and Statistics Canada, was held virtually. The winning presentations were:

- **First place (\$1,500):** Substance related acute care disparities by sexual orientations: Investigating the socio-environmental determinants of risk, presented by Sukhdeep Kaur and Celine Teo of Brock University
- **Second place (\$1,000):** Trends in mental health service use reported by youth and emerging adults in Canada, presented by Thipiga Sivayoganathan of the University of Western Ontario
- **Third place (\$500):** The relationship between neighbourhood level and family level factors and child sleep problems, presented by Katarina McKenzie of the University of Western Ontario
- **Policy Pitch prize (\$250):** Homeownership Gap between Immigrants and the Canadian-born: Implications for Canada's National Housing Strategy, presented by Xiaoxi Wang of the University of Western Ontario

We want to thank all the RDC researchers for taking part. Stay tuned for upcoming announcements on next year's challenge.

The Data Research, Access and Government Network, with the assistance of Felix Ritchie (University of the West of England) and an advisory committee from around the world, including Statistics Canada, organized a virtual workshop from July 5 to 9 on "the present and future of confidential microdata access." With central themes on technology, statistical disclosure control, organizational management, and microdata access planning in a societal context, the timing of the workshop and sharing of information coincided well with the upcoming Virtual Data Lab (vDL) and Virtual Research Data Centre (vRDC). DAD staff attended.

Work on the vRDC project has continued, following the delivery of the Joint Task Force report in February, refining the detailed architectural design of the new infrastructure and network, and procuring equipment for the central system hubs and pilot RDC. Additional support is being provided by Data Analysis as a Service and the StatCan cloud team, as the vRDC and vDL will leverage the same identity architecture for external users and a common master data repository. A series of kick-off meetings were held with Academic Directors and university IT and facilities personnel at the end of June to initiate discussions on the work that will be required at each of the existing RDCs to prepare for the new system. The core project team will be meeting

# DATA ACCESS DIVISION NEWSLETTER

## RESEARCH DATA CENTRES

separately with each university throughout the summer to address site-specific issues.

The focus in the coming months will be first on the build and testing of the system, followed by technical and operational pilots at the McMaster University RDC. A staged rollout to the remaining RDCs will begin next spring.

CRDCN has announced that their annual conference will be held from October 14 to 28, 2021. This virtual event titled, “Research, recovery and beyond” will open registration early in the fall.

We are also excited announce that the University of British Columbia Okanagan Campus RDC was officially opened to researchers on July 27.

### NEW RESEARCH DATA CENTRE HOLDINGS

A total of 16 products were added to our data holdings in the first quarter of the 2021/2022 fiscal year, and 2 data sources were updated (2019 Childhood National Immunization Coverage Survey– Vaccination during pregnancy and Education and Labour Market Longitudinal Platform).

### PARTIAL LIST OF DATA FILES ADDED FROM APRIL TO JUNE 2021

- Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB)
- Canadian Perspectives Survey Series 6 (CPSS) 2021: Substance Use and Stigma during the Pandemic
- Survey on COVID-19 and Mental Health (SCMH) 2021
- Canadian Health Measures Survey (CHMS) - Cycle 6
- Survey of Financial Security (SFS) - 2019
- Canadian Survey of Cyber Security and Cybercrime (CSCSC) 2019

For a complete list of data available in RDCs and government access centres, visit [www.statcan.gc.ca/eng/rdc/data](http://www.statcan.gc.ca/eng/rdc/data).

### GOVERNMENT DATA ACCESS: FEDERAL RESEARCH DATA CENTRES

In early August, the Federal Research Data Centre (FRDC) completed the merge with the Business Data Access Centre (formerly known as CDER). Located on the first floor of the Jean Talon Building at Tunney’s Pasture, the centre provides access to both social and business data for federal government users. Please contact the FRDC team if you have questions: [statcan.dad-frdcaadmin-adminidad-cfrd.statcan@canada.ca](mailto:statcan.dad-frdcaadmin-adminidad-cfrd.statcan@canada.ca).

Virtual data access is coming for federal clients in the FRDC program! Over the summer, DAD has been in contact with many of the first data access partners that will participate in the first phase of the transition to cloud technology in the vDL environment. These federal

# DATA ACCESS DIVISION NEWSLETTER

## RESEARCH DATA CENTRES

departments will work with Statistics Canada to select eligible projects for transition to the new technology and determine if access from other secure environments is a right fit for their research needs. Change takes time, and the transition is expected to occur over several months and into summer of 2022. We will be reaching out to more federal departments to discuss their transition to the vDL later this fall.

### PROVINCIAL SECURE ACCESS POINTS

Two provincial secure access points continue to operate in British Columbia and Alberta. Two more sites will open in summer 2021 in Ontario at the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services. For more information about these initiatives, please contact [statcan.dad-ssap-dad-pass.statcan@canada.ca](mailto:statcan.dad-ssap-dad-pass.statcan@canada.ca).

# DATA ACCESS DIVISION NEWSLETTER

## MODERNIZATION OF ACCESS

### ADVISORY COUNCIL ON ETHICS AND MODERNIZATION OF MICRODATA ACCESS

The vDL team successfully hosted its fourth biannual meeting of the Advisory Council on Ethics and Modernization of Microdata Access on Tuesday, June 15, 2021. Members and guests participated virtually. The panel included council members and representatives from Statistics Canada's senior management team.

The discussions proved to be instructive, as members provided their expertise and guidance on various initiatives that speak to the mandate of the council, such as the implementation of ethics as guiding principles in statistical programs in applying the necessity and proportionality framework; challenges, opportunities and recent efforts towards the acquisition of administrative financial data; engagement strategies in acquiring administrative data; managing the landscape in providing disaggregated data and increasing granularity; and advancements in artificial intelligence. With these new initiatives and advances in technology, Statistics Canada is working towards achieving the agency's overarching goal of enhancing its data access for researchers; expanding access to social, business, and administrative data; and supporting stronger evidence-based decision making to benefit all Canadians.

The team would like to thank council members for their participation. Their skills and expertise remain of the utmost importance and are essential as the agency continues to determine how best to modernize their approach in an

ethical and responsible manner, while delivering microdata access that benefits all Canadians.

### PILOT PROJECTS AND TESTING

In collaboration with the Strategic Communications and Stakeholder Relations Division (SCSRD), a series of consultations were conducted with the pilot participants, which resulted in a report and recommendations to improve the user experience when using the vDL. Recommendations from the consultations are beginning to be implemented in Pilot 3.

Pilot 3 is currently underway with the goal of transitioning users from StatCan devices into the vDL cloud environment. Projects from Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), and British Columbia Ministry of Education were selected. At this time, the CMHC project has been successfully onboarded.

Additional initiatives are underway to partner with two more organizations: the Canadian Institute for Health Information (CIHI), which may provide an opportunity for subject matter areas to gain experience creating health-related reduced-sensitivity masterfiles; and the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission, which may provide an opportunity to onboard an international researcher.

As the vDL heads into production for October 2021, this experience will evaluate the nuances of onboarding different types of researchers and inform how the user experience can be improved.

# DATA ACCESS DIVISION NEWSLETTER

## MODERNIZATION OF ACCESS

### VIRTUAL DATA LAB PROJECT UPDATES

As efforts continue on the vDL project, progress is ongoing on a number of key initiatives to increase virtual data access and prepare to go into production in the fall. These include updates to the governing framework, continued development of the analytics platforms and monitoring capabilities, and continued assessment and development of the Client Relationship Management System (CRMS).

As the vDL team prepares for the transition of existing and new partners to the new cloud environment within the next year, a detailed transition plan has been developed as a preparative measure, based on existing knowledge from pilot experience and consultations with providers and pilot users.

In addition, the vDL team is working with DAD to establish vDL requirements for the new CRMS in which DAD works with Dissemination to establish development priorities and business requirements.

**Questions or comments? Visit our website:** [www.statcan.gc.ca/eng/help/microdata](http://www.statcan.gc.ca/eng/help/microdata).

**Check out the StatCan Blog:** [www.statcan.gc.ca/eng/blog](http://www.statcan.gc.ca/eng/blog).

**Don't forget to follow us on social media!**



Facebook | Instagram | LinkedIn | Reddit | Twitter | YouTube