

# UK DAtabytes

The Newsletter of the UK Data Archive

No. 6

## New UK social science data service to be launched

We are pleased to announce that the ESRC and JISC are to jointly fund a new Data Archiving and Dissemination Service, provisionally to be known as DADS. This new service will come into operation in January 2003 and has secured initial funding for five years. The Service will be run as a collaborative venture between the UK Data Archive (UKDA) and both MIMAS and the Cathie Marsh Centre for Census and Survey Research (CCSR) at the University of Manchester. The new joint service between Essex and Manchester will effectively develop and replace the existing archiving and social science data dissemination services currently offered by the UKDA and MIMAS – with the exception of the Census services.

A key feature of the new service will be the development and maintenance of a more integrated approach to data archiving and dissemination, establishing a strategic vision that produces greater interoperability and synergy between the varied ESRC and JISC portfolio of social science data and information resources. In line with this policy, early goals will be to create a 'one-stop-shop' authenticated registration and data access system, together with a social science data 'Universal Portal'. Both will aim to provide more seamless and easier access to a range of disparate resources.

Within the new service the UKDA will generally continue to operate its central role in the acquisition, preservation, dissemination and promotion of social science data. This will be further augmented by MIMAS providing a new

specialist service giving online access to a large collection of international and UK-national macro time-series data, such as IMF, OECD and similar data. Equally, the CCSR will work to provide data enhancements to a number of heavily-used government surveys, as well as organising a number of specialist training events and user support activities relating to these data.

The UKDA will continue to host a specialist unit for the support of qualitative data (Qualidata) which will place an emphasis on the creation of enhanced, online qualitative data resources within the new service. The UKDA will also work with the UK Longitudinal Studies Centre (ULSC), based within the Institute for Social and Economic Research (ISER) at the University of Essex, to both develop and provide a number of data enhancements that will facilitate the use of existing longitudinal data collections. The overall management and co-ordination of the new service will take place through the UKDA.

More details of this exciting new service will be issued over the coming months. The joint Essex-Manchester team are currently working on planning the structure and operational mechanisms for the new service, and further news about the transition from the existing set of arrangements will be released as soon as possible. We envisage that any disruption to the user community will be minimal. The joint team is convinced that the gains to the end user from this new integrated service will be significant and that it provides the opportunity to build a world-class resource for the social sciences.

## Census Registration Service now available

The UKDA launched the Census Registration Service on 2 August 2002 to great acclaim. The service integrates the registration procedures for the four UK Census Data Support Units funded by the ESRC/JISC: the Census Dissemination Unit from MIMAS; the Census Geography Data Unit (UKBORDERS) from EDINA; the Census Interaction Data Service; and the Census Microdata Unit from the Cathie Marsh Centre for Census and Survey Research (CCSR) for the Samples of Anonymised Records. The service was established following extensive consultation with these support units and the census data user community.

The new registration system is entirely online; there is no need, as before, for time-consuming, multiple paper forms to be completed, counter-signed and posted. Previous users of the

Census Data Support Units will need to re-register, in compliance with the *Data Protection Act 1998*. The bonus of re-registration is that by filling in the single online form the user is then entitled to use all four of the Census units. Registration with the Census Registration Service will also enable users to use the UKDA.

The registration process can now be completed in ten minutes, after which the user is able to access the data immediately. All four academic Census services now also use Athens Single Sign On as their access route to the data, meaning that users do not have to remember additional passwords and may move from unit to unit without logging on again.

More information about the Census Registration Service may be found on its web site: [www.census-registration.ac.uk](http://www.census-registration.ac.uk)

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## UKDA at IASSIST 2002

The UKDA had a large presence at the latest IASSIST conference. IASSIST 2002, Accelerating Access Collaboration and Dissemination, was held at the University of Connecticut, Storrs, in June. Archive staff presented papers on their work, chaired sessions, held poster presentations and spoke at plenary sessions.

The conference took as its theme the capabilities of internet technology in supporting and partnering the research and education communities. It included papers on collaboration between data professionals and researchers in metadata dissemination and in integration projects, particularly those that have evolved from emerging standards for describing data and documentation.

Six papers were given by members of the UKDA. They covered the Edwardians Online Project, the European Research Area, opinion poll data, the Census Registration Service and the History Data Service's project to enhance

access to their Historical Censuses Collection.

Kevin Schürer, the Archive's Director, also gave a thought-provoking talk at the plenary session on Friday 14 June, on the topic of recent developments in data access and implications for data archives. He presented the UK perspective, suggesting that future developments were likely to involve digital certificates and integrated registration for multiple services.

The conference raised some interesting points which in turn resulted in stimulating discussions. Many of these were held in the state-of-the-art Homer Babbidge Library, surrounded by twinkling internet screens and World Cup football matches. Some were even held during the evenings' social events, a clambake and a polo match, and thus the conference's dream of integrating disparate sources was realised, at least a little...

The presentations from the conference may be viewed on the IASSIST web site at: [www.iassistdata.org/conferences/2002/presentations](http://www.iassistdata.org/conferences/2002/presentations)

*"... digital certificates and integrated registration for multiple services"*

## QUALIDATA News

### Release of Edwardians Online pilot resource

In June 2002, Qualidata released Edwardians Online, a web-based, multimedia, pilot digital resource, developed jointly with the UKDA and the HDS. The resource integrates a wealth of existing primary and secondary materials, including interview summaries, full text transcripts, images and contemporary photographs, and sound clips from audio recordings. Background material relating to the original research study, such as press reviews and details of publications based on secondary studies of the interview texts, is also included. The second phase of the project aims to link to other key sources such as maps and census data. Users can search the full text of a sample of transcripts by free-text or thematic search, making use of the existing coding schema that Paul Thompson originally used to classify and analyse the data. A database of summaries of the 500 interviews can also be searched.

Potential users are encouraged to help test the pilot resource. If you would like to complete a simple user evaluation exercise, please visit the web site at: [www.qualidata.essex.ac.uk/edwardians](http://www.qualidata.essex.ac.uk/edwardians)

### CAQDAS funding success

We are very pleased to announce that the Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS) Networking Project based at the University of Surrey, Department of Sociology has been allocated new funding by the ESRC for the next four years, starting in November 2002. The project will continue to provide support, training, and information about the use of software for qualitative data analysis. The CAQDAS project and Qualidata look forward to building a closer working relationship, including the hosting of joint workshops.

For further details of the CAQDAS Networking Project see: [caqdas.soc.surrey.ac.uk](http://caqdas.soc.surrey.ac.uk)

*"Potential users are encouraged to help test the pilot resource"*



Retailing c.1910 featured on Edwardians online

### SIDOS conference

In April, two members of UKDA staff, Louise Corti and Gill Backhouse presented papers at a conference entitled 'Social Science Archive and Resource Center for Qualitative Research,' hosted by SIDOS (Swiss Information and Data Archive Service for the Social Sciences) at the University of Neuchâtel in Switzerland.

The aim of the forum was to bring together experts in the field of qualitative data research resource provision and to explore the possibility of creating a resource centre and data archive for qualitative research in Switzerland. Twenty-five participants from a range of European countries discussed issues concerning archiving and sharing qualitative data, the quality of qualitative research, secondary analysis of qualitative data and tools for analysis.

The proceedings of the workshop are to be edited in a book to be published by the Swiss Academy of Humanities and Social Sciences.

## Recent visitors to the UKDA

The UKDA continues to receive a steady stream of visitors from overseas. While some have specific issues that they wish to discuss, in general their common aim is to find out more about how the UKDA works, its procedures and structures, its relationship with depositors and users, and its methods and plans for providing access to data, disseminating data and preserving data.

Recent visitors have included Teresio Poggio and Teresio Giovanna, University of Trento, Italy, who are planning to establish a data archiving and dissemination facility for academic social scientists in Italy; Miss Ka-lin Chan from the Census and Statistical Department, Hong Kong, who are investigating the possibilities of disseminating census and other micro survey data using web-based technologies; and Irena Vipavc from the Slovenian Social Science Data Archive who visited Essex as a student of the European Centre for Analysis in the Social Sciences (ECASS) for two weeks in order to investigate all aspects of the UKDA's work.



Cor van der Meer (left) and Peter van den Besselaar

Finally, Cor van der Meer and Peter van den Besselaar of Steinmetz Archive, at the Netherlands Institute for Scientific Information Services (NIWI), spent a day with UKDA staff to hear about user support activities and archival dissemination of qualitative data.

For information on ECASS please see: [www.iser.essex.ac.uk/ecass](http://www.iser.essex.ac.uk/ecass)

## MRC Data Archiving and Access Project

Over the years, the Medical Research Council (MRC) has funded the construction of a large number of population-based studies, including several longitudinal studies and a significant number of cross-sectional studies and clinical trials. Many have a unique value for research that runs well beyond their use by the principal investigators who created the studies. Despite this, the MRC does not have a formal policy with regard to the archiving and provision for secondary analysis of these data.

More recently, the MRC has recognised the importance of developing a policy towards data archiving and access, but also understands this is best not done in a vacuum. What is required is a better understanding of the range and variation of current MRC-funded data creation activities, the existing data management infrastructure and practice in MRC-funded contexts, and the views and opinions of those likely to be most affected by the establishment of such a policy.

To this end, the MRC Data Archiving and Access Project was established in 2001 to gather information, consult widely, and at the end of the Project, to make recommendations to Council concerning data archiving and access policy.

The project is staged, with Phase 1 conducting a broad but general survey and convening a working group of interested experts including the UKDA. Earlier this year the MRC launched Phase 2 of the Data Archiving and Access Project, and invited the UKDA to assist. Phase 2 comprises three elements: a set of case studies; a "Horizons" workshop; and preparation of proposals to Council.

For the field work, a small team, including UKDA staff and representatives from MRC Head Office, visited seven study sites. Up to three datasets were examined per site visit. Interviews were conducted with principal investigators, project managers, laboratory managers and data managers, attempting to uncover the current situation "on the

ground" with regard to data managements, preservation, and access; but also to hear researcher's views on the philosophical issues involved in developing a data archiving and access policy. The consultants' report of the case studies will be presented at the Horizons Workshop.

The Horizons Workshop, planned for 8 October 2002, aims to explore how data are likely to be generated, exchanged and combined in the future across a range of science, including genomics, medical imaging, clinical trials, genetic epidemiology and environmental sciences. It will also highlight developments in information technology and computing that will facilitate new ways of working with data. It will then consider issues specific to archiving population data.

The Data Archiving Working Group, led by Professor Sally Macintyre and including UKDA staff, will work with MRC Head Office to prepare policy proposals for Council to consider in December.

## UKDA joins DPC

The UKDA is pleased to announce that its recent application to join the Digital Preservation Coalition (DPC) as an Associate Member organisation has been successful. The aim of the DPC is to secure the preservation of digital resources in the UK and to work with others internally to secure a global digital memory and knowledge base. The activities of the DPC are also supported by the JISC, the Public Record Office (the UK National Archives) and the British Library. The UKDA's membership of the DPC took effect from August 2002.

Further details on the work and activities of the DPC can be found from their web site at: [www.dpconline.org](http://www.dpconline.org)

*"... their common aim is to find out more about how the UKDA works "*

*"Earlier this year the MRC launched Phase 2 of the Data Archiving and Access Project"*

## New functionality for UKDA catalogue

The UKDA catalogue search engine provides a powerful resource discovery tool for investigating the 4000-plus research data collections held by the Archive.

From July 2002 the following additional search facilities have been added:

- new catalogue display - highlighted search terms, direct links to online documentation, variable lists and UKDA read files
- variable search - available for our most popular datasets
- thesaurus-aided search - keyword search and easy-to-navigate online thesaurus
- time period search - locate data for a specific year or span of years
- new help guide - containing detailed help for the various search options available

As part of ongoing system upgrades, the underlying tables of the catalogue have been transferred to an SQL server and are accessed through active server pages to give a much faster response time.

The tables underlying the old catalogue search engine, BIRON, will only be maintained until 31 December 2002. The BIRON search engine will therefore not be available on our web site after this date.

The catalogue can be found at:  
[www.data-archive.ac.uk/search/searchStart.asp](http://www.data-archive.ac.uk/search/searchStart.asp)

Users are specifically invited to test the new catalogue functionality and email comments to [ukda-feedback@essex.ac.uk](mailto:ukda-feedback@essex.ac.uk)

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## History Data Service News

### Violent offences around Britain and abroad

The HDS has recently released a number of studies generated from ESRC-funded projects investigating the history of violence.

Violence in Early Modern England - a Regional Survey, 1600-1800 (Cheshire) (SN: 4429) resulted from research conducted at the University of York by J. Sharpe and R. Dickinson into crimes of violence tried in the courts of the county of Cheshire. Quantitative analysis of homicides and other acts of violence are complemented with extracts of depositions and an account of a colourful and socially charged high society murder case, which was serialised in the Cheshire Sheaf newspaper of 1648.

Still in that region, Violence in the North West with Special Reference to Liverpool and Manchester, 1850-1914 (SN: 4376) was generated from an investigation into all forms of interpersonal violence from a later period.

Researchers from Edge Hill College were keen to analyse the accepted interpretation that the latter half of the 19th century saw a marked decline in violence in England. To do this, records relating to violent deaths, and crimes of violence committed against women and children were digitised and analysed.

Prosecutions for Violent Offences in Selected English, Australian and New Zealand Petty Sessions' Courts, 1880-1914 (SN: 4483), broadens the investigation of violence in history to the southern hemisphere. The data here, collected by B. Godfrey at the University of Keele, have been extracted from petty sessions, and focus upon the perpetrator and victims of a range of violent crimes.

The HDS collection can be searched at:  
[hds.essex.ac.uk/search\\_cat.asp](http://hds.essex.ac.uk/search_cat.asp)

## Forthcoming Events and Announcements

- 8 October 2002** MRC Data Archiving Workshop, Holiday Inn, Regent's Park, London
- 9-11 October 2002** ERPANET Workshop on XML as a Preservation Strategy, Urbino, Italy
- 11 October 2002** National Statistics Open Day 2002, London
- 15 October 2002** Digital Preservation Forum, London
- 17 October 2002** Labour Market Statistics User Group (LMSUG) Seminar, Royal Statistical Society (RSS), London
- 6-7 November 2002** National Child Development Study (NCDS) and 1970 British Cohort Study (BCS70) Workshop, Institute of Education, University of London
- 3 December 2002** British Records Association Annual Conference, Royal Statistical Society (RSS), London
- 9-11 December 2002** International Conference on Social Science and Social Policy in the 21st Century, Vienna, Austria

Further details may be found at: [www.data-archive.ac.uk/home/forthcomingEvents.asp](http://www.data-archive.ac.uk/home/forthcomingEvents.asp)

Details of training courses may be found at: [www.data-archive.ac.uk/usingData/training.asp](http://www.data-archive.ac.uk/usingData/training.asp)

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