

LAB NOTES

Spring, 2001

Spring is unwinding all around us, and as the beloved U. sinks deeper into its final quarter of the regular academic year, we at the PRL humbly submit this overdue newsletter to remind you all that we are here and ready to serve you. I will keep my remarks short to make room for the capacious listing of our numerous services. This document will also be available on the PRL website:
<http://psweb.sbs.ohio-state.edu/prl/>

The Political Research Lab (PRL), located in Derby 2049, provides the Political Science Department with support and training in political research and offers graduate students access to personal and academic computing services. We also offer training and support for technology-enhanced teaching. Specifically, the PRL hosts the archive that contains data sets in all subfields of political science for student and faculty use. The PRL also maintains the computer labs in the basement and on the second floor of Derby Hall and operates experimental research facilities for use by both faculty and students. The PRL hours are from 8:00AM to 6:00PM, Monday through Friday.

TAPE2CD: Lab provides access to a locally created package of computer programs and procedures to rapidly transfer data from mainframe computer IBM standard labeled, half-inch, 9-track tapes and 3480 cartridge tapes to PC CDROM media (JMLTOCD/JMLMVSCD). Please see Jim Ludwig for assistance with archiving and retrieving your data. No format is too obscure for him.

Document Scanner: The lab has an HP IIC document scanner in room 2037 with an automatic sheet feeder. The PC connected to

this scanner has ADOBE EXCHANGE 3.0 installed which permits a stack of single-sided sheets to be rapidly converted to an Adobe PDF file.

Mcafee VirusScan: The university has a site license for the MCAFEE 403 virus scan product. No per user licenses fee is collected. Home PC use is permitted. The lab keeps a copy the current update file: SDATnnnn.EXE in the R:\MCAFEE\ folder on the Novell local area network. Department LAN users can update their office PC MCAFEE virus protection using this file. [Note: The Novell LAN R:\ is a READ-ONLY network drive.]

SPSS 10.0: The university has a site license for the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). No per user license fee is collected. Home PC use is permitted. To obtain the right to use the product and obtain the license codes you must fill out a form at the OIT office on the 5th floor of the Baker Systems Engineering building. The CD media to install the SPSS 10.0 product can be purchased at the OSU Computer Store or borrowed from the LAB.

LAN Disk Space: Departmental local area net users are provided with limited disk space on the file server. This space appears as the K:\ drive on department PCs AFTER the user has successfully signed on. Data placed on the user's K:\ is not accessible to other users without special arrangements. This LAN space is usually backed up overnight following each business day. The purpose of this backup is to provide a way of restoring the entire server disk in the event of a catastrophic system failure. Limited

individual file retrieval is possible, but it can take considerable time. It is important to note that individuals should limit their use of LAN space to no more than 200 Megabytes. Also, files on network disks are scanned for viruses most business days. Infected files that cannot be successfully cleaned will be immediately removed to protect the system.

Data Archive: In addition to on-site resources, the archives has access to all the databases and codebooks maintained by the Inter University Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR) Among his numerous descriptions, (some good, others I am unable to repeat on paper), Ray has been described as he who maintains the quantitative and qualitative data archives via the department's membership with ICPSR, helping students, faculty, and staff gain access to such data. The ICPSR site is currently undergoing reconstruction, so students and faculty should be aware of several changes in the way that data is found. It may not be intuitive that searches have to be specified by title, author, or study number. Data request forms are available in a folder at the front of the lab (room #2049). There will also be on-line forms that researchers can download, fill out, and print out at the PRL website. Finally, ICPSR is testing a new service, known as "ICPSR Direct." With ICPSR Direct, any data set available through ICPSR can be downloaded directly by anyone on the campus of a member institution -- without requiring the intervention (or the password) of the Official Representative. ICPSR Direct will eventually make Ray's job obsolete; however, Ray may prove useful in other capacities. Until we determine what those are, he is also responsible for taking student and faculty pictures for the departmental display.

GA's Sought For The 2001-2002 Academic Year: PRL supports 3 Graduate Assistants at the regular .5 appointment level throughout

the academic year, and two during the Summer Quarter. I encourage any student who has an appetite for the technical side of our discipline to discuss the possibilities with me as soon as convenient. Experience helps, of course, but isn't required.

New File Server: As you no doubt know by now, the Department's main file server died tragically and unexpectedly late in the Winter Quarter. James Norman worked heroically to replace the machine in speedy fashion, and we were only out of service for a little over a week. No files were lost. The new server is not only more reliable, but has much more storage space. It should, considering what it cost. When you see the stingy travel allotments for next year, you'll know why.

ICPSR Summer Program: The Inter-University Consortium For Political And Social Research will hold its 2001 Summer Program In Quantitative Methods in Ann Arbor from June 25 - August 17 (two sessions). Your humble Lab Director's file drawer is literally bulging with descriptions of the program that he would be more than delighted to give away. Some of the catchier titles from this summer's catalogue include Mathematics for Social Scientists (Basic and Advanced); Structural Equations Modeling ("LISREL"); Maximum Likelihood Estimation; Mathematical Models for Rational Choice Theory; and Event History Analysis. Students who have carried a normal courseload through three quarters are eligible to attend tuition-free.

Experimental Laboratory and Subject Pool: One of the many laboratories in the Political Research Laboratory is the long, narrow room (2049A) where we conduct our diabolical political psychology experiments. In truth, it is a completely innocent room with nine reasonably fast PC's in semi-private cubicles. The room is ideal for individual experiments of the computer-based or paper-and-pencil varieties. We also

have videotaping and editing equipment for media studies. Best of all, we maintain a pool of undergraduate students willing to serve as experimental subjects, ha ha ha. When the room is not being used for experimental or teaching purposes, which is most of the time really, it is open during normal business hours as a general drop-in computer laboratory. The machines have all the software you expect (Office, Netscape, SPSS, STATA, and more). Please see Andrew Holbrook for more information.

Internet Classes/WebCT: Web CT is an online distance education program that allows professors and students to interact outside the classroom. It combines such features as discussions, student homepages, online quizzes, and the ability to post classroom material with traditional classroom procedures to bring about a whole new way of learning. Chris Odom will train the faculty and students about this resource, or anyone who wishes to set up a WebPages for their courses.

Data Projector: We have two laptops and a portable data projector available for checkout

to graduate students and faculty. The laptops have 166 mHz processors, 40 MBs of RAM, a CD-ROM player, a 3.5 floppy drives, and a network/modem card. Laptop #1 comes with SPSS 10 and the Microsoft Office Suite and laptop #2 comes with SPSS 10 and the WordPerfect Suite. Both laptops can be used to access the departmental network (from within Derby Hall only). Given sufficient notice, we can customize the laptops for you to include things like Internet access (via a free ISP or one of your choosing). Rentals are handled on a first come first serve basis. See Doug Perkins for details.

PowerPoint: PowerPoint is a program that allows lecture notes or other presentation type material to be posted in a slide show type format. It has such features as bullets coming in one at a time as discussed ability to add graphics, and many other features. If you are interested in knowing any more information about Powerpoint or would like to be trained on it, Christina Odom will be happy to help.

Staff Office Hours, Contact Information, and Responsibilities

Title	Name	Office	Phone	Email	Hours
Director	Tom Nelson	2104	2-6408	Nelson.179@osu.edu	
Asst. Director	Doug Perkins	2049R	2-1061	Perkins.75@osu.edu	M: 8-6 T: 8-6:30 W: 8-1 R: 8-6:30
Master Programmer and Departmental Engineer	Jim Ludwig	2029S	2-9026	Jml+@osu.edu	
Systems Manager	James Norman	2049K	8-3732	Norman.67@osu.edu	
Web CT	Christina Odom	2049N	2-1814		M:8:30-12:30 T:7:30-10:30 W:10:30-3:30 R:12:30-4:30 F:12:30-4:30
Archivist	Ray Block	2049F	2-0511	Block.49@osu.edu	M, F: 9-5 T R 9-1:30
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Statistical Consultant	Andrew Holbrook	2049F	2-0511	Holbrook.61@osu.edu	M,W:12:30-5:30 F: 8-5
Tech. Support	Ken Mulligan	2049H	2-0511	Mulligan.30@osu.edu	