LAB NOTES

Winter 2003

Director's Welcome

This issue of LabNotes is intended to catch you up on news related to department computer use. The Political Research Lab remains active, though we are at reduced staffing. I'm pretty surprised to find myself back as director, virtually a feeling of déjà vu, all over again (Y. Berra, 19xx). Kevin Sweeney is Assistant Director, running things on a daily basis, as well as serving as our data archivist, laptop computer loaner, and statistical consultant. James Norman is our main computer honcho: our network administrator, systems manager, and acquisitions person. Brent Strathman handles both the department web page and the human subjects pool. Ryan Kennedy is in charge of the basement computer lab, dealing with the monitors for the lab as well as setting up computer accounts for classes using that lab. Ryan is also in the midst of surveying faculty on their computer needs.

Additionally, two undergrads work in the lab: Kevin Newman (who works on the computers in PAL) and Aatif Kahn (who works on the web page). Our winter quarter 2003 schedule is on the back of this issue.

Jim Ludwig has earned the esteemed title of computer wizard emeritus, while Tom Nelson and Rich Timpone have joined the venerated ranks of lab directors emeriti.

I'll be coordinating staff duties and setting overall lab direction and policy. Be sure to let me know when you don't feel your needs are being served, and when you receive good service from the lab, be sure to thank the person and let me know too.

PRL Brownbags

During the Winter and Spring Quarters, the Political Research Laboratory will be giving a series of brownbag presentations designed to help students. The first brownbag, given by Kevin Sweeney, was "An Introduction to Stata," and was held on January 31 in Derby 0150. Kevin will give additional brownbags during the remainder of the year on more advanced use of Stata – including data management, programming, and model estimation. All are encouraged to contact Kevin with suggestions on particular subjects to cover.

Brent Strathman will give a brownbag on "Creating Basic Webpages" in Derby 0150 on February 28. In today's academic environment it is essential to advertise yourself over the world wide web. Relatively few active graduate students have links to the departmental web pages, and this

is something we hope to improve. We encourage all to attend.

Ryan Kennedy will give a brownbag on "Upgrading Your PC" on March 5. Topics covered will include adding RAM, replacing motherboards, and upgrading drives. This session will be useful for all who have PCs at home.

Computer Upgrades

PAL Lab. The Lab Staff is in the process of upgrading five of the machines in the PAL Lab. The upgrades include new video cards, new Athlon 1800 XP processors, and 256 megabytes of RAM. In addition, two of the machines will have cd-writers. The upgrade will be completed by the middle of February.

New Stats PC. The Department has purchased a new "stats machine" for the high end room (Derby 2049U). The machine is a HP/Compaq with a Pentium IV 2.66 gig processor, 2 gigs of RAM and a 17" flat screen monitor. The machine has Stata 7 (special edition), SPSS 11, and Stat Transfer. We will add programs; such as Shazam!, RATS, and R to it as demand warrants.

New Scanner and Scanner Machine. The Department has also purchased a new scanner and scanner machine, which are also located Derby 2049U. The scanner is a professional grade Epson 1680. The scanner machine is an iMac with an 800 mhz G4 processor. It has a 17" flat screen monitor, firewire and USB ports, and a superdrive (Apple Speak for a DVD-RW). In addition to serving as the scanning machine this will also serve as the web and video-editing machine. It has software such as Adobe Photoshop, Adobe Premier,

Macromedia Studio, and Omnipage Pro. Also, it looks cool.

Laptops. The department currently has two laptops and a data projector available for borrowing. In addition, we will be purchasing two new laptops in February. All borrowing is on a first come first serve basis, those interested should see Kevin Sweeney for details.

Faculty and Staff Survey

The PRL staff is completing a survey of most of the departmental faculty and staff. The main purpose of these surveys is to ascertain how to improve lab service. We have, so far, found there to be a significant demand among faculty for Adobe Acrobat. We have purchased a site license to install it on faculty machines. If you would like to have acrobat installed you should contact the lab staff. We also found some faculty wanted Microsoft Power Point. You should find that program installed on your machines.

OIT Information

The Office of Information Technologies (OIT) is an excellent resource for faculty and student interested in using technology in their academic work or teaching. They offer numerous types of software and services that are free to the Ohio State community. Listed below are just a few examples of useful tools you can take advantage of from OIT.

SPSS. Those who use SPSS and are interested in getting it for home use will be happy to know that it is available, free of charge, from the OIT website. To download the program, just go to www.oit.ohio-state.edu, click on "students," click on "software," click on "site licensed

software," select the type of computer and operating system, and scroll through the listings. Licensing agreements can be picked up either at the OIT office, 512 Baker Systems, or in the PRL. These licensing agreements must be returned to the OIT in order to start using your software. One caveat is in order. SPSS is huge (it will not fit on a 100MB Zip Disk), so you will only want to download it with a fast connection.

Virus Scanning Software. OIT also makes available the latest anti-virus software. Several versions of VirusScan can be downloaded, without filling out a licensing agreement, from the OIT website. Just click on "software to go" and choose the operating system you work with.

Want Stata?
Since many of the first year students in PS 685 are using Stata, we figured it would be a good idea to let you know you can get your very own copy. Stata is available to grad students and faculty for the low price of $129. To purchase, or for further details, call 800-782-8272 or go to www.stata.com. Once you have ordered the software you can pick it you, usually the next business day, at OIT customer service in 512 Baker Systems.

Webpage News
The web page, after a major revision (accomplished by Sean Williams), is now up, active, and hopefully easier to navigate. But the web page is constantly changing to meet the demands of both professors and graduate students. In this vein, we will be adding new pages concerning fellowship opportunities and departmental awards. If you have any suggestions for improvements

to the web page, please feel free to email the PRL or Brent (strathman.5@osu.edu).

To better meet the web needs of the department, an undergraduate was recently hired to supplement the talents of the PRL staff. Aatif is a Junior and an aviation engineering major. Aatif has extensive experience in creating dynamic, multimedia web pages, and his knowledge greatly expands the web services we can provide. We look forward to improving the web page with the addition of his skills.

ICPSR Summer Program
The Inter University Consortium for Political and Social Research will hold its annual Summer Program in Quantitative Methods from June 23 to August 15. Some of the many courses include: Maximum Likelihood Estimation, Time Series Analysis, Bayesian Methods, and Missing Data Analysis. Many graduate students from our department have attended the program in the past, and it offers a unique opportunity to learn methods from some of the leading quantitative scholars in the social sciences. Interested students are encouraged to contact the Lab Staff or the ICPSR folks directly (sumprog@icpsr.umich.edu).

Experiments and Subject Pool
As you all know, one of the Lab's jobs is to stock the subject pool for those student and faculty who are conducting experiments. This quarter we have 6 experiments signed up, and 680 subjects. We would like to appeal to those teaching classes this quarter, and looking for a way to get their students some extra credit, to contact Brent Strathman about volunteering their class for inclusion in the pool.

Staff Information

Title	Name	Office	Phone	Email	Hours (Winter 2003)
Director	Herb Weisberg	2022	2-6572	weisberg.1@osu.edu	
Ass. Director	Kevin Sweeney	2049R	8-3732	sweeney.101@osu.edu	MF 8:30-12 TWR 9-12
Systems Manager	James Norman	2049K	2-1061	norman.67@osu.edu	M-F 11-7
Grad. Assistant	Ryan Kennedy	2049F	2-0511	kennedy.310@osu.edu	M 8:30-3 T 3:30-6 W 1-6 F 10-1:30, 3:30-6
Grad. Assistant	Brent Strathman	2049F	2-0511	strathman.5@osu.edu	M 1-6 W 8:30-6 R 12:30-6
Undergraduate Assistant	Kevin Newman	2049H	2-0511	newman.218@osu.edu	TR 8:30-3:30
Undergraduate Assistant	Aatif Khan	2049H	2-0511	khan.98@osu.edu	W 12-5 F 11-4

To contact all Lab Staff simultaneously, email us at prl@polisci.sbs.ohio-state.edu

The schedule for 0150 Derby Hall is posted on our website:
http://psweb.sbs.ohio-state.edu/prl/bas_schedule.pdf