

DIRECTOR'S MINUTE

By **MARCUS KURTZ**

Welcome to the inaugural issue of the new, all-electronic *Lab Notes*. We in the PRL are looking forward to providing the Department community with reliable, useful, and secure computing facilities throughout this year and into the future. The "Director's Minute" and other articles in this issue of *Lab Notes* describe the services we offer and explain how you can best take advantage of them. We are committed to providing you with top-flight service. To this end, we have upgraded our facilities over the summer and will continue to do so as the year progresses—peruse this note if you would like an overview of what is now available.

Over the summer, we finished upgrading the computers in all faculty and graduate student offices. We hope you experience even greater reliability and speed with these new machines. As always, however, we are ready to help should problems arise. If your computer is malfunctioning, it is usually best to fill out a ticket at the PRL Help Desk, but you can also call 2-0511 or e-mail prl@polisci.osu.edu.

We have also installed a card-reader system to give faculty and graduate stu-

dents after-hours and weekend access to the Experimental Lab (2049A) and the Media Room (2049C). The Experimental Lab now has two dedicated stats machines—one with dual-core processing for exceptionally complex models—and the Media Room continues to house facilities to help with preparing for classes, including a book scanner and a page-feed scanner for creating electronic versions of readings; color printers and transparencies for creating overhead slides in color; and a combined fax machine/color copier. Any of the PRL staff can assist you with the Media Room's equipment.

The PRL's support for class websites is now integrated with Carmen, the
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New Computers Installed in Faculty Offices

Grad Computers Also Upgraded

By **NATHAN TORONTO**

In an ongoing effort to maintain the quality of our computing facilities, PRL staff have spent the last few months upgrading computers in faculty and graduate student offices, as well as in the labs. Faculty have received brand new computers, and graduate student offices have been upgraded with computers that were previ-

SYSTEM SPECIALIST HIRED

New PRL Employee to Assist with System Administration, Network Management

By **NATHAN TORONTO**

In the week of October 25th, 2006, the PRL hired Joshua Morris to fill the Systems Specialist position recently vacated by David Sweasey. Josh comes to the PRL with a strong background in systems administration and network management, and the PRL staff is looking forward to having him on the team.

In August, 2006, Josh graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in Computer Science and Engi-

neering from The Ohio State University. Before coming to the Department of Political Science, Josh worked as a Student Assistant to the Systems Administrator in the Department of Chemistry, where he had been employed since June, 2003.

Josh brings with him experience in Windows 98/2000/XP, Microsoft Office, Adobe Photoshop, McAfee products, and Active Directory, and he has experience programming with C++, C, SQL, and HTML. He is also knowledgeable when it comes to PC repair, CPUs, memory, network maintenance, and peripheral devices.

Josh also has interests in history and philosophy.

ously in the downstairs labs. These new machines

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EQUIPMENT AVAILABLE FOR LOAN

By NATHAN TORONTO

In order to accommodate the needs of the Department off-site, the PRL will continue to make equipment available for short-term check-out. Due to newly-instituted University inventory rules, it is always best to give as much advance notice as possible when requesting equipment. Nathan Toronto coordinates equipment loans for the PRL.

Following is a list of equipment available for loan:

- Laptops: All laptops have a standard package of programs, including Microsoft Office, SPSS, and Stata. Should you require other programs, we can install them for you.

- Projectors: There are two projectors available for loan.

- Digital Video Camera

- Digital Image Camera

- External drives: The PRL has an external CD-ROM/DVD drive, a floppy drive, and a Zip drive available.

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should provide reliable, fast computing.

The computers that were in the downstairs labs—and that are now in graduate student offices—do not have CD-ROM or floppy drives in them, so the PRL now has external CD-ROM/DVD and floppy drives available for short-term check-out. Since the computers in the Experimental Lab and the PAL will continue to have floppy and CD-ROM/DVD drives, these external drives are meant to be loaned in situations that require the use of office computers (e.g., there are files on office computer hard drives).

New Stats Machine in Experimental Lab

By NATHAN TORONTO

There is now a new stats machine in the Experimental Lab (room 2049A). The one closest to the door—the older machine—still has Stata SE and Stat Transfer, which is useful for converting data from one program's format to another. The computer to its right—the new machine—has a dual-core processor, which is useful for running particularly complex or large models.

Due to demand for these machines, we ask that lab users give priority to those intending to use statistical

programs. In turn, we ask that stats users observe two rules of thumb when their statistical models will likely take a considerable amount of time to run. First, please run these models overnight, and notify PRL staff so that we can post a sign (to avoid unintended interruptions by other users). Second, if your model will take more than twenty-four hours to run, please reserve the machine over a weekend. The stats machines can be scheduled with Nathan Toronto for either overnight or weekend time slots, on a first-come, first-served basis.

Access Roper Center Data from Campus Computers

By NATHAN TORONTO

Computer users wishing to access data from the Roper Center for Public Opinion Research may now do so from any on-campus

computer. Users need only enter their University e-mail address and then create an account with the Center, after which they can have access to the iPOLL and RoperExpress services.

Roper servers automatically recognize the IP addresses of campus computers. Roper has over 17,000 survey datasets, with both individual- and aggregate-level data.

KADIR ON... CARMEN


By KADIR YILDIRIM

Carmen is OSU's new course management system, replacing WebCT. This new system brings a number of superior features, making it easier for instructors to handle their course material, grades, and assignments as well as allowing easy communication between instructors and students. In this issue of "Kadir on...", I will briefly sketch out one very useful feature of Carmen: the Dropbox tool.

The Dropbox tool facilitates submission of assignments by students. Although

submitting assignments via email is always an option, this often incurs problems (e.g., emails being identified as spam, or "I am not sure why you did not receive my email; yes, I'm pretty sure I sent it before the deadline."). Using the Dropbox should minimize these problems. Once students submit their assignments, the instructor can view the time of submission, grade the submitted assignment, and post feedback for the assignment. Also worth mentioning is that all assignments are saved in the Carmen course home in an organized way

without having to search piles of email to reach a particular submission.

To use this tool, first create the Dropbox link in the navigation bar. In the course home, when you click on the little  sign on the upper left corner of the page, Carmen will take you to the page where you can edit the navigation bar. Click on the *Bottom Left* bar, move the *Dropbox* link from the inactive links to the active links, save the changes, and go to *Course Home*.

The second step is to create a folder where students will submit assignments. After you click on *Dropbox* in the navigation bar, select the

Admin button, followed by the *Add Folder* option. Here, you should be prompted to make selections on various *Release Conditions*. Once you *Submit* your preferences, students should be able to submit their assignments via Carmen given the release conditions laid out by you.

The Dropbox will assist instructors overwhelmed with preparing for their classes, allowing them to focus more on the subject matter. If you have questions about importing course content, using the Dropbox tool, or any other subject in Carmen, please contact me at yildirim.10@polisci.osu.edu.

New Card Readers Installed

BuckID Readers Give Faculty, Students Greater Access

By NATHAN TORONTO

Over the past summer, the PRL had Physical Facilities install BuckID card readers on five lab doors, giving both students and faculty greater access to computing facilities. While access to the Political Analysis Lab (the PAL, in room 2037) will continue to be with keys, graduate students and faculty are now able to gain access to the PRL (room 2049), the Experimental Lab (room 2049A), and the Media Lab (room 2049C) using their BuckIDs. Under this new system, faculty and graduate students can enter these rooms after hours and on weekends. In addition, there are now card readers on the downstairs labs—rooms 125 and 150.

For those faculty and students who do not yet have BuckID access to the PRL but would like it, Bill Miller has set up an easy-to-use, on-line form, at <https://secure.polisci.ohio-state.edu/buckid>. Nathan Toronto (2049N, 2-1061)

administers the card reader system, and he can answer questions regarding the new system. When registering their BuckID for the system using the on-line form, only faculty are automatically given access to the Media Lab—graduate students who would like access to the Media Lab after hours and on weekends should direct their requests directly to Nathan Toronto.

The installation of card readers on 125 and 150 also improves access for instructors and students. Instructors no longer need keys to enter rooms 125 and 150, so keys may now be returned to Nathan Toronto. Furthermore, undergraduate students taking classes in room 125 can now enter room 150 during specified times, even in the absence of a lab monitor. This is on top of the open lab hours already staffed by lab monitors. Graduate students who would like access to 125 and 150 for teaching-related purposes may contact Nathan Toronto.

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University's class web server. We expect you will appreciate the added functionality and ease-of-use. Both Nathan Toronto and Kadir Yildirim are available and experienced enough to help with most Carmen needs—Nathan is using Carmen in his own course, and Kadir has taken OIT's Carmen training.

Throughout this year, we will continue to have equipment available for loan, in order to support teaching or the presentation of research. In addition to having laptops available, we have such items as projectors, a digital camera, and external USB drives. Please note, however, that the University has instituted new inventory control procedures, so it is always best to give us as much advance notice as possible

when you need equipment.

As always, we are ready to assist you in any way that we can. Nathan Toronto (Assistant Director), Sarah Wilson (Human Subjects Coordinator), and Kadir Yildirim (Webmaster) keep a schedule that makes at least one of them available to answer questions from 9:00 to 5:00 on weekdays. Nathan is also the one to contact for card-reader concerns and equipment loans. In addition to the graduate students, Bill Miller (System Administrator) and Issac How (System Analyst) will continue to provide help with technical questions, in addition to the stellar work they do maintaining, updating, and securing our network, file, and e-mail servers. We look forward to helping you have a great year!

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Methods Lunch

Dec. 6th @ 11:30 (meet in the east foyer of Derby)

Brownbag Seminar

"Tools of the Trade: What You Can Do with Different Methods"
early January, 2007 (date/time TBA)

All of us at PRISM hope everyone's Autumn term was great and that the Winter term gets off to a good start, and as always, we're happy to address your methods-related questions and concerns. Please check out the website for a comprehensive list of upcoming brownbag seminars, exciting speaking engagements, and useful methodology links.

<http://psweb.sbs.ohio-state.edu/prism>

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COMPUTER PROBLEMS?

FILL OUT A HELP DESK TICKET:

<http://128.146.120.20/cgi-bin/pdesk.cgi>

You can also contact any of the PRL staff, but a Help Desk ticket is best!

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SIT DOWN WITH SARAH

By SARAH WILSON

Dear Sarah,

How do I sign my students up to get extra credit for experiments? Do you have to visit the classroom for my students to be included?

Worried About Experiments

Columbus, OH

Dear WAE in Columbus,

To sign your students up for experiments, you can contact me (Sarah Wilson) at wilson.1478@osu.edu. I will arrange a time to visit your class and pass around a sign-up sheet. It is much better to do this earlier in the quarter (by week 4), so that we have an idea of how large our subject pool will be.

Alternatively, if you prefer not to use up class time by having me give a presentation, you can e-mail your students a link to the web page where they can sign up for experiments. We created this website for the first time this quarter. The link is: <https://secure.polisci.ohio-state.edu/credit/>.

Dear Sarah,

What kind of research requires IRB approval? How do I know whether my IRB proposal will be approved? How far in advance should I apply?

Institutional Confusion from Kristina

Dear ICK,

IRB applications are required for *any* research involving human subjects, including, but not limited to, interviews and surveys. There is no way to guarantee your IRB proposal will be successful. Guidelines change and proposals that were previously approved may fail the second time. We are currently trying to compile past IRB proposals, so that graduate students and faculty will have examples of commonly used language.

You should apply as far in advance as possible to avoid any complications with your research. You should consider what amendments to the IRB applications are necessary for your proposal including things like official translations if you will be conducting research in another language. Expedited review is available for some projects.

You can find more information at: <http://www.orrp.ohio-state.edu/>.

And don't forget, you have to complete the CITI online course *before* submitting an IRB proposal. See: <https://www.citiprogram.org>.

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BuckID Access

It gives you after-hours and weekend access to:

The stats machines in the Experimental Lab

Color printing, book and document scanning, and fax capabilities in the Media Lab

To sign up, go to:

<https://secure.polisci.ohio-state.edu/buckid>

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Meet the 2006–07 PRISM Fellows

ANAND E. SOKHEY (sokhey.2@polisci.osu.edu)

Anand is a Ph.D. candidate in American politics, and his research interests include voting behavior, public opinion, elite behavior, religion and politics, and methodology; he is particularly interested in multi-level models, survival models, and survey research. His recent projects have examined religious elites and foreign policy, the political cohesion of churches (and their role in promoting civic capacity), the social underpinnings of political knowledge among the American public, and the timing of voting in the U.S. Senate. His dissertation focuses on the role of interpersonal discussion networks and organizational involvements (and the interaction between the two) in voting behavior.

Autumn office hours: M 11:00–4:00; W 10:30–2:30, 4:30–5:30

QUINTIN BEAZER (beazer.1@osu.edu)

Quintin is a Ph.D. student in Comparative Politics and Political Economy. Substantively, he focuses on economic and institutional reform in Russia and other postcommunist countries. His current projects include work on credible commitment and reform after economic crises, the effect of budget constraints and regime type on government spending, and an investigation into the sources of lobbying power in transition economies. As PRISM Junior Fellow, Quintin looks forward to using the upcoming year to further explore his methodological interests in multilevel modeling, event history, and Bayesian analysis. As a complement to these statistical methods, he is also interested in game theoretic analyses as a means of generating testable hypotheses in political science research.

Autumn office hours: T/TH 8:00–11:30, 3:30–5:00.

A DYNAMIC LABOR MARKET:

*How Political Science is Opening Up to Methodologists, and How
Methodologists are Opening Up Political Science*

By JAN BOX-
STEFFENSMEIER AND
ANAND E. SOKHEY

If disciplines can be likened to living things, then perhaps political science is best characterized not by familiar symbols – e.g., the elephant, the donkey, or the eagle – but by a small sea creature: the hermit crab. Rather than generating its own protective cover, the hermit crab adopts the foreign shells that it comes across; it makes a home for itself by utilizing the previous works of other crustaceans. For many years, the discipline of political science – like other areas within the social and behavioral sciences – built its own frameworks using the analytical tools found in outside disciplines. Borrowing heavily from econometrics, psychometrics and biometrics, political scientists examined empirical data as they tested theories about individual behavior, organizational dynamics, and governmental processes. The substantive ends were of primary interest, and therefore less attention was paid to the means of inquiry.

This has changed dramatically over the last twenty or so years, and even more

The authors wish to thank Michael Brintnall for sharing the American Political Science Association's data on job postings, and David Campbell, Tom Carsey, Suzanna DeBoef, Jeff Gill, John Jackson, Jonathan Nagler, Herb Weisberg and Sarah Wilson for helpful comments and suggestions on previous versions of the article.

rapidly in the recent past. While the questions still drive the enterprise, the methods used to answer those questions now receive an ever-increasing amount of scrutiny. New statistical techniques and software packages emerge continuously; they have kept pace with evolving computer capabilities. In turn, advanced approaches to estimation and measurement have enabled researchers to ask and answer questions that previously were either avoided or could only be addressed indirectly. Innovations in statistical modeling have made political scientists better able to tackle questions involving space and time (both simultaneously and separately), and the progress has also spurred improvements in data collection. Today, learning and adaptation from other fields of study continues – political science can certainly be characterized as a “welcoming discipline” (Beck 2000). However, where there was once essentially a one-way flow of methodological innovation into political science, there is now an exchange with other disciplines. Political science has generated advancements in areas such as ecological generalization, and the discipline is clearly ahead of many of the social and behavioral sciences in terms of its general mathematical sophistication, application of Bayesian approaches,

integration of formal and empirical work, insights into model specification, and more recently, self-critical epistemological reflection. In short, political science has become both a consumer and a producer of methods.

Surely there are multiple explanations for this paradigmatic shift. One might view it as the natural outcome for a discipline that courts the large-*n* survey, that has access to increasingly rich, complex, and varied types of data, and that has had well-funded teaching and research resources for methods for some time, notably the Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR) at the University of Michigan (since 1962). The recent National Science Foundation initiative spearheaded by James Granato and Frank Scioli, called Empirical Implications of Theoretical Models (EITM), adds to this trend. EITM is intended to improve theoretical work so that it yields more testable hypotheses, while improving methodological work so that the testing of theory is more effective and informative (Aldrich 2002). Whether or not one is a proponent of a methods-infused political science, it is hard to dispute that the discipline has developed a distinct “quantitative core” over the years (Schwartz-Shea 2003): In 2003-2004, over half of the submissions to the discipline's top jour-

Methods Corner

nal – *The American Political Science Review* – used an approach that was classified as either quantitative (51%), or formal and quantitative (8%) (Sigelman 2005).

Much responsibility for this change, however, rests with a species that is on the rise within the discipline: the political methodologist. Political methodologists specialize in the ways in which political inquiry is carried out; they are experts in the analytical tools used by their fellow academicians, and are increasingly themselves either the sole or collaborative creators of such tools. From teaching research methods to graduate students and fellow Ph.D.s, to writing new statistical software programs, to publishing methods-related articles, these researchers have helped make methods part of the discipline's message. And one thing is certain: today methodologists' messages are resonating. At the start of the 1970s, essentially only one place in political science – the discipline's flagship journal, the *American Political Science Review* – published methods-focused articles, and even then it did not take many pieces. Today there are multiple prestigious journals within the discipline that regularly publish such works, not to mention other outlets including instructional books and series (as well as journals outside of political sci-

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ence) (Lewis-Beck 2006). In 2003-2004 a full 15 percent of the articles accepted into the *APSR* were primarily methods-oriented (Sigelman 2005).

One gains further insight into these political science trends by examining the curriculum of doctoral programs. In a survey of 57 departments conducted in 2000-2001, Schwartz-Shea found that *every* school included in the study offered at least one quantitative methods course, that nearly three-fourths of those departments questioned offered at least 3 such courses, and that seventy percent offered at least one specialty methods course (2003). And increases in the usage of methods and methods offerings have led to greater demands for instruction and expertise. Between 2002 and 2004, 150 academic position advertisements included a specific request for some type of quantitative methods. As one might expect, nearly two-thirds of these postings came from Ph.D. granting institutions, though over one-fourth came from institutions without graduate students (Brintnall 2005) – a sign that methods are also increasingly finding their way into undergraduate programs of study.

Of course methods-related job opportunities have not always abounded. In the not so distant past there were few primarily methods-focused scholars in political science, and rarely more than one in any particular department. It was difficult to go on the market as a methodologist, and

nearly impossible to gain tenure with a primarily methods-based record; indeed, rare was the methodologist who did not first publish in a substantive field (whether American politics, Comparative politics, or International Relations). In a given year, one typically saw no more than a handful of methods-related positions advertised. And, while such skills were often welcomed by hiring committees, less frequently were they explicitly requested in job bulletins.

However, while the shared experience of often being the lone “witch doctor” at an institution did not exactly help to tear down professional hurdles, it did force methodologists to confer and keep in touch – the result of which has been a solid formal (and informal) political methodology network that has continued to grow over the years. [The Inter-University Consortium](#) at Michigan, and its long-standing summer institute in social science research design and data analysis, played an especially important role in the early development of this community. For over forty years ICPSR has served as a forum for the scholarly debate and exchange of ideas related to political methodology, as a breeding ground for future methodologists, and as *the* place of learning for the everyday methods user (Lewis-Beck 2006).

Today the Society for Political Methodology (the official name of the methods section of the American Political Science Association) is impressive – in

some respects it is political science’s counter to an organization like the American Medical Association: active, well attended, well funded, and well respected. The first annual meeting of the Society was held in 1984 – with just 17 individuals in attendance – and was supported by the University of Michigan and the National Election Studies. By 1986 the summer conference was being co-sponsored by the National Science Foundation (which still continues today), and participation has increased steadily over the years – 148 people attended in 2005. Smaller regional conferences have now begun as well, such as the Northeast Methods Meeting and the Bay Area Methods Meeting.

Currently the Society boasts the second highest membership of all *APSA* sections at 930 (it trails only to the catchall of “comparative politics”), yet it has one of the highest yearly membership dues rates. Membership fees include a subscription to the Society’s formerly annual – now quarterly – journal, *Political Analysis*, as well as a subscription to the section’s newsletter, *The Political Methodologist* (*APSA* 2006). *Political Analysis* is a showcase for some of the top empirical work in political science, and despite its relative infancy, is currently ranked among the top 20 political science journals; it is now referenced in multiple and diverse research data-bases including *CSA Worldwide Political Science Abstracts*, *Sociological Abstracts*, *Sta-*

tistical Theory and Method Abstracts, and *The Social Science Citation Index*. *The Political Methodologist* serves as a forum for scholarly debate, research advice, teaching tips, book reviews, and job information. The Society also maintains a website, currently edited by Andrew Martin at Washington University, where teaching syllabi and working papers are archived along with other useful information: <http://polmeth.wustl.edu/>.

While it is clear that the methods community has succeeded in promoting intra and interdisciplinary ties, the success of the organized section and its journal has been particularly important for another reason: combined with the sheer volume of work coming out of the emerging field, it has managed to turn the heads of more than just political scientists. In its 2005 graduate program rankings, *U.S. News and World Report* moved to include political methodology as a separate subfield for the first time. (Previously, only American politics, Comparative politics, International Relations, and Political Theory had been ranked specialties.) And this external, “mainstream” recognition of political methodology as a distinct subfield within political science is sure to have both immediate and long-term consequences. It goes without saying that the rankings will impact the application and enrollment decisions of future scholars, just as they will shift or solidify the reputations of

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programs across the country. Importantly, however, they will also influence hiring decisions as certain schools attempt to build up their departments. And this impact has already been felt within the discipline, where in 2005 the new rankings had the effect of pouring fuel on an already hot methods labor market. Between July 2004 and December 2005, 61 academic position advertisements on the American Political Science Association's website called for individuals whose *primary* focus was methodology, and of these over half (36) were tenure-track jobs. In the same period an additional 66 advertisements specifically requested methodology as a subfield (APSA online job listings 2004-2005).

Traditionally, getting hired as a political methodologist involved displaying expertise in a substantive field first, and then methodology. However, hiring requirements and priorities have also begun to change in the last few years, as reflected in the recent number of primarily methods job listings. Today an increasing number of scholars find themselves with the opportunity to go on the market as strict (or at least primarily) political methodologists – a shift that is readily discernable from position descriptions that explicitly include methods consultation duties. For example, in 2004 the department of political science at the University of Notre Dame advertised a methods position carrying a 1/1 teaching load, noting that the reduced course responsibilities

would be in exchange for time spent assisting other faculty and graduate students with questions. And the rise in methods-focused positions has also been matched by expanding opportunities at many institutions for technically advanced graduate students. For example, the Program in Statistics and Methodology (PRISM) at The Ohio State University funds two graduate student fellows annually whose primary duties include methods consultation and the organization of instructional workshops. More generally, the culture of the political methodology field, while intense, is known for taking care of its more junior scholars – examples of this include the attention given to graduate work at the Annual Political Methodology meeting and the Interactive Video Teaching (ITV) Program in Methodology.

With opportunities for publication expanding, demand for expertise growing, and established institutional pipelines producing top-notch scholars, it is a good time to be a political methodologist. By joining in conversations with other fields of inquiry, these scholars have blurred disciplinary boundaries. In doing so, however, they have not only changed the face of political science, but have helped to underscore what connects the subfields within the discipline. Today these researchers can get tenure with a methods-focused vita, can get published in top political science journals, and most fundamentally, can get jobs. Indeed, the method-

ologist has found a voice and made a home within political science.

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Notes

- 1 Philip Schrodt first described the role of a political methodologist as that of a "witch doctor" in an article in *The Political Methodologist* (1991): "Everybody fears them; most people hate them. They are central to the rites of passage into the tribe. Nobody has the slightest idea what they do but witch doctors are thought to disrupt work from great distances – particularly cooking – so you keep them around for protection. And *everybody* agrees you only want one in the village" (1991, 19). Perhaps political methodologists are no longer the witch doctors, but more akin to members of a wise tribal council.
- 2 Though it began in 1989 as an annual volume edited by James Stimson, *Political Analysis* became a quarterly journal in 2000 under the editorship of Nathaniel Beck. Prior to that time, *Political Methodology* existed as a journal for methodological work in the discipline – it was started in the mid-1970's by John Sullivan and George Marcus, as noted by its former editor Christopher Achen (Achen 1985).
- 3 The coding scheme used to classify the APSA online job listings is available upon request.
- 4 The home page for the ITV program is: <http://psweb.sbs.ohio-state.edu/faculty/jbox/ITV/ITVHome.html>. The success of the Political Science ITV program – which celebrated its tenth year in 2006 – is highlighted in a recent report by the Committee on Institutional Cooperation (CIC) (see Marks, Parlow, and Player 2006).

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