

# Data First Resource Unit

The continued growth and demand for access to the Data First survey archive resulted in us making further substantial technology investments this year. This included the installation of our own dedicated high storage server, which now hosts our data archive as well as the CSSR and its constituent units' websites and is on a new high speed network.

## THE RESOURCE CENTRE

Client use of the Resource Centre from all social science disciplines continues to grow. Postgraduate students registered to use the data and supporting survey documentation now number one hundred and seventy three. This continued growth is encouraging when one considers that sixty students were registered in our first year. This growth can be attributed to two factors i) the comprehensive, user-friendly way our data and the supporting documentation is presented as well as the technical support offered to clients by the Data First staff and ii) the CSSR constituent research units' success in stimulating quantitative research using survey data. The graph gives a summary of registered students according to their field of study for 2004.

Students from Economics, Political Studies and Sociology continue to make up the majority of our student members. It remains encouraging (when one

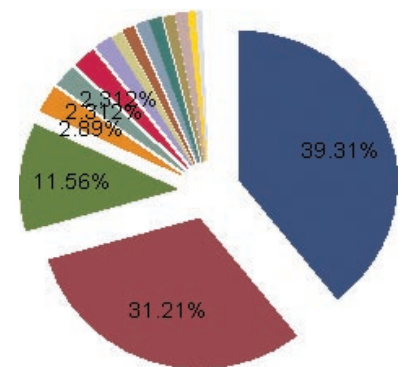
considers that when we first started out by far the majority of registered students were from Economics) that students from the social sciences are now making considerable use of our facilities. Fifty-seven percent of the student members are registered for Honours degrees, twenty-nine percent for Masters Degrees and fourteen percent for PhD's. Staff membership stands at 68 for this year.

## DATA ARCHIVE

The data archive now consists of 119 datasets. Additions this year included the Census 2001 data as well as the dataset from the March 2004 Labour Force Surveys, the School Register of needs survey data from 1996 and 2000, and SACMEQ. Access to international datasets continues through our membership of the Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR) at the University of Michigan. This membership continues to be sponsored by the Institute for Social Research (ISR) at the University of Michigan.

## SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

The Resource Centre has a collection of 2749 monographs. This includes supporting documentation for survey design and analysis (212 titles) as well as all publications that have made use of the survey



*Registered Students 2004: Field of Study*

*“The acquisition of our server and the increased speed of our computer network have allowed us to expand our level of access as well as improve the security of our data.”*



*The Data First Resource Centre*



*Our website can be accessed at  
<http://www.cssr.uct.ac.za/datafirst.html>*

DATAFIRST RESOURCE UNIT CONTINUED

data housed in the Resource Centre.

Data First continues to compile bibliographies of publications that use the datasets in our archive. These are accessible via the Data First website, with clickable links to many of the papers listed. Bibliographies are currently available for the following datasets.

- Afrobarameter South Africa Survey 2000
- Cape Area Panel Study
- Census 1996
- Kwazulu/Natal Income Dynamics Study 1998
- Khayelitsha Mitchell's Plain Survey 2000
- Labour Force Surveys 2000-2001
- October Household Surveys 1994-1999
- Project for Statistics on Living Standards and Development 1993
- South Africa Demographic and Health Survey 1998
- Survey of Activities of Young People 1999
- Time Use Survey 2000
- Victims of Crime Survey 1998

### WEBSITE

Data First continues to manage the website for the CSSR and its constituent units.

The increased power, space and speed of our new server has allowed us to move the CSSR website from the general UCT site to our own dedicated website. This has allowed us to redesign the site to be more user-friendly and informative. The new website went live on 12 July 2004 and can be accessed at the following URL: <http://www.cssr.uct.ac.za>.

Information on all the CSSR units, their projects and staff and research output can now be found on the site as well as references to all CSSR publications (downloadable). The site also provides up-to-date information on the latest CSSR seminars, conferences and workshops as well as information on the latest data and monograph acquisitions in Data First.

All questionnaires, codebooks and bibliographies related to surveys in the Data First archive are available on the Data First website (<http://www.cssr.uct.ac.za/datafirst.html>). Data First also maintains the websites for all the other CSSR research units.

Data First completed a pilot of a project designed to broaden access for undergraduate students at UCT as well as for researchers throughout the world, by making it possible to download our public access data as well as do analysis online without being dependent on knowledge of a statistical package (all the clients need is access to the internet and a web browser).

The pilot was conducted with the Khayelitsha/Mitchell's Plain Survey 2000 using an evaluation copy of the NESSTAR package. A full version of the package was purchased in August 2004. This package will be integrated with the Data First website during 2005.

### INTERNS

During 2004 the Resource Centre employed 3 interns for periods of three months each, working two hours per day. The interns are required to learn Stata as well as be familiar

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Their job is to assist Resource Centre clients with queries regarding the datasets and the statistical software used to analyse the data.

Students given internships with Data First in 2004 were: David Ngindu, Elvis Ndimurukundo and Tinto Seotloadi.

David was completing his Honours degree in Sociology during the time he was employed by the unit. He attended a GIS workshop while working for the unit, as well as a training session on the use of the 1996 Census dataset presented by Statistics South Africa. His main task was to assist clients in the use of the datasets from the 1996 and 2001 Population Censuses.

Elvis was completing his honours in Sociology in 2004 during his internship with Data First. He attended the Data First course on analysing survey data using the statistical package, Stata, held in January 2004. He assisted clients with survey research and assisted the Resource Centre Manager with a project that involved checking all survey datasets in the archive to ensure they were presented in a user-friendly way to the clients. This involved labelling unlabelled variables and sourcing metadata to add to the existing documentation for each dataset. This is an ongoing task for the Resource Centre staff.

Tinto was completing his Economics Honours degree while employed as an intern in the Resource Centre. He

attended the Stata course on data analysis in January 2004, and also worked through the online Stata tutorial to upgrade his skills with this package in order to assist clients in analysing survey data.

For the last couple of months Tinto has been involved in the project to label unlabelled variables in some of the South African survey datasets, using the questionnaires available. He has also been updating and maintaining the AIDS newspaper clippings collection in the Resource Centre.

Matthew Welch continues to be involved with the summer training programme run in cooperation with the Population Studies Centre at the ISR and the School of Economics at UCT. He also teaches on the new CSSR masters course in 'problem-driven social science research'.

The acquisition of our server and the increased speed of our computer network have allowed us to expand our level of access as well as improve the security of our data. The restructuring of the CSSR website has also improved access to information and publications produced by the CSSR and its constituent units. In 2005 we will be looking to increase access to our data through our online web analysis software.

### A FAREWELL

Our Director, Professor Francis Wilson, retires at the end of 2004. We remain grateful to him for his vision in establishing the Centre and its units, and his support and encouragement to us as we build Data First into a unique resource within the university and the academic

**People @ Data First**

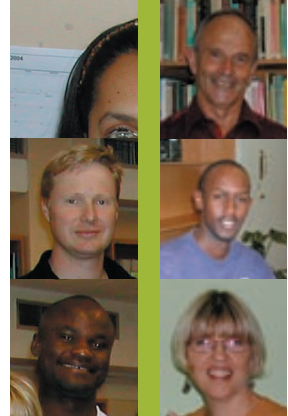
*Director*  
Francis Wilson

*Deputy Director*  
Matthew Welch

*Resource Centre Manager*  
Lynn Woolfrey

*Technical Officer*  
Alison Siljeur

*Interns*  
David Ngindu  
Elvis Ndimurukundo  
Tinto Seotloadi



CONTINUED DATAFIRST RESOURCE UNIT

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community in South Africa. As we continue to expand in order to create a facility that will fulfil the social survey research needs of our clients, we will continue to be inspired by what he has accomplished in his career.■