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ANSS CURRENTS

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Web version

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Randy Hertzler

The Midwinter conference in Denver seems to have just wrapped up, and yet ALA Annual in Chicago is just around the corner! As usual, the ANSS committees have been hard at work; be sure to check out the "Committee Reports" section in this newsletter to learn about the many exciting projects and initiatives in the works.

The current state of the economy has impacted academic libraries by, among other things, causing travel and professional development funds to all but dry up for many institutions. We already noticed the fallout in Denver, with some members unable to attend the conference due to funding problems, while others who *did* come paid partly or wholly out-of-pocket. This presents many challenges for our committees and, unfortunately, there are no signs that the situation will turn around any time soon. Committees are encouraged to be creative in finding new ways to get their business done and ANSS leadership would love to hear about effective strategies your committees have used to address this challenge. ALA and ACRL are well aware of the issue and I expect we'll see a trend toward alternatives to the traditional, twice-yearly, face-to-face meeting model.

Those of you coming to the Annual Conference in Chicago this summer should plan to attend ANSS' program, titled "Chicago's Ethnic Mosaic: Cultural Identity and Neighborhood Change." An interdisciplinary panel of four local scholars will explore issues surrounding race, ethnicity, and the traditional and changing nature of Chicago's neighborhoods. The program, which will be held Sunday, July 12th between 8am and noon, will address the ways in which cultural institutions shape ethnic identity and how economic and other forces change neighborhood identity over time.

A special thanks to all of you who volunteer to serve as ANSS committee chairs, members, and discussion group

conveners. Because of your time and hard work, ANSS continues to enjoy its well-established tradition of excellent work in service of the profession, library users, and the academic disciplines. Given the wide range of committees within ANSS, there is usually a niche to meet just about every interest, and I encourage those of you not currently serving on committees to consider volunteering. The online volunteer form is at <http://www.acrl.org/volunteer>. Also, if you're "shopping" for the right committee, please drop in to visit any of the committee's meetings (excepting the Nominating Committee) at ALA Annual this summer. Finally, subscribing to our listserv, ANSS-L, is a great way to connect with colleagues around North America who work with materials and services relating to Anthropology, Sociology, Criminal Justice, and other affiliated disciplines. Visit <http://www.acrl.org/ala/mgrps/divs/acrl/about/sections/anss/anss-l.cfm> to subscribe.

I wish you all a pleasant spring, and look forward to seeing many of you in Chicago this summer!

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Ad Hoc Committee on the Assessment of Library Collections and Services in Sociology

David Woolwine, Chair

The Ad Hoc committee voted to ask the ANSS Executive Committee to extend its term for an additional year. Woolwine, Jacoby, Philips, and Rui have agreed to stay on and the Executive Committee has approved the extension. Jennifer Sundheim of the University of Washington has been appointed to the Committee. Ed Kane has stepped down as sociology consultant and has been replaced by Tom Van Vele and Yvonne Vissing.

A workshop at the American Sociological Association Annual Meeting will be given by Woolwine and Sally Willson Weimar, the ACRL liaison to ASA. In addition, Woolwine and Phillips will present a paper, based on the

work of the Ad Hoc committee, to the Canadian Library Association for its conference in May for a session on innovations in collection development.

At Midwinter the Ad Hoc committee reviewed a draft document of the rapid assessment tool which is a client-centered assessment not a collection-centered tool. The draft, in its present form, is concerned extensively with budgets, collection development policies, journals/databases, circulating collections, reference collections, and liaison duties of librarians. It deals less well, at present, with audiovisual materials and datasets and does not address distance learning, handicap issues, or space/technology concerns. Core collection issues, primarily in regard to monograph collections but also in regard to serials, remains unsettled. The Committee continues to work on the document.

Conference Program Planning Committee 2009

Anne-Marie Davis, Chair

The title of the 2009 ANSS program at the ALA annual meeting in Chicago is "Chicago's Ethnic Mosaic: Cultural Identity and Neighborhood Change." An interdisciplinary panel of four local scholars will explore issues surrounding race, ethnicity, and the traditional and changing nature of Chicago's neighborhoods. The program, which will be held Sunday, July 12th between 8am and noon, will address the ways in which cultural institutions shape ethnic identity and how economic and other forces change neighborhood identity over time.

Conference Program Planning Committee 2010

Annie Paprocki, Chair

At Midwinter, the committee met for the first time to plan the ANSS program for the ALA Annual Conference in 2010, which will be held in Washington, D.C. We chose the theme, "Libraries and Social Movements." Speakers will engage questions such as: What role have libraries (or librarians) played in promoting social change or civic engagement? How have social movements changed libraries? What are libraries doing to document grassroots movements? Suggestions for possible speakers would be welcome. Contact acpapro@illinois.edu with your recommendations.

Instruction and Information Literacy Committee

Stephanie Alexander & Jason Phillips, Co-Chairs

Chairs Jason Phillips and Stephanie Alexander were pleased to welcome members of the ANSS Instruction and Information Literacy Committee and interested colleagues from various institutions to the Midwinter meeting. During our meeting we discussed and revised a

new contribution to the repository for a class in social science research methods. The committee also approved a plan to migrate committee materials and the repository to New York University's Faculty Digital Archive and/or Web space. Members of the committee have agreed to prepare their own submissions in advance of our summer meeting as we prepare to publicize the repository to the wider community and to transition materials to a permanent Web space in 2010.

Liaison Committee

Helen Clements, Chair

The Committee is currently renewing the mailing list for *ANSS Currents*. While we presently have a small list of organizations, departments, and research institutions that receive paper copies of the list, we would very much like to have suggestions from section members about groups that should know about the Division's work. In addition, if you have heard an excellent presentation on an anthropology or sociology information source and think that it would be useful to ANSS, please let us know. Current committee members are Helen Clements (Oklahoma State, helen.clements@okstate.edu); Julie Edwards (University of Montana, julie.edwards@umontana.edu), and Jameatrix Johnson (University of Miami, jjjohnso@miami.edu).

Membership Committee

Terry Epperson and Jennifer Darragh, Co-Chairs

The Midwinter ANSS Social was a success given tight travel budgets with approximately 17 attendees, and we are already looking forward to the next Social in Chicago. The Membership Committee is considering revamping the existing Buddy Program (where established members take new members under their wing at conferences). We are exploring the possibility of matching up buddies based on geographic location when possible. This would allow buddies to meet up in person beyond ALA Midwinter and Annual, allowing for what we hope would be a more synergistic relationship. While ANSS has experienced a 2.55% loss this past year, we are faring better than many other sections in retaining existing members and adding new members.

At the ACRL 2009 Conference in Seattle, Terry Epperson participated in the highly attended New Members Orientation and reported that we had many visitors to the ANSS table. Jen Darragh also hosted a Social Sciences Librarians Meet n' Eat dinner at the Pike Brewing Company that 12 people attended. A fun time was had by all and a picture from our dinner even made it into the closing session's slide show.

Publications Committee

Carol Bell, Chair

Jenny Bowers reported publication of the *ANSS Currents* fall 2008 issue and that Susan Metcalf had helped her with the spring 2008 issue. Lesley Brown volunteered to assist with the spring 2009 issue. There are two versions of the newsletter: a print version of 8 pages and an online version which can be as long as the material submitted. We would like to give more thought to the amount of space used in the print version for member profiles and bibliographies. Carol Bell will remind other committee chairs of the need to submit materials on time.

Difficulties encountered while attempting to edit the website in Collage were discussed. Carol Bell stated that more help is needed to complete website tasks and asked all members to take Collage training.

Operating from an inherited recommendation to create a wiki, the committee selected a short list of content items for early inclusion from a previously brainstormed list of suggestions. We agreed that we would like to keep the front page simple in design, establish policies and guidelines for wiki use, and not duplicate website content. The wiki would be available for ready posting of materials by a spectrum of ANSS members, while the website would be the site for information needing controlled input and less-frequent updates. David Tyler will explore how to go about physically implementing the wiki on the ALA site. Carol Bell will review the existing ANSS wiki and make a proposal at Annual 2009.

Review and Planning Committee

Katie Whitson, Chair

The Review and Planning Committee focused its work in two areas. First, the committee removed the existing Bylaws from the ANSS Manual and replaced those with new Governance Procedures. This change was prompted by an announcement from ACRL at last year's Sections' Council Meeting. While ACRL is required to have by-laws, individual sections should not have these as part of their operating procedures. ACRL sent a sample governance procedures document to sections. Randy Hertzler worked on the document prior to Midwinter so R&P could update the Manual with the new procedures. ACRL asked that finalized Governance Procedures be uploaded to the ANSS Section website and sent to ACRL by end of February 2009. The committee spent the remainder of the meeting making revisions to the Manual. As soon as the updates to the Manual have been posted on the ANSS website, all members will be notified via ANSS-L.

Subject and Bibliographic Access Committee

Wayne Sanders, Chair

At the Midwinter meeting, the Committee came up with a list of questions to work on for future monthly postings to ANSS-L: Why are there non-English notes and subjects on English language cataloging records?; What subject headings are used to provide access to materials on fossil hominids and paleoanthropology?; What subject headings are used for materials about the indigenous peoples of Australia?; What subject headings has Library of Congress prohibited from being used with the subdivision "History" due to their inherent historical nature?; How are century subdivisions used in sociological subject subdivisions?; and What subject headings are used to locate materials on criminal corrections?

The Committee discussed other potential delivery mechanisms for our information products and other communication mechanisms with our fellow ANSS members. Below are some actions which we believe will help the Committee enhance its impact and further those actions outlined in the ACRL Strategic Plan: 1) We will make a handout for the Chicago ANSS program providing lists of subject headings to find additional resources on the program topic; 2) The Committee will migrate its "Questions and Answers," as well as lists of new subject headings, to the ANSS wiki from the existing ANSS website. We believe this will allow us to better serve our members by presenting more current content, allow for RSS feeds, and provide better service to our members by meeting their Web 2.0 expectations; and 3) The Committee will construct a survey to evaluate our services to ANSS members via the ANSS-L listserv before ALA Annual 2009.

DISCUSSION GROUP REPORTS

Sociology Librarians Discussion Group

Triveni Kuchi and Afeworki Paulos, Co-Conveners

ANSS Sociology discussion group co-conveners extended a warm welcome to the more than 30 members and attendees of the ALA midwinter meeting. After a round robin of introductions, the two panel speakers were invited to present their analysis about the access and impact of Social Sciences Data on scholarship.

Lois E. Timms-Ferrara, Associate Director of The Roper Center at the University of Connecticut spoke first about the Center's collections, data access tools, data uses, complimentary resources, user group, and future plans of the Center. Roper Center's data consists mainly of public opinion poll information, national and international individual dataset files, reports, press

releases, and some commercial datasets. Some of the popular datasets are from a variety of sources, such as ABC News, Gallup organization, General Social Survey, NORC, Exit Polls, and Pew Internet Research. Also mentioned was the diversity of the Center's datasets – including data from more than 84 countries around the world and from over 150 survey organizations. Timms-Ferrara emphasized the use and importance of the Center's access tools for datasets, especially the use of the catalog (for keyword searching), the use of *iPOLL* as a finding aid for datasets, and the ready to download data icon – Roper Express. In addition, the Center's complimentary tool for analyzing data called Interactive Data Extraction and Analysis System (IDEAS) that provides ways to compare group responses, results within results, and extract statistical results was highlighted.

Timms-Ferrara addressed audience questions regarding the Roper Center's collections. She explained that the Center's data use covered broad subject areas including Political Science, Sociology, Public Health, Psychology, Economics, Journalism, English, Business, History and Pharmacy and provided information regarding a range of topics across these subject areas. She also mentioned that the areas Abortion, Alcohol, Crime, Energy, Environment, Ethics, Human Rights, Illegal Drugs, Immigration, Poverty, Race Relations (IDEAS), Women & Work, and Youth were covered under social topics. Academic clientele primarily use the Center's data comprising of over 58% doctoral programs, more or less evenly by graduate and undergraduate students (30-40%), and remaining by faculty, library staff, and non-profit and corporate researchers. Timms-Ferrara pointed out that interestingly undergraduates were the "recurring users of *iPOLL* data." The Roper Center's future plans include adding several new datasets and continuing to improve the search and retrieval features of their interface towards achieving the Center's broader objective of integrating data access and availability for users.

Jared Lyle, from the Interuniversity Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR), opened his presentation with a dramatic reminder of our world's overwhelming data production, using examples from the rapidly growing Protein Data Bank, the Hubble Telescope's daily photo output, and the data generated by the Large Hadron Collider, to emphasize his point. He made the case that in the world of social sciences data clearly organizations such as ICPSR are needed to continue to collect, preserve, manage, and provide access to data. ICPSR serves the social sciences communities by seeking social science data; collecting data files and documentation; preserving and future proofing data; offering multiple output formats;

disseminating data online, and providing free user support and training. Lyle reports that ICPSR has over 650 members worldwide, with a majority of users from North America. Graduate and undergraduate students are the largest users of ICPSR data (64%) and surprisingly faculty comprise only about 17%. These users come from various disciplines including anthropology, criminal justice, demography, economics, education, foreign policy, gerontology, health & medical policy, history, law/legal services, political sciences, psychology, public policy, and sociology. ICPSR's data archives have over 7000 collections and are growing at the rate of 300 to 400 collections annually.

Lyle was asked specific questions regarding ICPSR collections and plans for the future. He asserted that ICPSR is very proactive about acquiring and making available data to their users. Through its user-friendly, customizable website, ICPSR gives access to data collections, bibliographies, citations, full-text documents, data downloads, and the convenience of online data analysis. ICPSR also provides an extensive online learning center and training for users of data. Data-driven learning guides that connect disciplines such as sociology and its research methods topics to databases are available from ICPSR for students to readily learn data analysis. Lyle emphasized ICPSR's goal for long-term preservation of all data (including international data).

While addressing questions from the audience regarding ICPSR's role in the collection and preservation of data, he presented a summary of all the detailed and meticulous activity required for data curation and its management. Another question from the audience asked how ICPSR and the Roper Center were planning to collaborate at the local library/institutional repositories level regarding data access, preservation, and curation? Lyle mentioned that while there were currently no plans regarding collaborations with local Institutional repository archives, this was something ICPSR should probably consider in the future. He emphasized that ICPSR is actively involved in several research projects including: Data – PASS – Library of Congress project; Incentives project; Human Subject Protection and Disclosure Risk Analysis project; and Data Documentation Initiative.

ANSS MEMBERS' NEWS

Rebecca Blakeley has been recognized as a 2009 Mover & Shaker by *Library Journal*. Read about Rebecca's passion for government documents and her efforts to restore the McNeese State University Frazar Memorial Library's gov docs collection following Hurricane Rita at

Congratulations, Rebecca!

ANSS MEMBER PROFILES



Dr. Wade Kotter, as interviewed by Wendy Highby

I met Dr. Wade Kotter in January at the ANSS Midwinter Social in Denver. A fellow Southwesterner, Wade hails from Utah. He is the Social Sciences Librarian in the Stewart Library at Weber State University in Ogden. His polymathic talent and training are fully engaged in his current position. Wade provides traditional reference and collection development services and also teaches courses in information resources and as an adjunct in Weber State's Anthropology program. He actively continues his research in Near Eastern Archaeology. See his webpage at <http://library.weber.edu/cm/wkotter/>. Like most of us, Wade's career trajectory is a result of both intention and circumstance. Wade describes his career path in response to my questions below.

Wendy: I see you received a Ph.D. in Anthropology from the University of Arizona in 1986. Did you pursue your MLS before or after the Ph.D.? How have you combined the two disciplines in your career?

Wade: When I received my Ph.D. in 1986, the idea of pursuing an MLS couldn't have been further from my mind. Instead, I immediately began applying for both tenure-track and temporary positions all over the country. Between 1986 and 1991, before I began library school at the University of Maryland, I sent out nearly 100 applications. Although I did get a few interviews, none of the opportunities panned out. In the meantime, I taught as an adjunct at several institutions in the Washington, DC area. Then, in 1991, while I was perusing *The Chronicle of Higher Education* for anthropology positions, I noticed an announcement for the position of Near Eastern Bibliographer at the University of Chicago that required a Ph.D. in Near Eastern Archaeology and an MLS. I immediately called them and asked if they would consider me if I agreed to enter library school upon appointment. Unfortunately, they already had two fully-qualified applicants, so their answer was no. However, the idea of combining archaeology with an MLS intrigued me, especially since there were many more jobs at that time for librarians than Near Eastern archaeologists. So I applied to the library school at the University of Maryland two days

later and began the MLS program in the fall of 1991. I wasn't sure it was the right thing to do at the time, but when classes began I realized that librarianship was very attractive to me.

During my two years in library school, I had the opportunity to work as an intern and later as a volunteer in the Natural History Branch of the Smithsonian Institution Libraries, which includes the Anthropology library. It was in this context that I first had the opportunity to combine my subject expertise with librarianship. After finishing my MLS in 1993, I continued to volunteer at the Smithsonian and also worked in several temporary positions. Then in 1994, I noticed an advertisement in *The Chronicle* for the position of Social Science Bibliographer at Weber State University. My application was accepted and I've been at Weber State ever since. In speaking with my colleagues at Weber State, one of my major strengths for this position was the combination of a subject Ph.D. and the MLS.

During my time at Weber State, I've had the opportunity every year to teach as an adjunct in the anthropology program and most of my professional activities have combined the two disciplines. These activities include participation on a dig in Israel in 1995 with partial funding from Weber State and a sabbatical during which I began the creation of a bibliographic database on archaeological excavations in Israel and the surrounding areas. In addition, I have published two articles that combine librarianship with anthropology and remained active in the American Anthropological Association and the American Schools of Oriental Research. In all these activities I have received full support from the University Librarian and my colleagues. Although a faculty position in Near Eastern archaeology had been my dream, my career combining library science and anthropology has been immensely rewarding and represents a very wise decision on my part.

Wendy: At a mid-size university such as Weber State, you are required to collect materials in the social sciences and music. What are the challenges of serving such a wide scope of subject areas?

Wade: The main challenge is keeping up with developments in each of my subject areas, both in terms of information needs and changes in the curriculum. In the area of information needs, I am very lucky to work with faculty in all of my subject areas that are very well-attuned to the needs of their students and provide me with a constant flow of appropriate requests. They also understand that our focus is on supporting undergraduate instruction and research, so they very seldom request materials that are inappropriate for this mission. Only in

a few cases is it necessary for me to do much selection on my own, and in such situations I rely on catalogs, reviews, and information we gather on a regular basis regarding library assignments. I also take advantage of an approval program for music. In terms of the curriculum, Weber State requires that the subject librarian sign-off on new course and program proposals, so it is very seldom that I'm caught by surprise due to curriculum changes. The same, unfortunately, cannot be said of changes resulting from the appointment of new faculty. Often, new faculty bring library assignments with them, which sometimes require resources not available in our collection. The resulting lag in supporting these new activities can be very frustrating. Another challenge is the time and effort required to track orders in the various subject areas and manage the various fund accounts. At times I must admit to losing track of orders and expenditures. Fortunately, our acquisitions staff is very helpful in getting me back on track.

Wendy: You have a nice, as well as comprehensive, "Social Science Web Resources" page. How do you keep up with the changes on the World Wide Web?

Wade: I must admit that I don't do a lot of work in maintaining this page. One reason for this is that I choose the resources very carefully, only retaining ones with a high degree of stability. Also, each month one of our student workers checks the links and lets me know if anything needs to be deleted or updated. I also subscribe to the Internet Scout Report and several discussion lists, although most of my major discoveries result from interaction with students, faculty, and my library colleagues.

Wendy: You are teaching a course this semester, "Information Resources in the Social Sciences." What have your teaching experiences taught you?

Wade: Primarily, my experiences have taught me that to be successful in teaching research and information literacy skills one must first develop ways to engage the students and help them understand the relevance of these skills both to their school work and the real world. Otherwise, they simply go through the motions. Also, I have learned the importance of providing a variety of learning opportunities in response to the variation in learning styles, as well as the importance of creating assignments that reinforce and build upon previously learned skills.

Wendy: What, if any, overall trends/changes are you experiencing in the nature of your reference desk interactions?

Wade: Although we have seen a decline in the overall number of reference questions, the nature of these questions seems to be getting more complex. This is in part a result of more sophisticated assignments, but also a result of the gyrations patrons must often go through to access our online resources. For example, before we had full-text databases and link resolvers, either we had the journal in print or we told them to use interlibrary loan. Now we need to explain how to navigate the maze of "full-text links" and electronic journal lists in order to see if we have the article in digital format, and then explain how to use our online interlibrary loan system when we discover that the article is not available online. We are also getting many more questions on scanning, word-processing, presentation software, and related technical issues. While I sometimes lament that we are becoming glorified lab aides, much of this comes with the territory.

Wendy: How has participation in the ANSS section of ACRL affected your career?

Wade: First, participation in ANSS has provided me with multiple opportunities for professional service that combined my subject expertise with my work in the library. I consider my election as Chair of ANSS to be a major step in my career, one for which I was highly commended when reviewed for tenure and promotion to full Professor. Furthermore, it was through my ANSS activities that I became involved as a member of the Anthrosource Steering Committee. And it was through announcements on ANSS-L that I became aware of publishing opportunities that resulted in the publication of two peer-reviewed articles. The greatest impact on my career, however, has been the opportunities ANSS presents for networking with the best and the brightest in anthropology librarianship. Whatever I have attained in my career is to a large degree attributable to my interaction with these ANSS colleagues.

Wendy: Tell us something about your avocation, Sacred Harp singing.

Wade: Sacred Harp singing, more properly known as shape-note singing, is a form of unaccompanied participatory singing that is rooted in the late 18th and early 19th century New England singing school movement which rapidly spread to the west and especially the south. It is based on the use of differently shaped note heads to represent the different scale degrees in the music scale. By the 1840s, shape-note singing had died out in New England but still flourished in the south, especially central Georgia, where in 1844 B. F. White and E. J. King published a tune book entitled *The Sacred Harp*, which has been in continual use, in revised editions, since that time. The texts are 18th

and 19th century Christian hymns, while the music is comprised of 18th century English and American psalm tunes, along with hundreds of Anglo-American folk tunes adapted to Christian texts. Today, Sacred Harp singings are held on a weekly or monthly basis throughout the United States, Canada and the UK, although most activity is still concentrated in Georgia, Alabama, Florida, and surrounding states. In recent

years, I have participated in singings in Utah, California, Georgia, Alabama, and the UK. For more detailed information about Sacred Harp singing, please visit the Sacred Harp singing website at <http://www.fasola.org>.

REVIEW

iPOLL Databank

Sherise Kimura, Gleeson Library/Geschke Learning Resource Center, University of San Francisco, kimura@usfca.edu. Reviewed December 8, 2008 – January 9, 2009 and submitted March 13, 2009.

Vendor: Roper Center for Public Opinion Research, University of Connecticut, 369 Fairfield Way, Unit 2164, Storrs, CT 06269-2164. TEL: 860-486-4440, EMAIL: rcweb@ropercenter.uconn.edu, WEB: <http://www.ropercenter.uconn.edu>

Cost: Membership to the Roper Center includes unlimited online access to *iPOLL Databank*. Membership rates for academic institutions range from \$800-\$6,500, based on the 2002 Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education.

Authentication: IP authentication is available for academic member institutions.

Introduction

Founded in 1947, the Roper Center for Public Opinion Research is the world's oldest and most comprehensive repository for public opinion data. In its primary role, the Center acquires and maintains a growing archive of datasets from thousands of surveys of national adult, state, and foreign populations from 1935 to the present. The Center's secondary role is to provide access to this data for use by students, researchers, and journalists.¹

The Center makes data available on its website and through its databases. Two of the Center's major databases are *iPOLL Databank (iPOLL)* and the *Catalog of Holdings*. Accessible from the Center's website, the *Catalog* is the Center's online catalog of archived studies that anyone can search for free. Nearly 10,000 surveys conducted in the U.S. and 7,000 from other countries are indexed in the *Catalog* and users can search it to find surveys and accompanying datasets or raw data. Only surveys for which the Roper Center holds the datasets are indexed in the *Catalog*; Center members can download datasets for free, while non-members can order datasets from the Roper Center.

iPOLL is a database that searches the full-text of survey questions and retrieves question-level results (e.g., Figure 3). Data comes from all national surveys in the *Catalog*, in addition to survey data from many reports and releases for which the Center may not have the datasets. *iPOLL* contains nearly 500,000 questions and answers from surveys that have U.S. national adult samples or samples of any subpopulation that constitutes a large segment of the U.S. adult population, such as women and African Americans. *iPOLL* includes questions asked by more than 150 academic, media, and commercial survey organizations including major ones such as the Gallup Organization, Roper Organization, Harris Interactive, ABC News, CBS News, NBC News, *Los Angeles Times*, *The New York Times*, *USA Today*, *The Washington Post*, and the Associated Press. The database continues to grow, as new surveys and surveys from the Center's archives are added daily. The number of special sample surveys of women, men, parents, African Americans, gays and lesbians, among others, are increasing as well.

Accessing *iPOLL*

First time users are asked to register by indicating their status (e.g., faculty, staff, graduate student, undergraduate student, etc.) and entering an email address. Users are required to enter this address every subsequent time they access *iPOLL*.

¹ Lois Timms-Ferrara, email to reviewer, December 16, 2008.

Although a message on the login screen says your email address is used exclusively for accessing *iPOLL* services and support, I still had concerns about privacy. Lois Timms-Ferrara, Associate Director of the Roper Center, explained that the email address serves as a login; any email address can be entered, even a made up one. For the user's benefit, searches can be saved and stored indefinitely under the email address supplied by the user. Fortunately, the Center plans to offer an option to create your own password sometime next summer so users won't be required to enter an email address.²

Searching

Searching *iPOLL* is very straightforward. From the main search screen (Figure 1), enter keywords or phrases in the "Search For" box. The database allows the use of Boolean logic ("and," "or," and "not"), parentheses for nesting, as well as the percent sign (%) as a wildcard or truncation symbol. If you use the asterisk (*), the database will convert it to a %. Although the User Guide advises not to use any punctuation marks when searching, search results were the same whether or not quotation marks were used around two or three word phrases. A link to "Help" in the upper right under the menu bar goes to a page in the User Guide on basic searching, and "Boolean," and "Wildcard" help links give instructions on using these search techniques in the database.

The screenshot shows the main search interface of the iPOLL Databank. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the iPOLL logo and the text "The Roper Center For Public Opinion Research". Below this is a menu with links for "New Search", "Search Within", "Search History", "Store Search", "User Guide", "FAQ's", and "Support". The main search area is titled "SEARCH" and includes a "Help" link. A message states "Nearly a half-million public opinion survey questions." The search form contains the following fields: "Search for:" with the text "china", "Topic:" with a dropdown menu set to "Any", "Organization:" with a dropdown menu set to "Any", and "Date:" with "From" set to 1971 and "to" set to 1973. There are "Search" and "Reset" buttons. On the right side, a sidebar shows "ala2009 logged in" with a "Log Out" button. Below this, there are links for "iPOLL named Outstanding Academic Title by Choice" and "RoperExpress". At the bottom of the page, there is a footer with copyright information and contact details for The Roper Center for Public Opinion Research.

Figure 1. Main Search screen

Users have the option of searching by topic from over 100 broad topics covered in *iPOLL*. Clicking "Help" next to the pull-down topic menu takes you to page where topics are defined. Although the definitions are not detailed, this page is still helpful in giving users a sense of the kinds of topics covered in the database. For example, the topic, "abortion," has the following definition: *Approval of abortion, parental consent for abortion, abortion clinics*. Users who don't want to search by a topic can leave "Any" as the default to search all topics.

iPOLL also offers the option to search by the specific organization that conducted a survey. While novice users would probably not use this limiter, more sophisticated users may use it, for example, to retrieve results from a specific poll that came out in several releases.

² Lois Timms-Ferrara, email to reviewer, December 11, 2008.

With opinion data from 1935 to the present included in *iPOLL*, users may want to limit their searches to surveys conducted during a specific time period. This feature proved extremely helpful for a student at my institution who was looking for changes in American public opinion toward China before and after President Nixon's historic visit to China in 1972. I searched "China" and selected a date range of 1971 to 1973. By accident, I entered 1975 to 1973 and got no results. A future enhancement to the database might inform the user of this type of error.

The last limit option on the main search screen lets you select how you want results displayed: most recent or oldest, first.

Search Results

If any search results are found, your search terms, limiters (if any), and the number of results display at the top of the results screen (Figure 2). Instructions on selecting and viewing selected questions follow beneath, as well as a link to download all results as a text file. You must view selected questions before advancing to the next page, as selections are not saved across results pages. This could be improved to allow users to select questions across multiple pages and from different searches, and view all selections at the end of a session.

Results display as top-level questions in the survey. Each question includes the complete question text, followed by the source or polling organization, beginning interview date, and a "question details" link.

The screenshot shows the iPOLL search results interface. At the top, the iPOLL logo and 'DATABASE' are visible, along with the Roper Center logo and name. A navigation menu contains links for 'New Search', 'Search Within', 'Search History', 'Store Search', 'User Guide', 'FAQ's', and 'Support'. The main content area is titled 'SEARCH RESULTS' and indicates that 183 questions were found for the search 'china' between 1/1/1971 and 12/31/1973. Below this, there are instructions on how to select questions and buttons for 'Select All', 'Un-select All', and 'VIEW SELECTIONS'. A 'download search' link is also present. The 'Questions' section lists three questions with their text and sources. A sidebar on the right shows 'ala2009 logged in', 'Questions Viewed: 4', a 'Log Out' button, and links to 'iPOLL named Outstanding Academic Title by Choice' and 'RoperExpress'.

Figure 2. Search Results screen

My search on China from 1971 to 1973 retrieved 183 results. I elected to display the most recent results first but if I wanted to reorder the results, there's no way to do it from the results screen; I would need to return to the main search screen, change the sort order, and re-run the search. The option to sort results in reverse order from the results screen would be a nice addition.

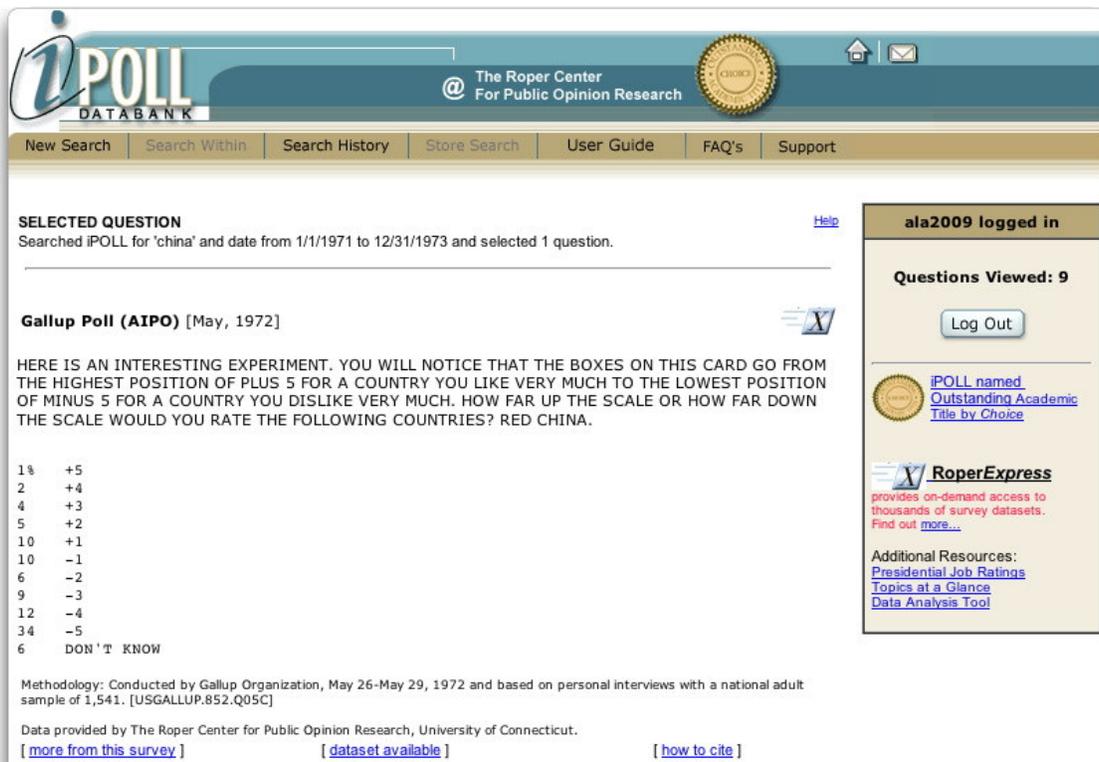
For the student's search on attitudes toward China, we found a Gallup Poll survey conducted in May 1972 that asked the same question again in another survey administered in April 1973 with a comparable sample. In May 1972, 34% said they disliked China very much and in April 1973 that number had dropped to 15%. The student was extremely pleased to find

this comparative historical data.

Similarly, users can choose among questions that address the same issue but ask entirely different questions. For example, a search on “drivers license% and illegal immigrants” retrieved six results, the most recent from an NBC/*Wall Street Journal* Poll conducted in April 2008. The question reads as follows: “(Now let me read you some critical things that have been said of the (2008 presidential election) candidates. For each one, please tell me whether this issue gives you major concerns, moderate concerns, minor concerns, or no real concerns about that candidate.)...It's hard to tell where Hillary Clinton stands on the issues because she changes her positions on things like NAFTA (North Atlantic Free Trade Agency) and drivers licenses for illegal immigrants to improve her chances of being elected.” While this question and answer sheds light on public opinion toward Hillary Clinton's views, it may not be relevant to a student looking for American public opinion on the issuing of driver’s licenses to illegal immigrants. The results of a February 2006 Quinnipiac University Poll that asked, “Do you support or oppose allowing illegal immigrants to get drivers' licenses?” better meets the student’s information need.

Selected Questions

Clicking “question details” under a question on the results page takes you to a selected question page (Figure 3). More information about the survey can be found on this page, including survey title, text of the question, national response percentages, a brief description of survey methodology, sample size and description, surveying organization, and sponsor (if applicable). The "Help" link at the top goes to a page where terms used on the “question details” page, such as responses, survey organization, research sponsor, and sample size, are defined.



The screenshot shows the iPOLL DATABANK interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links: New Search, Search Within, Search History, Store Search, User Guide, FAQ's, and Support. The main content area is titled "SELECTED QUESTION" and shows a search result for "china" from 1971 to 1973. The selected question is a Gallup Poll (AIPO) from May 1972. The question text is: "HERE IS AN INTERESTING EXPERIMENT. YOU WILL NOTICE THAT THE BOXES ON THIS CARD GO FROM THE HIGHEST POSITION OF PLUS 5 FOR A COUNTRY YOU LIKE VERY MUCH TO THE LOWEST POSITION OF MINUS 5 FOR A COUNTRY YOU DISLIKE VERY MUCH. HOW FAR UP THE SCALE OR HOW FAR DOWN THE SCALE WOULD YOU RATE THE FOLLOWING COUNTRIES? RED CHINA." Below the question is a list of responses:

14	+5
2	+4
4	+3
5	+2
10	+1
10	-1
6	-2
9	-3
12	-4
34	-5
6	DON'T KNOW

Methodology: Conducted by Gallup Organization, May 26-May 29, 1972 and based on personal interviews with a national adult sample of 1,541. [USGALLUP.852.Q05C]

Data provided by The Roper Center for Public Opinion Research, University of Connecticut. [more from this survey] [dataset available] [how to cite]

On the right side, there is a sidebar with a "Log Out" button, a "Questions Viewed: 9" counter, and a "RoperExpress" logo. Below the logo, there is a link to "iPOLL named Outstanding Academic Title by Choice" and a section for "Additional Resources" with links to "Presidential Job Ratings", "Topics at a Glance", and "Data Analysis Tool".

Figure 3. Selected Question screen

Up to three different links appear at the bottom of the selected question page: “datasets available,” “more from this survey” and “how to cite.” “Datasets available” means a detailed description of the study, codebooks or other study documentation, as well as the raw data, are available for free download. The  icon represents RoperExpress, iPOLL’s data on-demand downloading tool that links to datasets in the *Catalog of Holdings*. Users at member institutions have unlimited use of RoperExpress for data download in ASCII or SPSS formats. RoperExpress is available for about

75% of the Center's studies.

"More from this survey" in the bottom left links to a list of questions that appeared in the same release. Because this may not represent all questions asked in a survey, searching by survey organization, using the beginning interview date of your selected question, should find the results of an entire survey. Users should be aware that questions do not necessarily display in the order they were asked. Only by looking at the questionnaire provided through RoperExpress can you see all questions asked in the correct order. Undoubtedly, for this reason, graduate students and faculty, and some undergraduates, will want to access the questionnaires and study documentation.

Additionally, both novice and expert searchers would benefit by having more information about survey methodology, design, sampling, purpose of the survey, and even access to the raw data, in order to evaluate data quality. In his excellent review of polling databases, Stephen Woods notes, "These types of databases need to provide some level of evaluative information that allows users to identify deficiencies" (2007: 41). While *iPOLL* does have brief notes about these elements in the selected question and "more from this survey" pages, more information can be found in the accompanying documentation and datasets, if and when these are available. The Center features access to datasets for about 75% of the studies in *iPOLL*, which means a user may not be able to thoroughly evaluate a fourth of the studies (although for selected studies, study documentation is available and may give this information). Because survey organizations sometimes make data available in releases, for newer polls, it may just be a matter of waiting for a future release. In these instances, the Center recommends users sign up for their email newsletter and data acquisitions notices or check the "Recent Acquisitions" page on the Roper site. Datasets for some older studies just may not be available from the Center.

The Center recommends users acknowledge the Roper Center as a secondary source for any information taken from the database. Click "how to cite" in the selected question to view two suggestions for citing data. The first example is a general acknowledgement that the data was taken from *iPOLL*; the second, an APA formatted citation for the selected question.

Search Within Results

Users can narrow their search by choosing to search within results. After executing a search, click "Search Within" at the top. Your current search criteria displays followed by a text box where you can add terms to narrow your search. For my search on China from 1971-1973, I added the term, "Nixon" and got 119 results, 64 less than my original search. Since this database is not text heavy, most users will find this feature sufficient for refining searches. To run a completely new search, users will need to click "New Search" to return to the main search screen. A message on the "Search Within" page recommends users go to the "Search History" page if they do not want to search within their current results. In multiple attempts, the "Search History" link in the message leads to an error message screen that says the application session had a runtime error. Aside from this problem, directing users to "New Search" on this page would be helpful since even if you view your search history, you're not able to revise your search criteria unless you run a new search.

Search History and Storing Searches

All searches are saved and can be viewed anytime during a session by clicking "Search History" in the top menu bar. To re-run a search, click the link for the appropriate search criteria.

Users have the option of storing searches for future use as well. To store a search, after a search is executed, click "Store Search" in the menu bar. When you log in at a later date, click "Saved History" to view your saved searches. At this time the Center does not limit how many or for how long searches will be saved. While storing searches is a nice feature, as mentioned earlier in this review, it is tied to the email address you enter when you log in.

Added Features

The Roper Center site offers a lot of free, potentially useful data. Under "Data Access" in the top menu, free survey data can be found under the categories, "Topics at a Glance," "Presidential Approval," and "US Elections." "Topics at a Glance" addresses issues such as the economy, government institutions, and social issues, among others. On the topic of the 2008 financial crisis, 15 questions and answers out of a total of 156 in *iPOLL* are available, with questions as recent as November 2008. The list of issues continues to grow as a new topic is added every month. Under "Presidential Approval," approval ratings are given for President Bush, from 2001 through December 2008, as well as comparisons with selected

past presidents. The “US Elections” section contains valuable public opinion data collected during presidential campaigns from 1976-2008. Statistics on the presidential election by popular vote are also given for 1940-2004.

In addition to the rich data freely available, the Center’s site features informative tutorials under the “Education” menu. A tutorial called the *Fundamentals of Polling (Polling 101)*, is designed for the novice and goes over the basics of public opinion data collection, sampling, survey errors, and understanding tables in *iPOLL*. This page gets the most number of hits on the Center’s site after *iPOLL* and the *Catalog of Holdings*.³ Terms in the *Glossary of Terminology* are defined using language users unfamiliar with polling could understand. The section on *Analyzing Polls* includes two components: *Computer Analysis* and *Interpretive Analysis (Polling 201)*. *Computer Analysis* briefly covers the use of statistical software to disaggregate data and run tables. *Interpretive Analysis* further explains survey results and addresses survey quality, sources of error, contextual settings for analysis, and questionnaire design. Users needing an introduction to polling will find these tutorials extremely useful.

The "Teaching Tools" section features sample assignments using resources on the Center's site. Intended for use by faculty and librarians, the assignments ask students to find public opinion data and analyze trends, among other tasks.

Support

The concise User Guide accessible from the top menu gives a brief introduction to the database and covers major features such as searching, viewing results, understanding selected questions, search history, and storing searches. Context-sensitive “help” links in *iPOLL* link to pages in the User Guide.

“Support” in the top menu takes users to a page that reports system status, terms & conditions, a suggestion box, and staff contacts for user and technical support. Staff is available from 8:00am to 5:00pm eastern time.

Usage Statistics

Member institutions receive quarterly reports on the number of registrations by status (e.g., undergraduate, graduate student, faculty, staff, librarian, etc.), sessions, searches, data views, and documentation views, per quarter.

Comparisons with Related Resources

Besides *iPOLL*, there are a number of comparable public opinion question databases on the market. Woods (2007) gives a brief history of polling databases and critically reviews five products, including *iPOLL*, *Polling the Nations*, *Gallup Brain*, *Public Opinion Question Database*, and *LexisNexis Academic Polls and Surveys* (no longer available). He notes that except for the *Public Opinion Question Database* and *iPOLL*, the other full-text question databases do not provide access to corresponding codebooks, questionnaires, or raw data sets. The comprehensive *Guide to Public Opinion Poll Web Sites* by Gary Thompson and Sean Conley (2007) is a compilation of free and subscription sources with a focus on public opinion data, especially those that present data in usable formats.

Comparisons are often made between the Roper Center and another social and political science data provider, Interuniversity Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR). In an informative session at the ANSS Sociology Librarians Discussion two months ago at ALA Midwinter, featuring Lois Timms-Ferrara, from the Roper Center, and Jared Lyle, from the ICPSR, it was suggested the two centers offer complementary resources. Both collect and disseminate data files and documentation, however, their scope is somewhat different: the Roper Center maintains the world’s largest public opinion data archive, where ICPSR houses the largest archive of social sciences data, which includes public opinion data (Timms-Ferrara 2009).

Summary

iPOLL is an information-rich database, excellent for finding question-level polling results. Its intuitive, simple interface makes it easy to search and retrieve data. While undergraduates will find ample statistics on a variety of social, political,

³ Lois Timms-Ferrara, email to reviewer, February 17, 2009.

and economic issues, graduate students, faculty, and other scholars will most likely use it as a discovery tool for new research and methods of inquiry and utilize RoperExpress to access datasets (Woods 2007: 41). This highly recommended resource for finding public opinion data would have wide appeal to many academic users.

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