

News from the World of Statistics



September 8, 2016

IAOS Journal Touches on Progress in Understanding Survey Data Fabrication



The September issue of the *Statistical Journal of the IAOS* is now available and contains a special section on data fabrication, looking at methods for detecting and dealing with this challenge to data quality. In an [editorial](#) appearing in this issue, statisticians Steve Koczela and Fritz Scheuren address the topic of survey data fabrication, noting that it exists as much today, if not more so, than in 1945, when Leo Crespi opined on the graveness of so-called “cheating” by interviewers.

Koczela and Scheuren write that today’s forms of survey data fabrication are more “diverse and insidious,” and unfortunately, “literature on fabrication remains underdeveloped relative to the seriousness of the problem.” While the challenge remains a concern for responsible professionals, the authors note that some progress has been made, particularly through a series of webinars, papers, presentations, educational sessions and an international conference held earlier this year at NORC that helped “move the conversation forward.”

Romania’s National Institute of Statistics Celebrates Statistician’s Day 2016



July 8, 2016, marked the 157th anniversary of the foundation of the first public statistical institutions in Romania. To celebrate the occasion, also coined “[Statistician’s Day 2016](#),” Romania’s National Institute of Statistics hosted a debate titled “The official statistics: support for political decision-making.”

This year’s event argued the perennial character of the institute’s mission by some of the most authorized voices belonging to personalities among the

country's legislators, representatives of the executive branch and the academic and research university environment. Deputy Prime Minister Vasile Dancu attended the event, as did by ministers Dragos Paslaru and Sorin Sergiu Chelmu, parliamentarians Andreea Paul, Iulian Iancu, and Aurel Vainer, and Mihnea Costoiu, rector of the Polytechnic University of Bucharest. Tudorel Andrei, president of the National Institute of Statistics, opened the talk by reiterating the main challenges and the priorities of the Romanian official statistics, "synthetically contained in the formula: more and better information, produced faster and at lower costs."

Young Statistician Coalition Honors Egyptian Census Competition Winners



During Ramadan, the Young Statistician Coalition (YSC), a Facebook page aimed at exchanging experiences between young statisticians in Arab countries and is involved in activities spreading statistical awareness throughout society, and the National Statistical office (CAPMAS) prepared and implemented a competition titled "[Arwa and Census](#)" to spread awareness of the importance of the Egyptian census. In all, 18 winners were selected in what is thought to be the first-of-its-kind

competition at the level of statistical agencies in Arab countries.

Statistics Student Wins Award for Prevention of Terrorism, Money Laundering



Felipe Jiménez, a Master's student at the School of Statistics in the University of Costa Rica, recently won an award from the Latin American Federation of Banks. Jiménez was recognized for a professional practice course, and his monograph is titled: "Detection of web content associated to laundering and financing of terrorism." His tutor was Oldemar Rodríguez.

Jimenez created a prototype to estimate the probability that a piece of news on the World Wide Web presents content related to laundering, financing of terrorist activities or related topics (all over the world and in various languages). In this manner it's possible to detect entities (clients, managers, providers) linked to a financial group that appears with such a content. Thus, diligences could be implemented and decisions can be made related to what actions proceed for those entities, based on the case severity.

Through the creation of spider webs to extract information automatically, the processing of natural language and a consensual procedure of diverse statistical learning algorithms, models were generated to assign probabilities and classify texts. The objective was achieved with high precision in the classification models (98% ROC Curve in the validation sample), and a high discrimination in the concept test carried out using known individuals with already confirmed activities in money laundering topics.



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