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RENMIN UNIVERSITY HOSTS ITS SIXTH INTERNATIONAL STATISTICAL FORUM

The Sixth International Statistical Forum of Renmin University of China (RUC) was held May 24-25, attracting more than 400 national and international attendees. The opening reception was hosted by Professor Yanyun Zhao, dean of the RUC School of Statistics; Jiantang Ma, president of the Chinese Statistical Society and director of National Bureau of Statistics; Nuo Jin, chair of the RUC Council; and Wei Yuan, former RUC executive president.

As described by Professor Wei Yuan, the forum was an academic feast with all participants, including 10 prestigious statisticians, presenting specially invited talks. He also was delighted to see 164 students selected from the National Summer Camp for Outstanding College Students Majoring in Statistics,

hosted by the RUC School of Statistics, attend the forum. Professor Yuan urged these students to study hard and accumulate practical experience.

Director Jiantang Ma pointed said the Big Data era has created both opportunities and challenges for statisticians. He called for sharing of all data except state secrets, business secrets or personal privacy. He hoped with effort from everyone in the field of statistics data would become more available and reliable. Professor Zhao reported that the RUC School of Statistics was exploring new models to cultivate innovative talents, including student academic community groups and a student scientific research innovation platform.

All 10 keynote talks were delivered on the first day of the two-day forum. The speakers were:

- Dipak Dey, University of Connecticut
- Yongmiao Hong, Cornell University
- Jian Huang, University of Iowa
- Zhimin Huang, Adelphi University
- Zhiming Ma, Chinese Academy of Sciences
- Maozai Tian, RUC
- Hansheng Wang, Peking University
- Xianchun Xu, National Bureau of Statistics of China
- Hongyu Zhao, Yale University
- Lixing Zhu, Hong Kong Baptist University

On the second day, 19 invited and contributed sessions were conducted. Speakers from academia, government and industry presented talks on a number of topics in theory, methods and applications of statistics. The applications covered a diverse range of fields such as finance, insurance, economics, social sciences and transportation. The forum is expected to have a positive impact on the development of statistical science and practice in China.

Since 2004, the RUC School of Statistics has hosted the International Statistics Forum. This year's event was cosponsored by the RUC, Peking University, National Statistical Society of China, Institute of Statistical Research of the National Bureau of Statistics of China, Institute of Government Statistics of China, University of Connecticut, International Chinese Statistical Association, Capital University of Economics, and Central University of Finance and Economics.

SHARE YOUR NEWS & EVENTS THROUGH THE WORLD OF STATISTICS

Tell your colleagues in the worldwide statistical community and the public about your organization's events through The World of Statistics 2014 Activities Calendar. Now, you can submit your organization's 2015 events for next year's calendar, which will be posted to the site soon.

[Using this brief webform](#), it's easy to submit information about your 2014 Or 2015 event so it is added to the activities calendar for all to see.

After your event is over, you can send us a story about it for this e-newsletter. We have developed [this easy-to-use webform](#) you can use to submit your event stories and other news about your organization's activities to promote and advance the statistical science profession. These event stories and news items will be featured in an upcoming issue of this e-newsletter.

Send us your calendar and news items now!

THE WORLD OF STATISTICS 2014 ACTIVITIES CALENDAR FOR AUGUST & SEPTEMBER

Following are The World of Statistics participating organization-sponsored events and activities around the world for the remainder of this month and September. To see the complete list of activities for 2014, [click here](#).

- **August 25-30, 2014** — [Istanbul Quantitative Lectures \(ISTQL\) 2014 Summer School](#), Istanbul University, Istanbul, Turkey
- **September 1-4, 2014** — [RSS 2014 International Conference](#), Royal Statistical Society, Sheffield, United Kingdom
- **September 3-5, 2014** — [Small Area Estimation 2014](#); Central Statistical Office, Poznan University of Economics, Statistical Office in Poznań; Poznań, Poland
- **September 20-27, 2014** — [Maldives Census 2014](#), Department of National Planning, Male', Republic of Maldives
- **September 22-24, 2014** — [2014 ASA Biopharmaceutical Section FDA-Industry Statistics Workshop](#), American Statistical Association Biopharmaceutical Section, Washington, D.C., USA
- **September 22-26, 2014** — [XIII CLAPEM \(Latin American Congress in Probability and Mathematical Statistics\)](#); Bernoulli Society, SLAPEM, National Science Foundation, Universidad Nacional de Colombia, Universidad Antonio Nariño, Universidad Sergio Arboleda, Universidad de Los Andes, EAFIT; Cartagena, Colombia
- **September 29-October 3, 2014** — [XXIX International Forum on Statistics](#), Popular Autonomous University of Puebla and Mexican Statistical Association, Puebla, México

[Click here to submit your organization's 2014 and 2015 activities to The World of Statistics Activities Calendar.](#)

PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATION NEWS & EVENTS

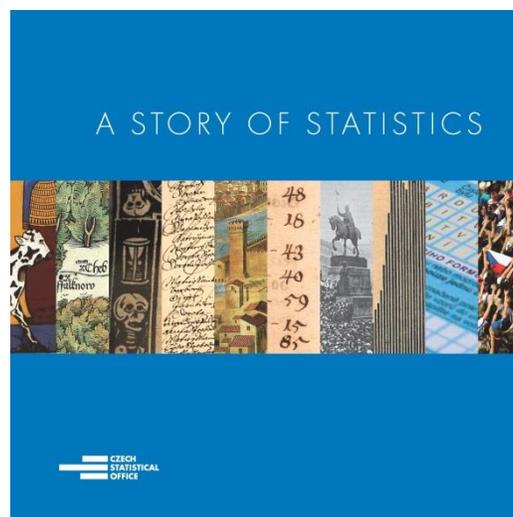
Following is the latest news and information from statistical organizations participating in The World of Statistics:

Bangladesh—A video of an event held jointly last year by the Statistics and Informatics Division of the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics and the Bangladesh Statistical Association to celebrate the International Year of Statistics is available on YouTube. [You can view the video by clicking here.](#)

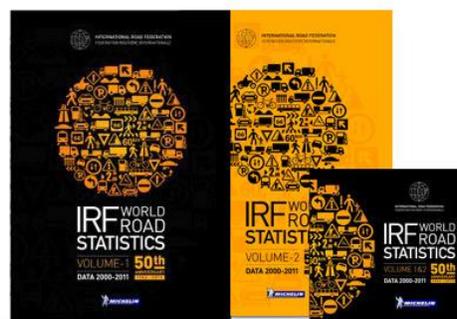
Czech Republic—The Czech Statistical Office has published a special commemorative book titled *A Story of Statistics in 2014*. It is no coincidence the book was published in 2014. The national statistical office is

marking two important anniversaries this year: The 45th anniversary of the founding of the office, which was then transformed into a federation of the Czech Republic and the Slovak Republic, and the 95th anniversary of the establishment of the State Office of Statistics as the first statistical institution in the newly formed Czechoslovak Republic. The present office is successor of these former offices and continues their activities.

The commemorative book details the roots of both international and Czech statistics and helps the reader gain a basic understanding of statistics history. Readers will be surprised to learn there were times when statistical data were not available to everyone. The publication's historical context will help readers discover what and why our predecessors learned with the help of statistics. It also explains the development of statistical censuses—from the first nationwide enumeration to the last census in 2011. The book is available in [Czech](#) and [English](#).



International—The International Road Federation is offering its 50th Anniversary Edition of the World Road Statistics (WRS), which is the most-updated data compilation of the 12-year period spanning 2000-2011. This special edition, which has received resounding support and testimonials from the international community, is published in two attractive volumes and a CD-ROM with Excel files. The IRF has published the WRS every year since 1964.



The conference welcomes contributions to applied statistics as well as theoretical statistics and in particular new problems related to robust statistics and data analysis. Topics will include but will not be limited to presentations on the following topics:

- Concepts and theory of robust statistics
- Asymptotic theory and efficiency
- Robust and nonparametric multivariate statistics
- Robust time series analysis
- Linear and generalized linear models
- Robust statistics in business and finance
- Robust estimation of income and allied size distributions; ethical indices
- Robust statistics in bioinformatics/genetics
- Statistical computing, graphics and data mining
- Statistical inference based on divergence measures

Contributions from all areas of robust statistics are welcome. Abstract submission and registration began in late July. Next year's ICORS will cover all areas of statistics having a robustness component or robustness perspective. For more information, [visit the conference website](#) or write to Drs. Ayanendranath Basu or Diganta Mukherjee at icors2015@gmail.com.

Canada—Judy-Anne Chapman, Ph.D., P.Stat., PStat® recently shared news of a statistics outreach program at Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario that targets high-school students. At the event, the students participated in the 2014 Cancer Statistics session of Cancer Today, which is run as an enrichment program for high-school students. Students participated in frontline cancer research and enjoyed the variety of statistics applications presented in *Significance*, *CHANCE* and *Stats* magazines.



Students thumb through issues of Significance, CHANCE and Stats at the Queens University high-school outreach event.

Nigeria—A technical-development workshop titled “Recent Advances in Smoothing and Regression for Longitudinal, Spatial and Event History Data” was hosted by The Nigerian Young Academy (NYA) and the Department of Statistics at the University of Ilorin on July 7 and 8. The event started with brief welcome

remarks by several esteemed members of the university and NYA staff. Drs. S.B. Adebayo and Ezra Gayawan, a member of NYA, took the participants through the workshop. Adebayo introduced the participants to several spatial and semiparametric regression models in a unifying Bayesian perspective. Specifically, he talked extensively on:

- Introduction to Structured Additive Regression Models
- Approaches to Modeling Multiple Outcomes (nominal and ordinal)
- Geoaddivitive Survival Models

Adebayo used several of his published articles to demonstrate select practical areas of applications of the models. Dr. Gayawan presented the practical sessions and introduced the participants to BayesX and used some examples to show how the models discussed could be implemented in the software. He also led a session on “Fellowship Opportunities and Conferences for Statisticians.”

All 43 participants were very excited they had attended the “eye-opening” workshop and encouraged the NYA to organise similar meetings on a regular basis. Before the event ended, participants discussed in groups the challenges they face as young statisticians in Nigeria and the way forward. Prominent among the problems listed is the lack of opportunities and funding to attend similar workshops locally or abroad.



Students listen intently during The Nigerian Young Academy (NYA) technical-development workshop.

Ethiopia—The Ethiopian Statistical Association (ESA) is inviting interested association members to join the editorial board of the *ESA Newsletter* in order to strengthen the panel. New board members will contribute to improving the quality of the publication by generating updated news articles and a new series of national and international statistical news items in order to inform ESA members and the public about statistical events and promote the development of the profession in the country. This newsletter is published three times annually. Its objectives are to make announcements of call for papers and

conferences, publish information that enhances the statistical knowledge of Ethiopian society, and exchange scientific information. [Click here to access an online form for submitting your information.](#) For more information, contact ESA via phone at +251 912 03 52 05 or email at ethstat@gmail.com.

China—The Third International Conference on the Interface between Statistics and Engineering (ICISE2014) will be held December 15-17 at the City University of Hong Kong. The conference objective is to provide a platform for innovative creation, development and dissemination of research ideas and results on the interface between statistics and engineering for the support of complex system design and operation, quality and reliability improvement, and optimal proactive decision-making.

Topics to be discussed include:

1. Applied statistics
2. Data mining and machine learning
3. Statistical data analysis integrated with engineering models
4. Quality and reliability engineering
5. Optimal decision making
6. Optimal manufacturing and service enterprise systems
7. Statistical controls in the semiconductor industry
8. System informatics and control

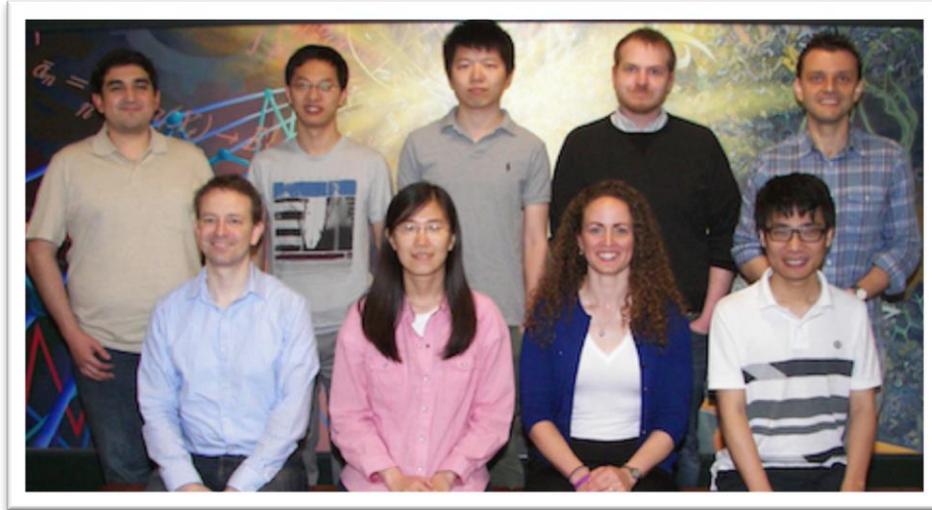
Organizers invite your abstract submission and participation in ICISE2014. Original paper contributions that are relevant to the topics are invited. The abstracts—maximum 200 words or two pages—written in English must be submitted with a completed Abstract Submission Form (one form for each abstract) to the Secretary of Conference Committee by September 15.

[More details about the conference are available by clicking here.](#) Email your questions to icise2014@cityu.edu.hk.

United States— A team of Iowa State University graduate students topped 98 other universities from 28 countries to capture first place in the 15th annual Data Mining Cup. The winner was announced July 2 in Berlin. It is the first time a team from the United States has won the competition.

Prudsys AG, a leading European data-mining company, sponsors the intelligent-data analysis competition for universities. The competition is meant to be a “bridge between university and industry to identify the best up-and-coming data miners.”

Iowa State team members and their departments are Guillermo Basulto-Elias (statistics), Fan Cao (statistics), Xiaoyue Cheng (statistics), Marius Dragomiroiu (computer science), Jessica Hicks (bioinformatics and computational biology), Cory Lanker (statistics), Ian Mouzon (statistics), Lanfeng Pan (statistics) and Xin Yin (bioinformatics and computational biology/statistics). Lanker and Mouzon were on last year's Iowa State team, which finished fifth.



Members of Iowa State University's winning Data Mining Cup team.

Teams had six weeks to develop a solution for a data-mining problem about optimal return prognosis. Teams used an unidentified online store's historical purchase data to create a model for new orders that predicts the probability of a returned purchase.

"The motivation for this contest data is that some online retailers offering free return shipping have almost half of their orders returned," said Iowa State's team leader and statistics PhD candidate Cory Lanker.

"We could advance our ideas to create an application that helps online retailers reduce returned shipments and increase profit margins," he said.

Between April 2 and May 14 teams worked at their respective universities to develop their probability predictions.

"Teams submitted return probabilities for approximately 50,000 purchases made in one month using data from approximately 481,000 orders from the previous 12 months," Lanker said. "They used 12 variables that characterize the customer information such as age, location and purchase history and information about ordered items such as size, color, price, etc."

Lanker said the basis of Iowa State's technical solution was "to fully characterize customer behavior, which we did using advanced statistical learning concepts on the provided history of purchases. Once we successfully characterized customer behavior, we could then best predict whether a new purchase would be returned."

"This was specifically a student contest," said Steve Vardeman, Iowa State University professor of statistics and industrial engineering. "The team had no direct faculty input on the problem. They organized and executed their solution entirely on their own."

A jury scored all 57 submitted solutions and invited the top 10 teams to Berlin to present their solution methods at the Prudsys User Days conference. Each team gave a 10-minute presentation.

As the winning team, Iowa State team received 2,000 euro prize money (about \$2,700 U.S.) and a plaque. No other American university placed in the top 20. Basulto-Elias, Yin and Lanker went to Berlin for the presentation and announcement. Final team rankings were announced beginning with 10th place.

“Before long, fifth place was announced and it wasn’t us, so I knew we did better this year,” Lanker said. “When it was down to two teams, (Prudsys organizer) Jens Scholz said, ‘The United States lost in the World Cup last night,’ and I thought, ‘Well this is us, we finished second,’ but then he added, ‘But a United States team has won the 2014 Data Mining Cup!’”

Lanker says the shock has not worn off yet. He attributes the team’s success to multiple weekly team meetings that were well-attended at the end of the semester, demonstrating the “dedication we all had to our team’s success.”

“As a leader, I stressed sticking to a schedule so we didn’t run out of time and involving everyone in discussions about making the many important statistical decisions,” Lanker said. “The level of teamwork was extraordinary ... with many large contributions from all members.”

México—Each year, the Mexican Statistical Association (AME) organizes a conference called the International Forum on Statistics. At this event, the Mexican statistical community and colleagues from other countries come together to share their professional experiences and research and exchange ideas.

This year, the Popular Autonomous University of Puebla will host the XXIX International Forum on Statistics from September 29 to October 3 with the theme “Statistics in the Social Sciences.” Lectures by prestigious national and international researchers will be presented. Also, short courses will be offered September 29 and 30. Original research and applications of statistical methods in various subject areas also will be presented through thematic sessions, free contributions and poster session.



The object of the forum is to bring together the community of statisticians from all sectors of society, in particular, academia, government and industry, as well as researchers from around the world to facilitate professional exchanges and share the latest knowledge and innovations in statistics. This year, special emphasis will be placed on the application of statistics in the social sciences. [Click here for more information about the AME’s XXIX International Forum on Statistics.](#)

India—For the first time, the Department of Statistics at Agricultural College in Aswaraopet celebrated National Statistics Day June 29. This special event was held in memory of the late Professor Prasanta Chandra Mahalanobis, an Indian statistician who contributed greatly to the field of economic planning and statistical development in the country. In recognition of Mahalanobis’s notable contributions, the Indian government has designated June 29 of every year—the date of his birth—as National Statistics Day, which is celebrated nationally. The celebration brings awareness—especially to the younger generation—about the role of statistics in socio-economic planning and policy formulation. As India’s first agriculture statistician, Mahalanobis was instrumental in developing the ministry’s agriculture statistics program. He received one of the nation’s highest civilian awards—the Padma Vibhushan—from the national government for his contribution to science and service to the country. Agricultural College Associate Dean Professor Venu Gopala Reddy, Professor Shekar Babu, Sri. I.V.S Reddy, and Sri. G.K Murthy spoke at the event. The student team of Praneeth, Vishesh, Mounica and Sai Kiran took the key initiation. Dr. A. Meena was the key role performer. All speakers asserted the role of Mahalanobis and called on the students to focus on the application of statistical tools.

United States—The American Statistical Association (ASA) celebrated its 175th anniversary at the recently completed Joint Statistical Meetings 2014 in Boston. A number of celebratory events were held during the five-day meeting, highlighted by a champagne toast and a talent competition featuring statistical-themed performances by several ASA member acts.

Also, on August 2 the Sunday edition of the *Boston Globe* included a Metro section front-page feature article about the founding of ASA in the city in 1839 and the development of statistics in the United States throughout the following 175 years. [Click here to read the *Globe* article](#) and [click here to view the sidebar](#).

NATIONAL STATISTICAL ORGANIZATION: NEWS & EVENTS

Following is the latest news and information from national statistical organizations participating in The World of Statistics:

Poland—The Central Statistical Office is hosting the 7th European Forum for Geography and Statistics (EFGS) Conference in Krakow October 22-24. The EFGS is a network of experts cooperating within the framework of the European Statistical System to create a common geostatistical data infrastructure and create best practices in collecting, producing and disseminating georeferenced statistics.

EUROPEAN FORUM FOR GEOGRAPHY AND STATISTICS KRAKOW CONFERENCE 2014



22 – 24 October, **Krakow**, Poland

“Together now for a **better** future”



The conference theme is: “Together now for a better future.” This meeting is unique in bringing together professionals from across the disciplinary spectrum—statisticians, researchers, academics and related experts—and from various institutions who are involved in the production and use of geostatistics. There is no attendance fee for the event. The conference is organized by EFGS and supported by Eurostat. [Learn more and register by clicking here.](#)

JOIN THE WORLD OF STATISTICS

If your organization or an organization you know of isn't yet part of The World of Statistics, encourage them to join. Joining is easy—just ask a representative of the group go to www.worldofstatistics.org and click on the “Join” icon on the top right-hand side of the homepage to become an official participating organization in The World of Statistics. Participation is valuable and is absolutely free!

THE WORLD OF STATISTICS NEEDS YOUR HELP

Now that the [new website for The World of Statistics](#) is up and running, we need your help.

You can help move The World of Statistics website up in the list of Internet search results by linking to the new website address—www.worldofstatistics.org—from your organization's website and replacing the old Statistics2013 logo with the new logo for The World of Statistics and linking it to the new website. [You can download the new logo here.](#)

[See how the United States National Center for Education Statistics is displaying The World of Statistics logo on its website \(go to bottom of the homepage\).](#) Kudos to Andrew White, NCES Senior Research Statistician Statistical Standards and Data Confidentiality, for sharing the link with us and, more importantly, for posting the logo.

Some other things your organization can do to help the cause include:

1. Update existing links to www.statistics2013.org on your website so that these point to www.worldofstatistics.org
2. Change all references to Statistics2013 on your website to The World of Statistics and link to the new website (www.worldofstatistics.org)
3. Change your Facebook page information, links and logos so that these reference The World of Statistics. Also, share information about and publicize The World of Statistics on your organization's social media accounts, including Facebook and Twitter
4. Post a version of The World of Statistics logo in your language on your organization's website. [We currently have nine language versions available for download.](#) To request a language-customized logo, email the following information in a PDF document to Jeff Myers at jeffrey@amstat.org:
 - a. The interpretation in your language of: “The World of Statistics”
 - b. The interpretation in your language of: “Participating Organization”

5. If you have a linked Statistics2013 banner on your organization’s website, please remove it and replace it with a new banner for The World of Statistics and link the new banner to www.worldofstatistics.org. [You can download these new banners here.](#)
6. The World of Statistics Twitter account is @astatworld. Start following us today. Be sure to retweet our tweets and also mention The World of Statistics—hashtag #TWOS—in your tweets.
7. If your website has content about Statistics2013, please delete it and replace it with [copy about The World of Statistics](#).
8. As you did with Statistics2013, include mentions of The World of Statistics in all your organization’s online communications.

Working together, we’ll move up The World of Statistics in all search engine results.

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[Click here to access the “Guide to Contributing to The World of Statistics and Downloading Logos and Other Resources.”](#)