

SSC Network Update

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Social Science Network and Data Services

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Survey Services

Peter Fewster/Heather Stevens

SSNDS provides survey services to a wide range of people and groups. Since 2001, we have customized over 32 surveys and dozens of election ballots. For those who prefer to create their own survey with *SNAP*, which is a suite of integrated software programs, SSNDS provides support for hosting and other administrative tasks.

What We Do

SSNDS recently helped a research group who had attempted to carry out a survey with an off-the-shelf product that was found to be inadequate for its needs. This group wished to survey four disparate groups, and then follow-up with them. In addition to implementing the online survey, we provided advice on the group's survey instrument and developed a routine for matching respondents' data over the two phases.

In another instance, we assisted an undergraduate student to fine-tune her survey for two separate groups; one of which was for students in the Research Pool who would be receiving a participant credit.

Our goal is to consider your survey requirements, no matter how complicated, and create a web survey that will work for you.

	Disagree	Agree
I feel courageous	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am brave	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel unafraid	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am daring	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

People and Groups

SSNDS has assisted a variety of individuals and groups to carry out surveys. These include:

- 4th year students working on their senior honours projects
- graduate students collecting data for their theses, including some

who have been enrolled part-time whose surveys pertained to their jobs

- researchers in various Social Science departments
- researchers from other faculties and Western's Research Park
- various university departments collecting data about the functioning of their department or assessing the effectiveness of special programs
- academic societies that have an affiliation with the Faculty of Social Science

Specific Services

The types of customized services include the following:

- **Web Design.** Creation of professional looking web designs including header image, footer image, buttons and colour scheme.
- **Accessibility.** Web pages are designed to be as accessible as possible for all web-enabled devices.
- **Security.** Surveys are hosted on a secure server so data is encrypted when passing through the network.
- **Login control.** Access is managed via unique username/password credentials. Where an e-mail address is used as the username, a recovery system is provided for participants who forget their logon credentials.
- **Invitations.** Tools are provided for researchers to manage invitations to prospective and active participants.
- **Analysis-ready data.** Researchers are provided with data in *SPSS* or *Stata* format ready for analysis.

Laptop Maintenance and Care

Kam Abado

Extremely Important First Step for Laptops - Create the Recovery CDs/DVDs

Save money, and minimize stress! If you own a laptop, here are a few hints to extend your laptop's life....

Almost all Windows laptops shipped today do not include a distribution copy of Windows CD/DVD media with the system. Instead, the manufacturer preloads the Windows Operating System on the hard drive and provides a Recovery Disc Creator program which must be run to create Recovery CDs/DVDs. We strongly recommend you create these discs after Windows initializes itself on first power-up.

Yes, a distribution copy of the Windows Operating System, and factory provided software are usually stored in a hidden partition of the laptop's hard drive. However, if the hard drive fails or needs to be replaced, making the hidden partition inaccessible, you must have your Recovery CDs/DVDs to restore the system to the same manufacturer software configuration it had when shipped from the factory.

Proper Ventilation

One of the major causes of overheating in a laptop is improper ventilation. If you place a laptop on a bed, on a couch, or on your lap, you might be blocking the air vents, preventing adequate air circulation to keep the components inside the laptop cool. To prevent overheating, locate the vents on your laptop and ensure unobstructed ventilation during use. Although not necessary, for less than \$50, you can purchase a cooling pad built with a USB-powered fan that draws heat away from the laptop to help keep the internal components cool.



Loose dust and pet hair can get inside a laptop through its ventilation system and clog the processor fan. This can overheat the processor causing sudden system shut downs and damage to the laptop's internal electronic parts. To avoid costly repairs, keep the laptop vents clear from loose hair, and vacuum the vents at least once a month to remove debris.

Laptops and Liquids Do Not Mix

Do not place drinks near your laptop as accidents happen quickly and can be very costly. Keep in mind that damage to laptops caused by liquid spillage is not covered under warranty!



Battery

Eventually, all laptop batteries will deteriorate and not hold a charge for very long, even after having been fully recharged. A typical laptop battery will last for about 500 charge/discharge cycles -- which is approximately a year and a half to three years, depending on usage. To maximize battery life, consider the following suggestions:

- Remove the laptop battery whenever it is being used with the power adapter (unless you need to recharge the battery). Leaving a fully charged battery in the laptop while the power adapter is plugged into an AC outlet can overcharge and overheat the battery, damaging the cells.
- When running on battery power, use your laptop until the battery gets low (with about 15% capacity left); then fully recharge it.
- Keep your battery and laptop in a dry, well-ventilated location, as hot environments and condensation will cause corrosion and poor contact between the battery and laptop connectors.

Standby Mode vs. Hibernate Mode

Standby mode on the laptop will quickly re-launch the laptop, but is it the right function to use? Not necessarily!

- Standby mode allows you to bring up your desktop within a few seconds, instead of waiting a couple of minutes. However, Standby consumes power which will drain your battery, even when the screen is shut off.
- Hibernate mode should be used instead, as it requires no power. Hibernate will preserve your notebook's current state by writing the current settings to the hard drive as a file. When you restart the laptop Hibernate simply reloads the file, restoring your system to its exact state prior to hibernation. (Continued... Page 7)

Bolen Configuration Guides

Les Flodrowski

Did you know that Bolen offers desktop computer, and Toshiba notebook configurations specifically tailored to the Faculty of Social Science?

SSNDS works closely with Bolen and has helped to develop standardized computer configuration guides for Social Science faculty and staff. These configurations take into account our experience in maintaining systems on the SSC Network, as well as providing a standardized choice of hardware components that ensure reliability and ease of maintenance over the life of the purchase. For more information about these guides, and to download the latest copy, refer to the following URL on the SSNDS website: ssnds.uwo.ca/bolen.html

Note that the guides are updated monthly to reflect the latest hardware choices and pricing.

What's New? on the SSC Network

Les Flodrowski

SPSS

SPSS version 16 was announced on the network in the summer of 2008. Some users who did not upgrade were surprised when their older versions stopped working this past January. The network licenses that we purchase for SPSS do not allow us to support more than one version, and when we renewed in November; our choices were SPSS versions 16 and 17. As such, we plan to upgrade to SPSS 17 this summer. The current version of SPSS, however, will continue to work until the end of December, 2009.

All SPSS users should also take note of two new patches to version 16 that were issued recently to fix problems with the initial release. These are available on the network through **Add or Remove Programs in Control Panel** and should be installed at your convenience.

SSNDS Receives Student Donation

SSNDS is pleased to announce that it has received a substantial donation from the Social Science Student Donation Fund to upgrade two of our servers that will offer greater fault tolerance in the event of a server failure. In addition, a *Storage Array Network (SAN)* will be purchased as the foundation of our future storage architecture. The SAN will be used primarily to serve up network applications and secure personal storage (*H: drives*). Overall, the funding comes at an optimum time (near the end of the current servers' life cycles) and will help ensure a reliable and fault tolerant platform for user services well into the future.

We should like to thank the current Student Council for their consideration and acceptance of this request.



Western Single Identity Project

Les Flodrowski

In a nutshell, the purpose of this project is to eliminate the assignment of multiple Western ID numbers and credentials (usernames) to the same individual. For example, all students are assigned an ID number and username by Higher Education. Then, if the student becomes a Western employee a second ID and username are created by Human Resources. With Phase One of this project now in place as of November 27, 2008, all new students and employees will be assigned a single ID and username regardless of their status.

Impact on Social Science Users

The SSC Network accounting procedures have been modified to accommodate the single identity rules through the use of "roles". This means that new users will only be issued a single SSC Network account but the username can belong to both student and employee account groups. For example, a student could be a member of the "Undergraduates" group and also "Economics Staff Members" group. Account groups are used to secure resources on the network such as: access to departmental printers; software; entrances with card

swipe readers; intranets, and shared storage areas. Therefore, it is important to bear in mind that when setting up or requesting network services from SSNDS, your user access and security concerns are met.

Attention: Social Science Employees with Two Usernames

Many senior Social Science faculty and staff who have been account holders from the "VAX days", in the early 1990's, actually have two employee usernames on the SSC Network — their legacy username (usually just a last name), and their Western e-mail username. Having two usernames has caused considerable confusion in the past (Which username do I use?). To omit this ongoing confusion, everyone with two usernames is encouraged to migrate to a single one. SSNDS will facilitate this move by simply merging your two accounts into one. The only one you will use for all computing activities (logging onto the SSC Network; e-mail; web-based authentication for ballots and surveys; departmental intranet access, etc.).

For more information, or to request a migration, please contact Les Flodrowski via e-mail (les@uwo.ca)

Goodbye Vista. Hello Windows 7!

Les Flodrowski

Whenever a new PC operating system from *Microsoft* becomes public, SSNDS takes on the task of supporting it. Nearly two years ago, support for *Vista* on the SSC Network was announced. Although there is now a smattering of *Vista* users, almost everyone has stayed with their tried and true *Windows XP*, even those who made new computer purchases. This is a common theme, not just at Western, but across corporate desktops as well. In fact, a recent poll of 700 senior executives found that only 10% had deployed *Vista* in their organizations.



As a result of its failure, *Microsoft* appears to be under pressure to replace *Vista* with the next version of *Windows*, code-named *Windows 7*. Consequently, the new operating system may be out later this year. At this point, *Microsoft* needs to save face and do everything it can to make *Windows 7* a viable upgrade to *Windows XP*. Early reports from beta testers suggest *Windows 7* is much faster than *Vista* and requires less computer power. Under the terms of the *Microsoft License Agreement*, that we subscribe to, all SSC Network users have the right to upgrade to a new operating system. Will you want to upgrade to *Windows 7*? Time will tell.

Student Group Project Meeting Room (SSC 1014)

Steve Rumas

A new meeting room has been created within SSNDS, for students working on group projects for Social Science courses.



The room is outfitted with a networked desktop computer; a ceiling mounted LCD projector (connected to the desktop); a projection screen; three whiteboards; power and wired/wireless network connectivity for student laptops; eight chairs and a table. Students can also connect their own laptops to the ceiling projector. The desktop is connected to the SSC Network and can be used to run software available on the SSC Network, including *Microsoft PowerPoint* (used to prepare computer based presentations).

The room is available 24/7 via student card swipe access, and can be scheduled by qualified students for a maximum two-hour time slot. Qualified students are those using the room for a group project in a Social Science course. They cannot schedule another slot until after their currently scheduled slot is used.

Students can schedule the room by either visiting the SSNDS main office, (SSC, Room 1008) in person, or by phone (519-661-2152). Normal office hours are Monday through Friday, from 8:30 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. At the time of booking, students must provide: full name; Student ID number; e-mail address; related course number; professor's name, and the number of students in the group. For further information, please go to ssnds.uwo.ca/rooms.html



24/7 Access to SSC from UCC (Supported by the Social Science Student Donation Fund)

Steve Rumas

Last year, the Social Science Student Council (SSSC) approached SSNDS with a request to provide 24-hour card swipe access to the Social Science Centre from the tunnel to the University Community Centre. The SSSC provided all funding from the Social Science Student Donation Fund. Appropriate approvals were obtained, and the project was completed by November of 2008.

Social Science students, faculty and staff may now use their University ID cards to obtain 24/7 access to the SSC from the UCC tunnel near the outdoor Japanese Garden. Note that these swipe-controlled doors have a handicap operator, and are therefore, wheelchair friendly.

21st Century Personal Computer Security

Heather Stevens

Today's computer viruses are becoming more ingenious in both their deployment methods and their impact than ever before. According to *Trend* more than 50 percent of malware infections in 2008 came from the Internet through accidental download from unknown or malicious web sites. While surfing the Internet, users may receive a bogus security or update message. These programs imitate legitimate software alerts and trick people into downloading, (Continued/...page 5)



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and even purchasing these bogus applications. Once installed, these programs can be notoriously difficult to completely remove.

The Internet and viruses are not the only source of threats to your personal computer security. The following sections provide some tips that you can use to protect your system during your daily computing activities:

USB Removable Devices

In Asia, the most common source of infection is from auto-run malware on removable devices such as thumb drives and portable hard drives. We have seen these types of infections and they can be expected to increase. *Deep Freeze* is installed on all of the computers in the teaching rooms on campus and in the SSNDS computer rooms; so before connecting your USB device to one of those computers, reboot the computer to ensure that you are using a clean system. Alternatively, ensure that the computer where you use your removable device is running up-to-date security software.

Passwords

Are you getting tired of managing all sorts of different passwords or do you use the same password for everything? Try using one password for your computer accounts, one for your highly secure sites such as your bank account, and another password for your less vulnerable sites such as *Air Miles*. If you have too many passwords to commit to memory, be sure to store them in a secure place like a locked file cabinet drawer. Experts recommend that you change your passwords every 30 - 90 days.

Update and Patch

Keep software and security patches up-to-date. Your *Windows Updates* should happen automatically on your office computer, but may require that you restart your PC to complete the installation. Ensure that *Windows Updates* are enabled at home. Be advised that all of the major browsers have had major security patches in the last several months. Mozilla is
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ESRI Site License

Liz Hill



ESRI

Geographic Information Systems (GIS) are increasingly prevalent in areas outside of Geography. Movies and television shows depict solutions to problems being found using tools that include *GIS*. Visual representations of communities can be combined with other information that is location specific to help solve complex problems. Within our academic community, data from sources such as Statistics Canada or your own research can be plotted on a geo-spatial file to visually depict data such as: population trends; prevalence of illness; or location of particular types of businesses.

The tools required to integrate *Geographic Information Systems* into your research, work, or student assignments are available to all members of the Western community through Western's site license from *ESRI* for the *ArcGIS* suite of products. The software can be borrowed from the Data Resources Library (DRL), Room 1004, SSC, by individuals for use on a home PC, and is also available to be installed from the network to your desktop via **Add/Remove Programs**. Users can also run the software through the remote access service ssnet2.uwo.ca. The site license entitles Western members to take advantage of free online training courses via the *ESRI Virtual Campus*.

Visit the SSNDS-hosted *GIS* web page, ssnds.uwo.ca/gis.html for additional information, and to register for a training course.

January 21, 2009

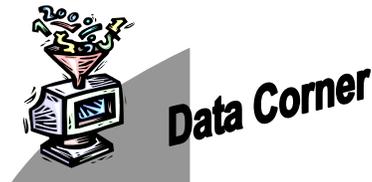


Liz Hill

Social Science staff and faculty are entitled to have one copy of *Microsoft Office Suite* installed on a home computer for work-related purposes. Entitlement to this software has been coordinated for these groups due to the faculty's subscription to the *Microsoft Campus Agreement*. Presently *Office 2003* and *Office 2007* are the office suites that are available.



If you wish to have *Microsoft Office* installed on your home PC or laptop, contact Liz Hill (ethill@uwo.ca), ext. 85049, in the Data Resources Library, Room 1004, Social Science Centre.



Vince Gray/Liz Hill

Data Liberation Initiative (DLI) Training

The *Data Liberation Initiative (DLI)* is the subscription based Statistics Canada consortium that provides access to public data files from Statistics Canada to educational institutions for academic research purposes. Through this body, broad and affordable access to a wealth of research data is available to Western and other Canadian universities. At Western these data are made available to our users via the *Internet Data Library System (IDLS)*, *idls.ca*. Over 40 academic institutions in Canada subscribe to *IDLS* in order to access *DLI* data products. Additional information on the *DLI* program can be found at: www.statcan.gc.ca/dli-ild/about-apropos-eng.htm.

The *DLI* group, made up of representatives (usually Data Librarians) from each Canadian University and *DLI* division staff from Statistics Canada, meet regionally across Canada annually. Western is excited to welcome the 2009 *Ontario Spring DLI Training*, which will be hosted by the Faculty of Social Science. The training affords education to data providers on new products from Statistics Canada, training opportunities, as well as sharing of ideas on delivering data to an academic community.

The *Spring DLI Training* will be held from April 6 - April 8, 2009. Researchers and graduate students using *DLI* data, who are interested in learning what topics will be presented at these sessions, can contact Vince Gray (vince@uwo.ca) for additional information.

2006 Census Public Use Microdata Files and Master Files

From 1971 to 2001, *Individual, Family and Household PUMF* files were produced: each file from each wave of the census is available through the *Internet Data Library System (IDLS)*,

idls.ca. Statistics Canada is changing the dissemination plan for the 2006 Census. Statistics Canada's announced plan is to produce the same *Individual* file again, but not to produce the *Family* or *Household* files, which will be replaced with the hierarchical file that links the three universes (*Individual, Family* and *Household*).

The *Individual* file (2.7% of population) is scheduled to be released during the summer 2009.

The *Hierarchical* file (1% of population) is scheduled to be released during the summer 2010. Loading a hierarchical file into *IDLS* is a challenge. Currently, the March 2002 (*Annual Demographic File*) from the *United States Current Population Survey* is the only hierarchical file loaded into *IDLS*. We would invite you to look at how this file is loaded, determine if it works for your needs, and provide feedback to us.



An Improved (and Renamed) Internet Data Library System

For the past two years, SSNDS has been working with CREPUQ (the Quebec University consortium) on the redesign of the *Internet Data Library System* (which was designed approximately ten years ago), with the intent of offering improved access to data for all users of *IDLS*. This work is now coming to fruition. The new system will be made available for public access on Friday, March 20, 2009.

The new system reflects current web design practices. It will offer simplified but enhanced search capabilities, in both French and English.

The existing *IDLS* will be maintained until the end of the current academic term so that users will not have to change in mid-term. However, we anticipate that most users will opt for the newly designed system, for which the name will be revealed at its launch on March 20.

Just Ask Us!

Mary Van de Ven

What is that big screen in the "Encounters" cafeteria area for? For all you sports enthusiasts, I would like to tell you that it is out there for the next big game. Actually, Social Science Network and Data Services (SSNDS) is using it as another communication tool to share information with our user community.

SSNDS is more than physical space; more than computer rooms. In addition to these, we offer a host of services to enhance the learning, teaching, and research missions of our faculty and Western.

Faculty members, staff, undergraduates, and graduate students of the Faculty of Social Science have the opportunity to explore what SSNDS has to offer by checking our website at ssnds.uwo.ca. A newsletter is published twice yearly to inform you of software and data in SSNDS. *Lunch and Learn* sessions are offered to provide useful technical information.

Still wondering what the "big screen" is for? We have found one more way to share information about the breadth of services which are made available for you to use. While we don't expect that everyone will sit through the whole *PowerPoint* presentation, we only hope to capture your attention for a brief moment at a time, while you are having lunch or a beverage. Information on: Survey Services and Shared Network Drives for Researchers; Personal Electronic File Storage; Help Desks; Assistance with Laptop Wireless Connectivity Problems in the Social Science Centre; Data Inquiries, and much more are presented.

Perhaps there is a service you would like to know more about. SSNDS welcomes inquiries.

Just ask us!

ssnds-help@uwo.ca

Laptop Maintenance and Care

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Hard Drive



Hard drives have platters that spin at a very high speed while a laptop is in use. A single hard knock or bump could damage the drive's platters or the read/write heads and render the drive inoperable. To prevent damage to the hard drive, shut down the laptop before moving it, or move it gently. Another option to consider is: purchasing a laptop which contains a Solid State Hard Drive (SSD), which consists of non-volatile flash memory (has no moving parts, generates less heat and is not sensitive to vibration). SSD drives are significantly more expensive than standard hard drives and currently do not come with large storage capacities.

Cleaning Your Laptop

- **Do not** try to lift the keys when cleaning your laptop, as they can break off. Compressed air can be used to lightly blast some of the dust or dirt from under the keys.
- **Never** use a cleaning agent such as Windex on your LCD panels or laptop screen. Those cleaners often contain ammonia, which over time; will permanently damage your display panel.
- **Use only** approved cleaning kits such as 3M's LCD Panel Cleaner Kit (available at most office supply stores). Most of the commercial LCD Panel cleaner solutions consist of a 50/50 mixture (half isopropyl alcohol and half water).
- **Do not** clean your screen with paper towels or fabrics that might be abrasive. Instead, use a static/lint free cloth to use for cleaning the LCD display.

Carry Laptop with Care

Laptop mishaps come with expensive consequences. To reduce damage to your laptop while travelling, choose an appropriate carrying case with adequate padding. Do not over pack it with items that will apply force on the case. Always be gentle when placing the laptop bag on the floor, in a baggage compartment, or on a table.

21st Century Personal Computer Security

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Update and Patch

requesting that all users upgrade from *Firefox 2.0* to *3.0* as soon as possible because it will no longer be issuing updates for *Firefox 2.0* to protect against future online scams and attacks. Ensure that the *Trend Officescan* is up-to-date and running on your office computer. For your home computer, or laptop, use *Trend Micro Internet Security* (formerly *PC-Cillan*). This anti-virus software can be purchased at the Campus Computer Store. *Sophos Anti-Virus* for *Macintosh* computers is available from the ITS web site.

Secure Your Wireless Home Network

The web tools provided by your manufacturer for entering your configuration settings usually have a username of *admin* or *administrator*, and the password is often the word *password*, or left blank. Since the default settings are very easy to hack, change the login username and password immediately. Turn on *Wi-Fi Protected Access (WPA) Encryption*. Some older wireless network routers do not support *WPA*; so you may need to obtain a device driver upgrade from your manufacturer or replace it. Ensure that *Firewalls* are enabled on each wireless computer and on the router. There are lots of good tips on the internet for wireless security. One site worth checking is www.practicallynetworked.com/support/wireless_secure.htm

Surf Smart

Anti-virus software can fail, especially when it comes to newly released

malware. Here are some safe surfing tips:

- Be very careful when clicking on pop-up advertisements--especially ads promoting system security or performance tools that look like standard *Microsoft Window* alerts.
- Avoid sites with adult content or those offering pirated goods, and exercise caution on blogs and forums by not following links.
- Turn on your browser's pop-up blocker. If you do get a pop-up, close it in the *Taskbar* in case the "X" close window icon is actually a link (Right click the pop-up in the *Taskbar* at the bottom of your screen and choose *Close*)
- Turn on your browser's *Phishing Filter*
- Do not accept or open suspicious messages within your web browser.
- When entering secure information on a website, make sure that the URL is *https* with the "s" for secure. Also, your browser should display a lock symbol (*Internet Explorer* and *Firefox* display the lock at the end of the URL field).

Did You Know?

Les Flodrowski

The L: drive is for You and Your Students

Instructors can use the **L: drive** to make data files, assignments, and other material available to their students.

Every computer on the SSC Network automatically connects to the **L: drive**.

If you would like to have permissions set up, so that you can access the **L: drive**, please contact Les Flodrowski, ext.83595 or (les@uwo.ca)