

# Editorial

Welcome to the 2007 Conference Issue, “Who’s in charge of public statistics?” The editors are conscious of being new to the job and we shall endeavour to keep up past standards of publication. However, the success of **Radical Statistics** depends upon members sending us contributions. Please be in touch for future issues!

Fortunately, for this issue, we begin with a pre-selected set of authors. We are grateful that six conference speakers have converted their presentations into excellent papers in time for this issue. We hope that you enjoy reading them.

Ray Thomas provides a clear and thought provoking analysis of trust in and independence of official statistics, including the damage done by performance indicators.

Alison Macfarlane and Diana Kornbrot both discuss problems in accessing data collected at the public’s expense. Alison highlights the semi-privatisation of health statistics through the Dr. Foster consultancy and Diana investigates through her statistical analyses the problems of combining diverse quality measures in higher education.

Daniel Smith’s short note on trying to reduce the burden of data collection is highly topical as it deals with identifying training posts for the Medical Training Application Service, 2007.

Gill Green argues cogently that local migration data are essential for local planning; she deplores the failure to develop better methodology for obtaining information and the failure to make better use of such data as are available.

Petra Boynton will publish a written version of her talk in a future issue and meanwhile she has agreed a short summary with Janet Shapiro outlining the problem of rogue surveys which she would like Radical Statistics to attack.

We hope that Roy Carr-Hill will also write up, for a future issue, his talk which brought an international dimension to the conference.

The scandal of commercial sponsors using academic researchers and institutions to give the appearance of respectability to bad research is highlighted by Aubrey Blumsohn. He describes the dangers of mis-representation of data and flawed statistical analyses in refereed papers and raises several issues including the dual questions:

- should academics allow their names to be used on papers when they have not had adequate access to the data and data analyses?
- should commercial partners be permitted to deny such access to their academic collaborators?

This issue concludes with a report on the conference by Geoffrey Rendle and the Annual General Meeting minutes and reports.

The next issue, "Making Statistics Relevant", will include articles on teaching statistics, mortality in Iraq and population growth and forecasts. It will also contain sections for book reviews and readers' responses (short, relevant and statistical). There is still time for you to submit your article, book review or response.

For future issues, as well as longer articles on topics of interest, we invite occasional short contributions such as web-site reports, reports on seminars and maybe personal reviews of the email list discussions. We are open to other suggestions and look forward to hearing from you.

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