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The report of the President's Commission on Federal Statistics (see /1/) contains some recommendations which are being developed into regular activities of the CLCD. These activities will result in the creation of statistics on users of census statistics. It is somewhat unusual for a private organization to be following recommendations of a Presidential commission. This paper explains why the CLCD is doing so and how it hopes to achieve its results.

The CLCD is an activity of the National Data Use and Access Laboratories (DUALabs), a private non-profit organization concerned with increasing the application of publicly available data to public problems and national needs. The CLCD is an outgrowth of the work of DUALabs and the Center for Research Libraries in supporting the efforts of researchers at universities and elsewhere to acquire and apply the computer tape output of the 1970 Census. Prior to the emergence of the CLCD, over 50 universities and research organizations had joined in DUALabs' Summary Tape Assistance Research and Training (START) Program. These groups had contributed funds of their own, and received additional funds from the Ford Foundation to make possible the community acquisition of the data base from the Bureau of the Census. DUALabs prepared a library of computer programs which greatly simplified the problems of the use of the 1970 Census on computer tape. Also, the tape files were reduced in bulk by 85 to 90 percent, and the cost of acquisition to each participant was similarly reduced.

DUALabs then undertook responsibility for training three persons from each organization in the START Community in the use of the software, problems and errors in the data base, and the general characteristics of the census files which they had to learn to use the files effectively. The basic purpose of this training has been to equip the three persons at each organization to train other users in a similar manner, and to provide support to users at their universities in retrieving, evaluating, and applying census data to their research problems.

The START Program was designed to run for five years, through 1974, at which time we anticipate that strong census use capabilities permanently will be in place at many major research sites around the nation. The START Community, as it is called, uses a common computer technology. An important advantage of the common technology is that researchers can move from one site to another and continue their work with a minimum of technology transfer problems because the same user software, techniques, and information support systems exist at all sites. If access to a particular portion of the data files is not available at a specific site, it can be obtained /1/ Federal Statistics Report of the President's Commission, Vol. 1, pages 6,7, GPO, 1971.

from the community store at DUALabs at minimum time and cost.

An interesting advantage of the community concept is that members can contribute feedback in the form of new data files, software improvements, information about data base errors, and new techniques for using the data in research applications. This feedback has already resulted in the creation of compatibility between important segments of the 1960 census data base and the START software system. It has added 1960 census data to the community storehouse. It has increased the capability of the START software.

It was recognized from the beginning that a great many researchers who were directly connected with the START Program of their university, as well as many more researchers at non-START locations, would require a different form of support to use the 1970 Census. These researchers would be in need of something akin to the services of a research librarian. They would believe census data could help solve their problem but they would need an expert to help them decide if this were true and to advise them how to overcome technical problems to use the data. They would not wish to become census data experts, would not wish to get involved in computer systems, and would not want to be apprised of all errors and all potential applications. But, in the absence of expert assistance, the contents and potentialities of the summary tapes and the Public Use Samples would remain a mystery to these researchers because of the complexity, size, and variety of information resources required to use the materials. The CLCD was established with support from the National Science Foundation for the express purpose of facilitating research applied to national needs which could benefit from the use of the 1970 Census. The general objective of the CLCD is to guide a researcher through the seemingly impenetrable thicket of problems associated with the use of the files and quickly bring him to a point of applying data to a specific research objective. Therefore, the CLCD has a consulting role to orient a user, to guide him, to offer special training as needed, to bring him in contact with those who can provide data, and to help insure that resources exist to accomplish his research objective. (The CLCD is not funded to supply computer or clerical services to researchers.)

To reach as many users as possible, the CLCD has enlisted the aid of groups who have established themselves as competent sources of assistance in the use of the 1970 Census, with proven experience in meeting users application requests in a timely and efficient manner. These groups are called User Contact Sites of the CLCD. They all offer a no-cost orientation service to any researchers. There are now 14 User Contact Sites from Massachusetts to California, and more will be added in the future. (See attachment)

When potential users of the census data base contact the CLCD or any of the User Contact Sites they are informed of consulting and training activities available to them and asked to fill in a Census Use Questionnaire. This questionnaire serves to identify the major interests of the user and to assess the knowledge he possesses of the data base. The replies form the basis for the initial orientation (by letter, telephone, or in person). In many cases this orientation directs the potential users to appropriate printed materials from the Census Bureau, DUALabs, or elsewhere, providing the required data or information about data.

If the user requires further guidance, it is provided by additional personal consultations. Detailed guidance can be arranged if the user wishes to become a "visiting scholar" at the CLCD, meaning that he is assigned desk space and afforded the opportunity for interaction with CLCD staff while he works out the census use and access details of his research project. Group training sessions are also provided and the publications called Census Use Technical Bulletins and Data Access News are used to keep the researcher informed of current developments.

In reviewing the needs of researchers and the requirements of efficiency in CLCD services, it became apparent to the CLCD staff that the greatest possible benefit in applying the results of the census to national needs would be obtained only if a vigorous program were set up to evaluate CLCD services and users. As a result, two additional components of the CLCD work have been constructed. One is an advisory system, and the other component is an information system on users and uses.

Advisory groups have been established representing researchers, State and Local government users, legislators, librarians, computer experts and the User Contact Sites.

The advisory groups have been reviewing the CLCD services to date and have suggested a variety of improvements. A number of these suggestions either parallel or extend some recommendations of the President's Commission on Federal Statistics.

Item: The Commission's report suggests that small area data uses of the census required by law be catalogued. CLCD advisors have suggested that the legally required uses be identified and that an effort be made to establish specific services to enable users quickly and cheaply to acquire the data specified in the laws in a form which matches the reporting requirements of Federal agencies.

Item: The Commission recommends that field studies of the uses of small area data be made. The CLCD advisors have suggested compiling information of this sort from CLCD Census Questionnaires.

Item: The Commission recommends that schemes

of cooperative collection and analysis be tried out to determine who uses the census, for what purpose and whether the census provides the information the users want. CLCD advisers have suggested that analyses of census users be made on these points.

Item: The Commission recommends that interchange of knowledge about data for small areas should be encouraged among workers at all levels of government, with special emphasis on the need for analytical specification of data requirements and procedures for using data. CLCD advisers have noted the cooperative possibilities in the exchange of analytic approaches afforded by the CLCD network of information exchange and the Clearinghouse function of referral of users to one another for assistance. They further noted the large number of organizations trained by DUALabs in procedures for using the data and have recommended a great expansion of this effort to reach out to analysts with specific research applications, in addition to those whose emphasis is on computer and data base technology.

Item: The Commission recommends that serious attention should be given to coordinated examination of the demands for data made by the Federal government on State and Local governments. CLCD advisers have noted these demands, have identified some States in which the responses are coordinated, and have suggested the CLCD attempt to educate the users in other States in systems for coordinating their efforts to respond to Federal demands. (This assumes that no coordination will be attempted at the Federal level.)

In response to its advisers suggestions, the CLCD is now planning several new programs. These programs would begin to accomplish the tasks mentioned above which the Commission had seen as responsibilities of the Federal government. Where success in accomplishing these tasks depends on an awareness of users needs, the CLCD may be more effective than the Federal government. (Because the CLCD exists to serve users' needs, it has a far greater desire to respond to these needs than the Federal statistical agencies, whose missions are more complex and less likely to emphasize user requirements.)

The greatest weakness in the CLCD as an instrument for surveying user needs is that it collects information only from those users who come to it seeking help.

The CLCD is creating an information system on users of its services and on the uses they make of the data. The information system will focus on the people and organizations using the 1970 Census. It will have organizational classification codes, and it will classify the characteristics and frequency of census data applications. The kinds of data used, the purposes of the use, and needed data not present in the census will be recorded. The user's capabilities in terms of data bases on site, software and equipment available, and willingness to assist others

will be noted. Also noted will be past experience of the user in terms of research activities, special training, data acquired, and software used.

The information will be made available in the following kinds of registers, catalogues, and lists.

Uses made of small area census data required by statute:
Problems in such use
Successful solutions to problems

Uses of small area data not required by statute:
Type of area; type of data
Purpose of use

Research problems using census (major classifications):
By researcher and organization

Expert persons available for assistance:
By location, by area of speciality

Data bases available for use of others:
By location; software (with information on costs)

Training services available:
By location; frequency; purpose

Errors in the census:
By geographic area and subject matter to which errors apply

Special analytic techniques:
By purpose of analysis, sources of assistance

Although some of this information is now available from the CLCD (for example, an annotated catalogue of sources of assistance in use of the census) it will require extensive additional resources to bring the information system to a fully accomplished project capable of generating reports on demand. In the meantime, the CLCD is collecting enough data on all users it serves to anticipate most of the demands that will be placed on the information system. When the system is developed, it will be possible to create a variety of statistics on users of statistics. A prime purpose of such statistics would be to serve as an information resource for planning future Federal census data collection and processing operations.

Unfortunately, the cases included in the information system will be a biased sample of a universe of data users of unknown size. However, the information collected from the CLCD users will be standard and systematic. Because the users will be making specific uses at the time the information is collected, the resulting statistics could be used in the next decennial census planning process. Such information might be more valuable than the anecdotal information which served as the planning inputs to the last census, and which was distilled from notes taken at public meetings.

CLCD User Contact Sites

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THE PENNSYLVANIA STATE UNIVERSITY
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PRINCETON-RUTGERS CENSUS DATA PROJECT
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TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY LIBRARY
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UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, LA
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