ICPSR Direct

About ICPSR

With over 700 member institutions and over a half million files of social science research, the Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR) is the world's largest social science data archive. Through the CSU's membership in the ICPSR, students, faculty, and staff can download data using **ICPSR Direct** from on campus. Some campuses also allow off-campus access through a proxy server.

ICPSR data are made available through a license to the CSU, and are not to be provided to non-CSU personnel.
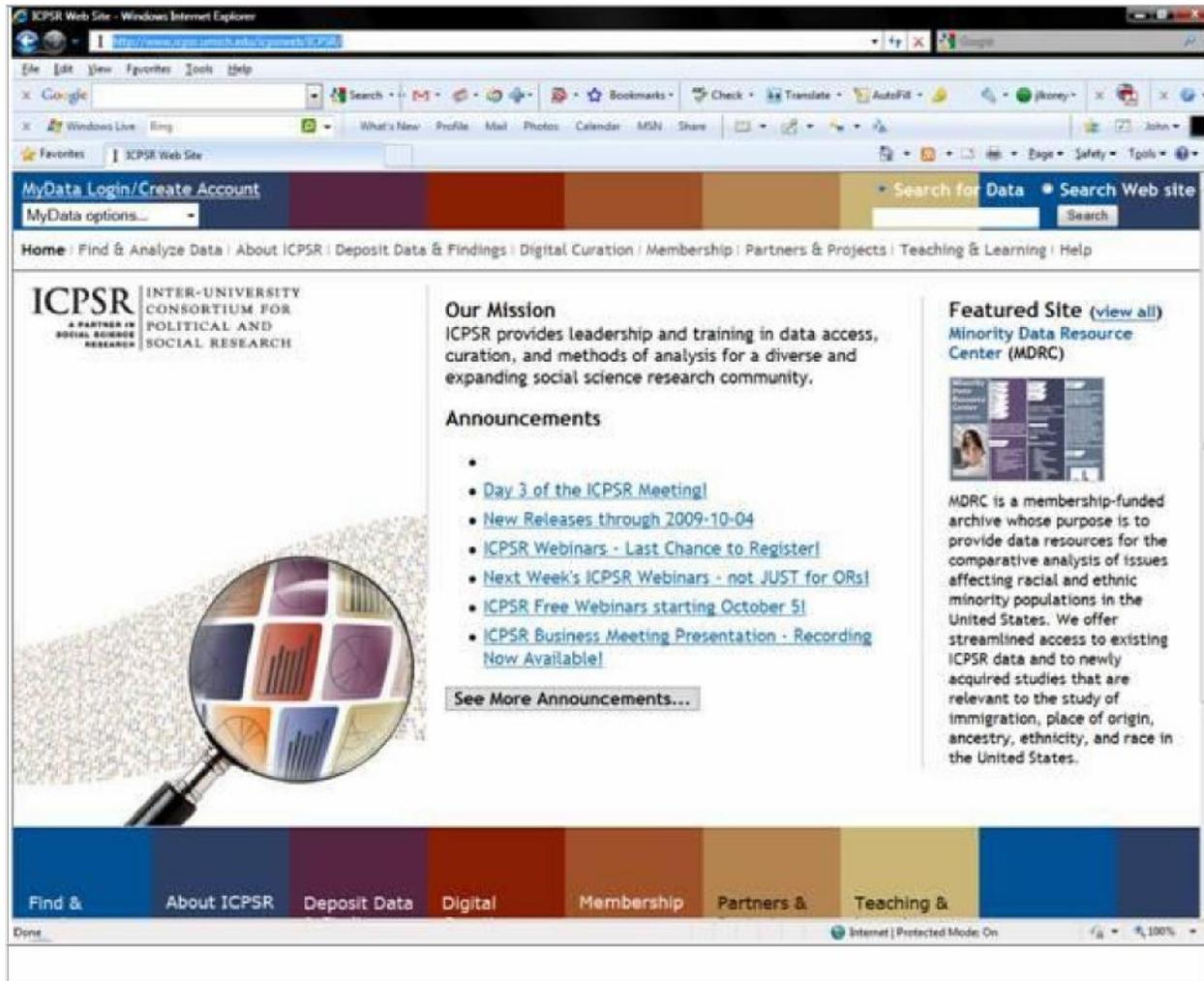
Downloading Data from ICPSR Direct.

Note: Initial access to ICPSR data must be from an on-campus computer or, if your campus provides it, from off campus through a proxy server. Check with your SSRIC representative (at http://www.ssric.org/reps.html to see if service via a proxy server is available on your campus. Once you have validated your ICPSR "Mydata" account (see below), you can then download ICPSR data from anywhere. You will need to revalidate your Mydata account for this purpose every six months.

Go to http://www.icpsr.org/ or http://www.icpsr.com/ or http://www.icpsr.umich.edu/.

Log in to "MyData" in the upper left corner (or, if you are a first time user, create an account). (If you get a message saying "Unable to Log In -- Cookies not enabled," ignore it and click on the link to "MyData.") Click on "Find and Analyze Data." You can then use any of the several options provided to browse for data, or you can search for data by entering key words (e.g., gun control) in the dialog box and clicking on "Search for Data." Find a study in which you are interested and click on the title. Choose the download option you want. Log in with your email and password or, if you are
a new user, create an account. Read the terms of use and, if you agree, click on "I agree." Save

the zipped file containing the information.

Syntax (setup) files. In some cases, you can download a file that can be opened directly in SAS or SPSS. In other cases, you will be provided with a fixed-format ASCII file and a SAS or SPSS command file. The instructions that follow apply to SPSS command (or "syntax" files). Once you have downloaded your files and, if necessary, unzipped them:

- Start SPSS and open the syntax file (the one with the ".sps" extension).
- Find the "FILE HANDLE" command and replace "data-filename" with the path to your data file (the one ending in ".txt"). For example, if you download ICPSR Study 4131 (ABC News Pennsylvania Poll, Sept. 2004) in a directory on your "C" drive called "Temp," the path created will be "C:\Temp\5268001 \ICPSR_041 31 \D S0001_A BC_News_Pennsylvania_Poll ,_September 2004\04131-0001-Data.txt." (This is admittedly pretty unwieldy, and it might be a good idea to move and rename the file before proceeding). The FILE HANDLE:

  FILE HANDLE DATA / NAME="data-filename" LRECL=225.

  would become:

FILE HANDLE DATA /
NAM E=" C:\Temp\5268001 \ICPSR_041 31 \DS0001_ABC_News_Pennsylvania_
Poll ,_September_2004__\041 31-0001-D ata.txt " L RECL=225.

- Find the "SAVE OUTFILE" command (probably the last one in the file), and replace
  "spss-filename.sav" with the name and path of the SPSS system file you wish to create.
  If the command is preceded by an asterisk, remove the asterisk. For example,

  SAVE OUTFILE="spss-filename.sav".

  would become:

  SAVE
  OUTFIL E=" C:\Temp\5268001 \ICPSR_041 31 \D S0001_ABC_News_Pennsylvani
  a_Poll ,_September_2004__\041 31-0001 -Data.sav".

  From the menu bar, click on "Run" and "All."

  If no "SAVE OUTFILE" command exits, create one from scratch. Note that all
  SPSS commands end with a period.

Data without syntax (setup) files. ICPSR is experimenting with creating setup files on request for datasets that come with neither system for syntax files. The following information was provided on October 11, 2006 by ICPSR Director of User Support, Mary Morris:

"ICPSR is pleased to announce a new service to create statistical package setup files on demand. We are providing this service to assist users at member schools who want to work with particular studies in the ICPSR holdings that currently lack these setup files. To request setup files for a specific study, please contact netmail@icpsr.umich.edu. Our User Support staff will discuss the request with you and then respond with a rough estimate of how long it will take to deliver the needed files and, if applicable, your place in the queue.

"We caution that the estimates are only approximate since the time and effort involved in generating setup files vary greatly from study to study and depend on several factors, including the number of study variables and files and the condition, clarity, and format of the documentation. We produce these setup files solely from the study documentation, independent of the data. Much of the work is manual, with staff entering variable-level information into spreadsheets and then running a program to generate setup files from the spreadsheet contents. The setup files then undergo a series of basic quality control checks.

"This service is part of a larger effort to retrofit the ICPSR holdings with these files. Your requests will help us to prioritize that work, which is quite large in scope."

Additional Resources

ICPSR Home Page : http://www.icpsr.com/

Data Use Tutorial: http://www.icpsr.umich.edu/icpsrweb/ICPSR/help/newuser.jsp

Using SPSS Syntax Files to Read ASCII Data:
http://www.icpsr.umich.edu/icpsrweb/ICPSR/support/faqs/0062

Bibliography of Data-Related Literature:
http://www.icpsr.org/citations/index.html

ICPSR Member Institutions:
http://www.icpsr.umich.edu/icpsrweb/ICPSR/membership/ors.jsp

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