



## Happening in SRO

You can find this “Happening in SRO” and all similar newsletters on the SRO Intranet Home Page, located at: <http://isr-wp.isr.umich.edu/srointranet/> under Recent News.

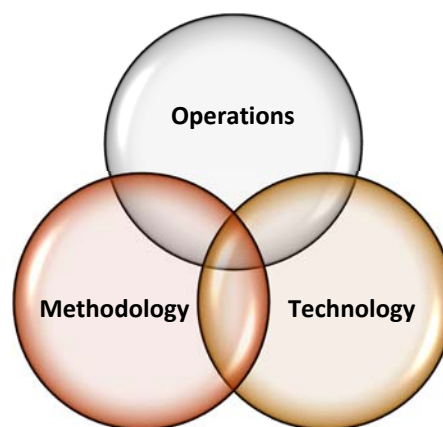
*If you have items for the newsletter or if you would like to highlight an event, please let Ann Vernier or your unit director know.*

### Introduction to the SRO Survey Process Forum (Lisa Holland)

The Survey Process Forum or SPF is a cross-subunit group within SRO intended to facilitate sharing of information throughout the unit. The information we share is related to the methods, technologies and best practices in the field of survey research and data collection. Our intention is to look across projects and sometimes across organizations to identify both internal and external topics that would be of interest to SRO. As much as possible, the group tries to consider the intersection of methodology, technology, and operations to identify information, challenges and opportunities. So many decisions about study design and systems have an impact on us all.

Some of our activities include coordinating:

- IFDTC abstract submissions and practice sessions
- SRO Lunch & Learn presentations
- Journal Club discussions
- SRO poster sessions



SPF also coordinates occasional discussion forums on special topics such as mobile devices or follow-up sessions after conferences. Some of our upcoming events include:

- Lunch & Learn: Recharge Rates – June 5
- Lunch & Learn: Clinical Contact Protocol – June 11
- Lunch & Learn: Pivot Table Workshop – June 19 (RSVP required)
- Lunch & Learn: Budgeting and Finance – July 10
- Lunch & Learn: Resource Forecasting Tool – July 31
- Lunch & Learn: HelpDesk – August 5
- Journal Club Discussion: Nonresponse Bias – August 13

Lunch & Learn sessions are scheduled from 12:00 noon – 1:00 PM (usually in 1300), and we always provide a BlueJeans link for remote participation. Feel free to bring your lunch, and we hope to see you there! . We will be sharing articles on Nonresponse Bias shortly. This event is scheduled for 12:00 noon – 1:00PM (room TBD).



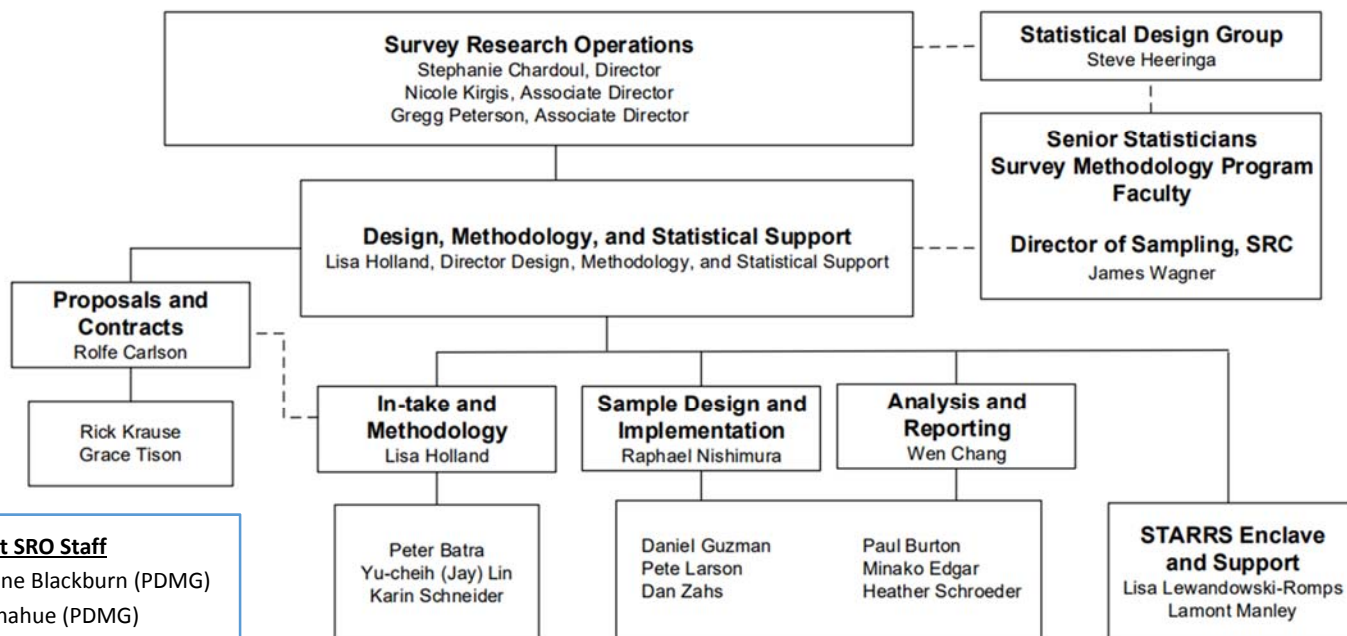
Our group membership currently includes Juan Carlos Donoso (PDMG), Margaret Hudson (DCO/SSL), Gina Cheung (TSG), Dan Zahs (DMSS), Rachel Orlowski (PDMG), Chrissy Evanchek (Finance), and Lisa Holland (DMSS). Lisa has been leading the group, but leadership will transition to Dan Zahs at the end of May. We meet biweekly on Friday afternoons (yes, our meetings are that good!), so please let us and your supervisor know if you are interested in joining our forum! Also, please contact us if you are interested in presenting or have ideas for topics to be presented or discussed!

[SRO-SPF-TEAM@umich.edu](mailto:SRO-SPF-TEAM@umich.edu)

## Design, Methodology, and Statistical Support (DMSS) (Lisa Holland)

In our last SRO All Staff Meeting, Stephanie Chardoul shared the organizational chart below and announced the formation of the new Design, Methodology, and Statistical Support Unit (DMSS). I am pleased to be directing this group, and I wanted to share some information about the new unit.

### Design, Methodology, and Statistical Support Unit



#### Adjunct SRO Staff

Katherine Blackburn (PDMG)  
Kat Donahue (PDMG)  
Andrew Hupp (PDMG)  
Carlos Macuada (DCO)  
Andrew Piskowski (TSG)  
Qi Zhu (TSG)

The former Statistics and Methodology Unit – or Stat Unit – and the former Proposal Development Group (PDG) have been combined into a single unit called the Design, Methodology, and Statistical Support or DMSS. The unique functions of each former group have been retained, but the integration of the two teams will serve several purposes: 1) We increase the methodological capacity of the former Stat Unit; 2) We expect to experience greater continuity between the design and implementation stages of new projects, particularly in regard to sampling and also explicitly acknowledging that all design decisions have cost implications; 3) We increase the resource pool for proposal development and in-take; and 4) We facilitate sharing relevant information between staff involved in different aspects of the data collection process.

Lisa Holland, as Director of DMSS, acts as the point person for new inquiries, working closely with Rolfe Carlson who continues to lead proposal, budgeting, and contract activities. The In-take and Methodology group works directly with clients developing data collection designs and proposal packages, coordinating with Rolfe on the budgets. Members of our methodology group also lead project teams within SRO. Raphael Nishimura leads sampling activities for SRO, and Wen Chang – recently promoted to a Research Area Specialist Lead – will oversee statistical analyses and reporting activities carried out in the DMSS. Raphael and Wen will work closely to provide scientific guidance in the design and implementation of samples, post-survey adjustments, and statistical analyses carried out by the group. Lisa Lewandowski-Romps continues to oversee the STARRS Enclave activity, while also providing broader analytic support on the evaluation of OLIVE data.

Lisa, Wen, and Raphael meet weekly with James Wagner, the SRC Director of Sampling, and monthly with additional members of the SMP faculty. The entire group also participates in SRC's Statistical Design Group meetings. These meetings provide excellent opportunities to seek input and learn from the SMP faculty. SDG allows us to learn about other data collection efforts being developed across campus, and DMSS staff are often involved in further work with these researchers, whether it is working with them on a statistical or methodological problem or working with them to develop a proposal and budget for data collection.

Although DMSS staff spend most of their time supporting sponsored projects or creating the budgets and proposals for sponsored projects, a few other activities also keep the DMSS staff very busy. We often provide methodological consultation or questionnaire review for faculty, staff, or students across campus who are implementing survey research projects on a smaller scale. (Thanks to those of you in other groups who often help us out with these!) Like every unit in SRO, we are always looking for time to complete developmental initiatives and improve internal processes. Recently, we have carried out analyses intended to improve our understanding of interviewer attrition, calling efficiency, and how to handle restricted-access addresses or "locked buildings." We also have an ongoing list of cost analysis and cost modeling topics. If you have an operational question or idea for further analysis, please reach out! We are always looking to collaborate with others in SRO to improve our processes.

One way that we effectively collaborate is through our Adjunct Staff. These are SRO staff members from other units with a common interest in statistics and methodology. These staff members attend our biweekly staff meeting and share work that they are doing that is related to DMSS work. Just a few examples include report and dashboard development, managing a methodological project or experiment, and MSRS/ODS development.

If you're looking for us, our group is split between the Ground Floor (Sampling and Analysis) and the Second Floor (Proposals, Methodology, and STARRS Enclave), but so far, we have been able to use our combined meeting times to effectively integrate and establish new norms. A couple FAQs that might help you out:

### ***If I need sampling or analytic support, whom do I ask?***

Please send your inquiry to Wen Chang and Raphael Nishimura, with a cc to Lisa Holland. Our statistical leadership group meets weekly, and we will discuss staffing in that forum.

### ***Whom do I contact if I have question about an existing proposal or budget?***

Please direct these inquiries to Rolfe Carlson with a cc to Lisa Holland. If you know who did the intake on the project, feel free to include them as well.

### ***If I completed a questionnaire review or consultation, whom do I inform?***

Please let Grace Tison know if you helped out with a questionnaire review or methodological inquiry. She maintains a database of the researchers we support with a brief summary of the work provided. It is a diverse and impressive list!

If you have any other questions or ideas for the DMSS, please send them to Lisa Holland. Thank you all for your patience as we acclimate to our new structure!

## **AAPOR's Got Talent**

As mentioned in *April Happenings*, several SRO presentations were accepted for the AAPOR conference, including one that was submitted to the "AAPOR's Got Talent" competition. Please see below for a description of the author's presentation and experience as participant of AGT!

### **Katherine Blackburn:**

I was fortunate enough to attend AAPOR this year and compete in the AAPOR's Got Talent (AGT) competition. AGT is a research idea competition consisting of two phases: first, contestants submit an abstract to the judging committee; second, finalists are selected to give a short presentation at AAPOR.

My research idea was to adapt web surveys in real time to respondent's response behaviors. Specifically, I wanted to discourage straight-lining, short answers to open ends, and break-offs by adjusting the way the survey questions were presented. For straight-lining, I proposed to change grid questions to single items. For short answer to open ends, I proposed to change open ended questions to closed ended codes based on responses in a previous wave of data collection. And finally for break-offs, I suggested skipping respondents to the key survey questions and ending the survey early. An algorithm would use response behaviors throughout the survey to predict the likelihood of these behaviors, and then the survey would adjust if risk of the behaviors was high enough.

I competed against 4 other individuals and teams at AAPOR. I placed second in the competition. The first place idea was an innovative use of the virtual assistant Alexa proposed by Tina Norris from the US Census Bureau. When respondents received an invitation to participate in the survey, the letter would include instructions on how to access an Alexa "skill" that would be able to answer questions about study participation. During and after data collection, respondents could access Alexa again to ask questions about the results of the study.



**Congratulations Katherine!**

## **SRO Mapping Application: Making Face-to-Face Interviewer Assignments More Efficient**

**(Andrew Hupp, Raphael Nishimura, Pete Larson, Minako Edgar)**

In mid-2018 an SRO technical initiative was approved and funded to create a tool to aid managers in trip planning for face-to-face projects. Initial requirements for the initiative included:

- Initial focus on trip planning
- Maps need to be dynamic (users can zoom in and out)
- Must meet CMT security requirements
- Interviewer and sample information needs to be loadable by batch and saveable

The project team was lead by Andrew Hupp and Raphael Nishimura. Pete Larson and Minako Edgar developed the mapping application. Mark Simonson and Andrew Piskorowski provided support with the underlying data and Megan Gomez-Mesquita was the budget analyst.

The application was created using [Shiny](#), a package in the [R](#) programming environment that allows developers to create web-based interactive applications. The mapping application allows managers to perform custom queries of sample line and interviewer data from the Operational Data Store (ODS) that contains data from MSMS and SurveyTrak. Information updated in the sample management systems is transferred to ODS each morning, followed by a Python routine check for any address updates. Any updated addresses are geocoded on the Maptitude offline software and the result (geocodes) are written back to the ODS. With this process, the users always receive the most up-to-date data.

Results of queries are displayed in an interactive map. Users can click on a sample line or an interviewer's location to receive their corresponding information through a pop-up. The map also includes the locations of airports, streets and other information. The results of the query are also displayed in tabular form, including search and sort features for ease of use.

Users can export the results of their query in both mapping and tabular form to an HTML report. This report includes most of the functionality of the application, including the ability to zoom in/out in the map, being able to click on location to view informational pop-ups, and the sort and search features of the table. The reports can be downloaded and placed within a location (SurveyTrak, Webtrak, MSMS, WorkZone, etc.) that allows access by interviewers and staff, and can be opened using any common kind of browser.

Another feature allows users to drop a "pin" at any location on the map, which generates a circumference of a pre-defined radius around the pin and selects all sample lines contained within. The results are also displayed in tabular form including SID, address, assigned interviewer and distance from interviewer location to sample line. Users can export this table and use it within any spreadsheet program. This feature is useful in areas with remote sample or unstaffed areas.

Projects are able to define the variables to be used in the queries and customize certain features of the application to their project needs.



There has been a lot of excitement around the tool to-date. Several projects have already used or will be using the mapping application:

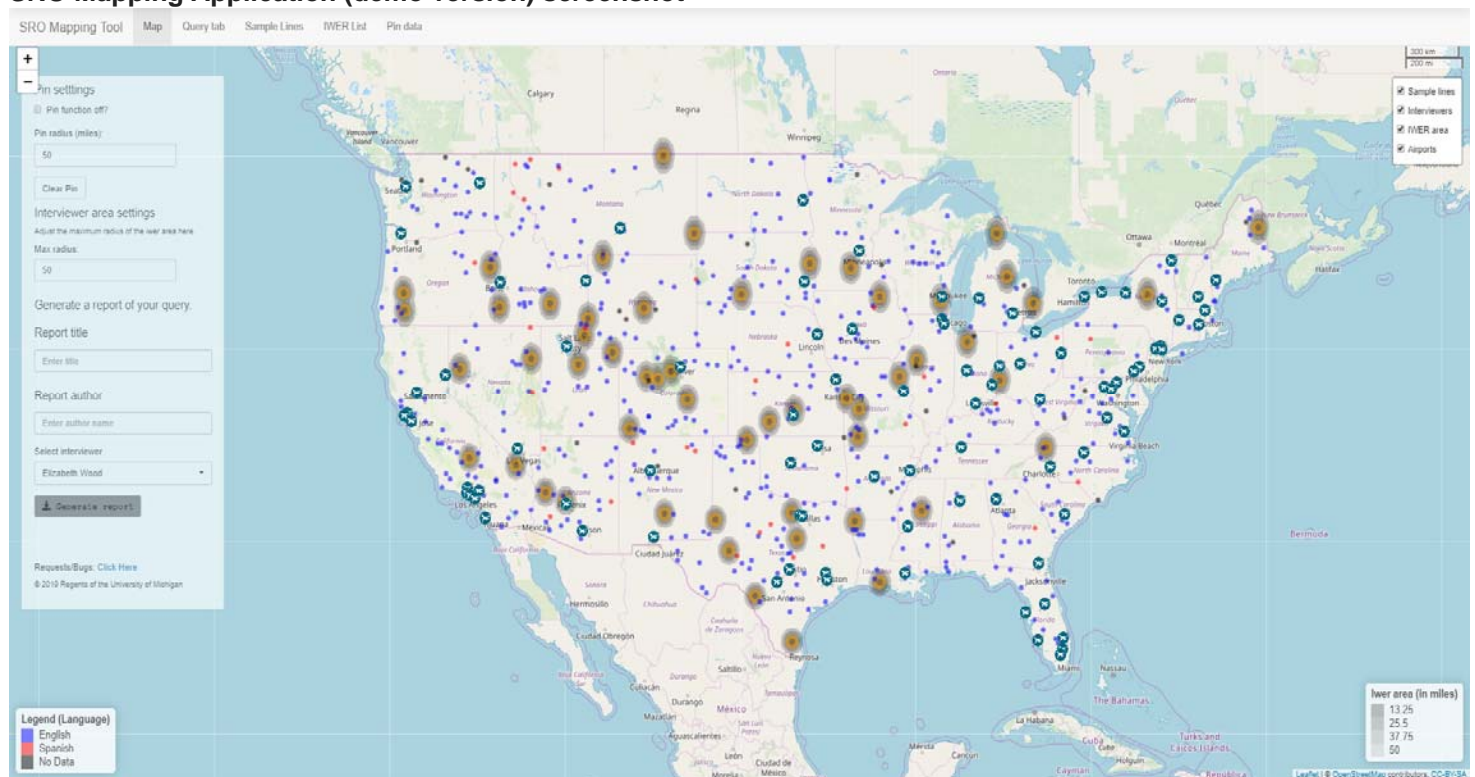
- 2018 Health and Retirement Study (HRS)
- 2019 Panel Study of Income Dynamics (PSID)
- 2019 HRS eGenX study
- 2019 PSID Child Development Supplement (CDS) - Planned for fall

As projects continue to use the mapping application, additional functionalities and features will be added.

Any questions about the application can be directed to: [SRO-MappingApplication@umich.edu](mailto:SRO-MappingApplication@umich.edu).

A demo version of the mapping application using fictional data is available [here](#).

### SRO Mapping Application (demo version) screenshot



**Nancy Knows  
(Nancy Bylica)**

**New ISR-Perry Cleaning and Trash Pick-up Schedule**

Wednesdays – Ground, 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> floors- Wing 3 (new side)

Thursdays – Basement (All)

Fridays – Projects and/or catch up from week, typically no offices, only common areas

**Note: When one or more custodians are not working that day, the people working may not be able to do everything they normally would do.**

**From the Office of Campus Sustainability (OCS)**

**Having windows open is less efficient than the HVAC.** The university HVAC systems filter, dehumidify, and temper outside air provided to the building spaces. Opening the window allows unconditioned outside air in and can work against the HVAC. Even if the temperature outside feels right, it still needs to be filtered and/or dehumidified, causing the HVAC system to work harder to compensate.

Please do not open the windows in offices, the conference rooms or any other shared space. Everyone should also know if their space feels uncomfortable and is not maintaining the room thermostat setpoint (plus or minus more than 2 degrees), the HVAC system may need repair and they should contact ISR Facilities at: [isrfacilitiesandsupportservices@umich.edu](mailto:isrfacilitiesandsupportservices@umich.edu) or enter an on-line work request at: <http://fop.isr.umich.edu/index.cfm> click on Facility Maintenance and fill out the form.

**Changes in Duplicating Delivery**

As of June 1, items from ISR Duplicating, Postage Due, and Business Reply envelopes will no longer be hand delivered to individuals unless it is necessary/urgent and specifically requested on the duplicating request form. All items will be delivered to a central drop box on each floor - mostly likely in the copy room on each floor or some other central location. More specific details on drop box locations to follow.