
▲ WELCOME TO THE STATISTICS CANADA DATA FAIR

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Question: What do you get when you bring the teachers and students of the Grade 12 Data Management Course (MDM4U) together with Statistics Canada staff to celebrate exemplary student projects?

Answer: The wildly successful Statistics Canada Data Fair, held in Ottawa in the lobby of the Jean Talon building at Statistics Canada on June 4th .

The Data Fair, where students set up displays of their culminating projects, gave students, teachers and Statistics Canada staff from the Ottawa Region the opportunity to see the range and quality of



A student from St. Pius X shares her project with several Statistics Canada employees and a teacher.

student projects from the MDM4U course. The Data Fair highlighted 26 student projects from 9 high schools and three school boards in the region. The projects were strong evidence that the challenging vision of the curriculum is coming to life in the MDM4U course. Students really are:

- Posing significant problems which require large data sets;
- Using the tools of the course to analyze their data;
- Producing and presenting their findings; and
- Constructively critiquing the work of their peers.

The many teachers who were in attendance all received a CD containing the PowerPoint presentations for most of the student projects. The CD also contained support materials for teachers from Statistics Canada. The students were the recipients of remarkable attention, interest and enthusiasm from the throngs of Statistics staff who stopped to engage the students in conversations about their projects. Here are some comments:

"Wow, Joel. Some of those research papers are as good as those the analysts in Statistics Canada have published! I spoke with . . . and he says that depending on the length of papers, we may be able to publish some of the students' projects that are relevant to education."

Shelley Harris, Analyst, Statistics Canada

"It was so great to make the connection between those that set up the data and the students who are using it."

Student Participant

The students all received the *Canada: A Portrait* book and the *Canada Yearbook* CD as well as a Certificate of Appreciation. Probably the greatest benefit for students was the opportunity to talk about their work and see the work of other students. Students recognized that their projects have value both in and outside of the classroom.



A teacher and Statistics Canada employee watch a presentation from a student from Sir Robert Borden.

"It was very fun and interesting to see what students at other schools were doing and researching. Not many projects were the same. I had a great time. It was an excellent experience."

Student Participant

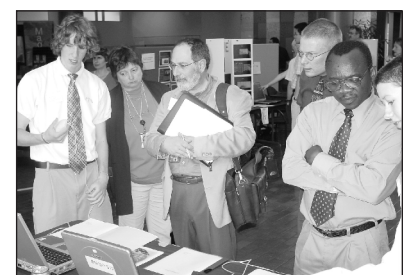
Most of the student projects used Statistics Canada data. In particular, data was drawn from:

- E-STAT
- The National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth (NLSCY) microdata from the Ontario Fathom CD (called OntarioYouths.ftm)

In the fall of 2003, students may have access to additional data sets such as:

- 1991 Census Microdata set
- Census at Schools data

The projects were judged by a panel of educators and



St Matthews students share their projects with data fair judge, David Zimmer, and several Statistics Canada employees and a teacher from Perth.

Statistics Canada staff. Students with the top 7 projects received prizes donated by Statistics Canada, Spectrum Educational and Texas Instruments. The judging of so many excellent student projects in such a short period of time was extremely challenging.



Statistics Canada employees stopping to speak with students from Brookfield High School.

“Next year, we plan to focus on celebrating the quality and diversity of student projects rather than ranking the projects. They were all great!”

Joel Yan, Statistics Canada

The model of a Data Fair to celebrate and share the MDM4U student projects can be used at several different levels: school, board, region, or province. In the 2003 – 2004 school year, Statistics Canada will build on the success of this initial experience by:

- Providing ideas for projects on the Learning Resources web site of Statistics Canada
- Planning earlier (September)
- Holding the event in early February
- Involving more boards, schools, teachers and students
- Building in learning opportunities for teachers and students
- Creating partnerships with mathematics educators:
 - OAME
 - OAME Chapters
 - OMCA
 - Fields Institute

“Many thanks for a great day – my students were really impressed and felt that their research was being well considered. All in all, a huge success.”

Heather Rayner, Teacher,
St. Matthew High School

Watch for an upcoming regular column in the *Gazette* that will provide further support to teachers from Statistics Canada. Please send any suggestion for this column to Joel at joel.yan@statcan.ca, 1-800-465-1222. ▲