



[« Back](#) | [Print](#)

Webcast: Statistical Literacy for All

How all those numbers can help your community, its businesses and eventually, the library budget

Dodie Ownes -- Library Journal, 6/16/2009 7:58:00 AM

- Sponsored by LexisNexis
- Speakers Dan Coyle, Jeff Newman, Richard Landry
- Real-life reference challenge scenario

The June 9 LexisNexis-sponsored webcast, *Data for a Downturn Economy*, gave attendees an inside look at how a variety of government-produced statistics are created, merged, archived, and made accessible. Perhaps more importantly, panelists connected the dots between the data, patron needs, and the ability of librarians to deliver the statistical information in a ready reference format in real time.

Moderator Dan Coyle, director of Market Planning, Statistical and Business, LexisNexis, opened with a brief discussion on the history and value of statistical literacy, citing authors John Allen Paulos and Joel Best as two leaders of the recent movement to focus attention on statistics education. Coyle was followed by Jeff Newman, an economist with the Bureau of Economic Analysis. After outlining many of the agencies and the statistics they produce, he noted that there is often confusion among agencies, researchers, and the press on who creates what, pointing to the need for a central site for locating this data, and noted several resources, the oldest being [FedStats](#). In May 2009, the federal government released [Data.gov](#), which has greater functionality and is more Web 2.0 friendly. The Bureau of Economic Analysis also has put great energy and thought into creating and maintain its website, [BEA.gov](#), organizing statistics by account area, whether international or local level, offering FAQs, and a newsletter. Data is well-documented, and a customer guide is available.

Richard Landry of Conquest Systems, developer of LexisNexis Statistical Datasets resource, described different data delivery options, such as Wolfram/Alpha and Google2. While each has strengths, big picture output of the statistics and formatting options are lacking. Statistical Datasets was created to take data from a variety of sources, both wide and deep, and make it more useful by being able to identify relationships between the data. Statistical Datasets also adds analytics, visualization, organization, and standardization to the data and the output.

How does this kind of statistical data help libraries serve their patrons? To tackle that question, Colbe Galston, business resources librarian at Douglas County Libraries, CO, presented an overview of business information needs of patrons, such as competitive intelligence, business life stage issues, and market demographics. Galston asserted that librarians have the responsibility to provide this kind of reference support to patrons and can do it by using their expert knowledge of resources, training patrons, and providing value-added—along with a good old-fashioned reference interview. Attendees then experienced two real life references challenges—a patron looking to sharpen his fine arts business marketing, and another investigating the pros/cons of the poultry processing business using LexisNexis Statistical Dataset. Galston and her colleagues were able to provide both patrons with the information they needed to make sound business decisions.

The *Data for a Downturn Economy* webcast, sponsored by LexisNexis, is now available in the *Library Journal* webcast archives for on-demand viewing. Visit www.libraryjournal.com/webcasts to see all archived and future webcasts.

[« Back](#) | [Print](#)

© 2009, Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All Rights Reserved.

Advertisement



ACADEMIC NEWSWIRE

Sign up today ... it's FREE!

LJ Academic Newswire is the e-publication academic librarians rely on for the latest news and scholarly publishing information.