



Statistical Society of Australia Inc.

## Victoria Branch Newsletter: May 2005

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### 1) **May Meeting**

The next meeting of the Victorian Branch will be held one week later than usual at 6:15 p.m. on Tuesday 31 May in the seminar room, Graduate Research Centre, Swinburne University of Technology, Hawthorn campus. A map is available at [http://www.swin.edu.au/cwis/maps/maps\\_hawthorn.htm](http://www.swin.edu.au/cwis/maps/maps_hawthorn.htm). The meeting room is in building AR on that map. There is a similar (but better) map in the Melways (Page 581). There building AR is marked clearly as "The Graduate School of Research".

The meeting will be preceded by light refreshments at 5:45 p.m. The speakers are Helen Bartley and Mark Davis (details below). Members and guests are invited to join the speakers for dinner at a nearby restaurant after the meeting.

#### **What's it like to be a statistician in the market and social research industry?**

Helen Bartley (Bartley Consulting Pty Ltd.) and Mark Davis (I-VIEW Pty Ltd. )

Helen Bartley is an Accredited Statistician and Qualified Practising Market Researcher with a Master of Applied Science in Social Statistics. She has worked in the market and social research industry for nearly 20 years, where she has developed expertise in research design, survey sampling and the analysis of social survey data. Recently Helen established her own business which provides specialist research, statistical and data management services. Helen also teaches in Swinburne University's graduate program in Applied Statistics.

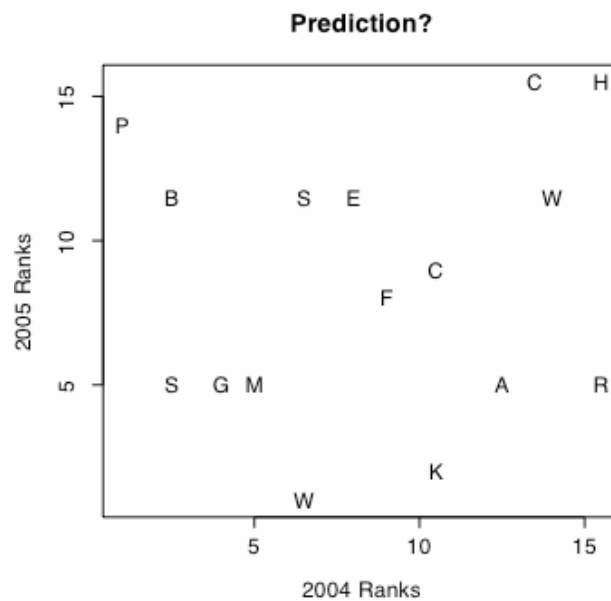
Mark Davis has Post-Graduate qualifications in statistics and has worked in the market and social research industry for more than 15 years. He is currently employed in a senior role at I-view where he is responsible for a range of large scale social research projects. His areas of expertise are data analysis, research methodologies, sampling and weighting regimes and automation of research processes.

Throughout their careers, Helen and Mark have utilised their skills as statisticians in the market and social research industry. However they have found that their job as a statistician extends well beyond the traditional areas of data collection and analysis.

Their talk provides some insights into the expectations of a statistician in the market and social research industry. They demonstrate, through examples from their own careers and feedback from other market researchers that the market and social research statistician cannot hide in a back office speaking a language few can understand.

This talk is non-technical and should appeal equally to experienced statisticians who are interested in learning about career opportunities in the market and social research industry and to young statisticians who are exploring their career options.

## 2) April Meeting (held on May 3): Talk Summary



Predicting ALF 2005 ranks from 2004 ranks after 6 rounds

The talk this time was given by Larry Weldon. Larry is visiting Brian Phillips' Statistics Unit at Swinburne University for several months while on a study leave from Simon Fraser University. Larry's thinly disguised objective with his talk "Simulation as a data-analytic tool for complex systems" was to encourage use of simulation and graphics in both teaching and practice of statistics. His perspective on the topic was that simulation in combination with a little data can produce more information than either simulation or data alone.

Larry used four examples to make his case: the variability of league standings for equally matched teams with reference to the current footy league, the accordion phenomenon of heavy traffic, the connection between lifetime health status and cross-sectional hospital experience, and an economic optimization problem based on real data for a bakery's deliveries and sales. His back-and-forth between Power Point slides and simulations in the freeware language R kept the audience awake for the full fifty minutes. The discussion continued after the talk and over dinner at a nearby restaurant.

Several Swinburne faculty were teaching at the time and Larry agreed to give the talk again at the Lilydale Campus in the near future.

### 3) Minimum Message Length (MML) Publications

The Minimum Message Length (MML) principle was developed by Chris Wallace (1933-2004) in Australia (predominantly here in Victoria) and has been used in both statistics (e.g., 2 articles in J. Royal Stat. Soc., etc.) and econometrics. This year sees a chapter on MML in a book on MDL with M.I.T. Press (April 2005, ISBN: 0-262-07262-9) and Chris Wallace's book on MML published posthumously (July 2005) with Springer. Also, April 2005 statistics from the prestigious Computer Journal (founded in 1958) give their most downloaded "full text as .pdf" article ever (over 22% ahead of its nearest rival) as:

Wallace, C.S. and D.L. Dowe (1999a). Minimum Message Length and Kolmogorov Complexity, Computer Journal (special issue on Kolmogorov complexity), Vol. 42, No. 4, pp270-283

For more information, see <http://www.csse.monash.edu.au/~dld/CSWallacePublications>

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