What's New with CAUSEweb and MERLOT?

Mark Werner
University of Georgia

Michael Ernst
St. Cloud State University

The aim of this short column is to provide an overview of resources and events from CAUSEweb (www.causeweb.org) and MERLOT (www.merlot.org) to help you stay connected with the Statistical Education community.

eCOTS 2014

USCOTS 2013 (https://www.causeweb.org/uscots/) was very successful in helping statistics educators stay in touch and learn from leaders in the field. For a good overview, see the Teaching Bits column in the previous edition of the *Journal of Statistics Education*, Vol. 21, No. 2, 2013, http://www.amstat.org/publications/jse/v21n2/mockotb.pdf.

It can be time-consuming or costly, however, to travel to such a conference every year, so building on the success of eCOTS 2012, CAUSE (the Consortium for the Advancement of Undergraduate Statistics Education) will be hosting eCOTS 2014. This conference will take place entirely online from May 19-23, 2014, and costs a mere $25 to attend. eCOTS aims to help providers of undergraduate-level statistics education (including AP Statistics) keep in

touch with current developments, learn how other educators are incorporating new ideas in their classrooms, and to facilitate networking and online discussion – all without leaving the comfort of your home or office.

eCOTS 2014 needs your help! CAUSE is inviting proposals for 20-30 minute online presentations as well as posters for a virtual poster session. Full details can be found in the Call for Proposals on the CAUSE website https://www.causeweb.org/ecots/; we provide a brief summary below.

Submissions should be sent via the online form in the Call for Proposals by **February 14, 2014**, 11:59 pm US Eastern Standard Time; each submission will be reviewed by at least two peers. There will be approximately four contributed presentations per day from May 19-21, during which conference attendees can ask questions and interact with the presenter and each other. The presentations will be recorded for later viewing by those who are unable to attend in real time. Contributors who are selected to present a virtual poster should record a short webinar describing their work with no more than 10 slides, to be submitted the week before the conference. These virtual posters will then be placed in a designated section of the conference website where attendees can view them throughout the conference, leave comments, ask questions, etc. Topics for virtual posters may pertain to any theme relevant to the teaching and/or learning of college level statistics. Online presentations, however, should specifically address one of the three key themes for eCOTS 2014:

1. *Teaching from Big Data*

   How can we teach data analytic methods that draw insights from massive data? How can a focus on big data change the way we teach statistics?

2. *The Impact of the Common Core*

   How should the teaching of statistics at the college level change in light of changes in the K-12 statistics curriculum? How can we better prepare, at the college level, future teachers of statistics at all levels (K-16)?

3. *Bridging the Disciplines*

   How can we connect with other disciplines and forge relationships with these disciplines that will be mutually beneficial? How might we create valuable learning experiences for students that will prepare them to work in multidisciplinary teams?

A new feature for eCOTS 2014 will be the inclusion of "lunchtime discussions," similar to the "Birds of a Feather" discussions during USCOTS 2013 or the Roundtable discussions during JSM. Individuals interested in hosting one of these discussions should propose a topic and send their ideas directly to the eCOTS program chair, Michelle Everson, at gaddy001@umn.edu. The deadline for these lunchtime discussion proposals is also **February 14, 2014**.

There will be at least two keynote speakers for eCOTS 2014. The speakers are still being finalized, but just like in 2012, we anticipate some great personalities. Recall that in 2012, the

keynote speakers were Webster West and Hans Rosling. Webster West (North Carolina State University) is the designer of StatCrunch and spoke about the tremendous changes that technology brought upon the teaching of statistics – both in terms of content and delivery. Hans Rosling (Karolinska Institute) provided an excellent demonstration from his office in Sweden about using modern technology to animate statistics and tell a fascinating data story, enabling students to not only see the beauty of Statistics, but also to formulate an accurate, data-driven worldview. Both of these talks can still be found at the eCOTS 2012 website, https://www.causeweb.org/ecots/keynotes/. Hans Rosling's work on animating Statistics and making it understandable and accessible to an exceptionally wide global audience would lead him to become listed as one of Time's 100 Most Influential People in the World for 2012, http://content.time.com/time/specials/packages/article/0,28804,2111975_2111976_2112170,00.html.

Recent CAUSE Webinars

There are now three types of webinars that educators can attend (or watch later) on a regular basis: the Activity webinar series, the Teaching and Learning webinar series, and the Journal of Statistics Education series. Topics and links to recent webinars are given below:

Activity webinar series

- "Making the Grade: A Cross-National Analysis of Teacher Training on Student Achievement Across 52 Nations," by Natalie Bold, Seattle University, https://www.causeweb.org/webinar/activity/2013-10/.
- "Which Traits Attract Women: Appearance, Intelligence, Wealth, or Strength?," by Nathan Tintle and Joshua Nymeyer, Dordt College, https://www.causeweb.org/webinar/activity/2013-09/.
- "StatKey – Online Tools for Teaching Bootstrap Intervals and Randomization Tests," by Robin Lock, St. Lawrence University, https://www.causeweb.org/webinar/activity/2013-08/.

If you would like to present an Activity webinar, please contact Leigh Weiss at lweiss@capital.edu.

Teaching and Learning webinar series

- "Updating the Guidelines for Undergraduate Programs in Statistics," by Nicholas J. Horton, Amherst College, https://www.causeweb.org/webinar/teaching/2013-11/.
- "Connecting Research to Practice in Statistics Education," by Dennis Pearl, The Ohio State University, https://www.causeweb.org/webinar/teaching/2013-09/.

If you would like to present a Teaching and Learning webinar, please contact Ellen Gundlach at gundlach@purdue.edu.

Journal of Statistics Education webinar series

- "Does My Baby Really Look Like Me? Using Tests for Resemblance to Teach Topics in Categorical Data Analysis," by Amy G. Froelich and Dan Nettleton, Iowa State University, https://www.causeweb.org/webinar/jse/2013-11/.
- "The 'Core Concepts Plus' Paradigm for Creating an Electronic Textbook for Introductory Business and Economic Statistics," by M. Ryan Haley, University of Wisconsin Oshkosh, https://www.causeweb.org/webinar/jse/2013-11/.
- "Distinguishing Between Binomial, Hypergeometric, and Negative Binomial Distributions," by Jacqueline Wroughton, Northern Kentucky University, https://www.causeweb.org/webinar/jse/2013-10/.
- "Using Fun in the Statistics Classroom: An Exploratory Study of College Instructors' Hesitations and Motivations," by Lawrence Lesser, The University of Texas at El Paso; and Rob Carver, Stonehill College; and Patricia Erikson, Taylor University; on behalf of the paper's 11-author team, https://www.causeweb.org/webinar/jse/2013-08/.

MERLOT News

The Merlot website has been redesigned! After 15 years in existence, the largest collection of peer-reviewed online teaching and learning materials announced the arrival of MERLOT II, http://www.merlot.org. Read the Grapevine newsletter, browse the Merlot blog, follow on Twitter, or simply browse or comment on the thousands of faculty resources. Of particular interest to statisticians might be the Merlot Statistics Portal, a joint venture with CAUSE, http://statistics.merlot.org/.

Educators with an interest or expertise in technology-enabled teaching and learning might find it beneficial to participate in the Merlot Conference, the 7th Annual Emerging Technologies for Online Learning International Symposium, to be held April 9-11, 2014, in Dallas, TX, http://sloanconsortium.org/conference/2014/et4online/welcome.

The Merlot Virtual Speakers Bureau (VSB) enables individual contributors to register as guest speakers in their areas of expertise, as well as search for and invite guest speakers to their courses, professional development workshops, and special events, either online or in person. See http://info.merlot.org/merlothelp/virtual_speakers_bureau.htm for more information on becoming a guest speaker, or to invite a guest speaker to your class. At the time of writing there was only 1 statistician listed as a virtual speaker, surely there is room for growth!

Educators who would like to gain recognition for their research, or read the research of others, are invited to visit JOLT, the Merlot Journal of Online Learning and Teaching, http://jolt.merlot.org/. The most recent edition was a special issue devoted to MOOC's (Massive Open Online Course); several MOOC's in 2013 have focused on the Introductory Statistics course, so this topic is very relevant and timely.

CAUSEweb Resource Highlight

We briefly highlight two resources mentioned on the CAUSE website. The first is the *Significance* magazine website, which aims to "bring you a statistical view of what's going on in the world." It contains interesting articles such as the recent venture by Google to extend the duration of human life, and some statistics on the use of daylight savings time in various countries (for instance, 7% higher incidence of heart attacks in Sweden during the first three days after the change in Spring, with a decrease in Fall). See http://www.significancemagazine.org for these and more.

The second resource might be of interest to those who'd like to mix things up and introduce some variety to their classes. *μTube* is a small but growing collection of videos illustrating how a light-hearted approach to Statistics can often be informative and convey useful ideas in new ways. Try not to laugh too hard when you spend some time at https://www.causeweb.org/resources/fun/?tab=video&cat=All%20Categories.

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