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**Statistics Canada International  
Symposium Series - Proceedings**

**Symposium 2005 :  
Methodological Challenges for  
Future Information needs**



2005



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## OPENING REMARKS

François Maranda<sup>1</sup>

Good morning.

On behalf of Statistics Canada, I would like to welcome you all, friends and colleagues, to Symposium 2005. This is the 22nd International Symposium organized by Statistics Canada on survey methodology.

Some of you are familiar with this Symposium, and we are glad to have you back. Others are joining us for the first time, and I would like to extend our most cordial welcome to you.

One of the goals of the Symposium is to bring together people from a variety of horizons to share their views, experience and expertise on current and emerging methodological issues related to the collection, analysis and dissemination of official statistics. I am confident that this year's program is broad enough that decision makers, researchers and statisticians from government agencies, public and private survey organizations, and universities can all feel included and find it useful.

The title of this year's symposium is "Methodological Challenges for Future Information Needs." There are two complementary themes, both aimed at addressing the question of how best to generate reliable statistics on important economic and social issues in our societies.

On the one hand, we consider topics related to the front end of the process of producing statistics—such as data sources, standardized concepts and questionnaires, respondent burden, respondent relations, and the use of administrative data and registers. How do we best get quality data about important social and economic topics while minimizing costs and respondent burden, and respecting privacy? These are important questions for Statistics Canada and for government statistical agencies around the world.

On the other hand, we consider topics related to the dissemination and appropriate use of statistics. What are the challenges of analysing data from complex surveys? How do we measure the quality of our data, and how do we develop methods and metadata to ensure that the analyses are appropriate, methodologically sound, and well understood by decision makers and the user community at large? How can we best make data available for analysis while respecting our commitment to our respondents' confidentiality?

Many of these questions are not new, but the statistical methods and practices needed to address them always require changes and adaptation to reflect a constantly changing environment.

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Yesterday there were two full-day workshops on these themes. Various issues related to the front end of the survey process were discussed in the workshop entitled “Blaise – Methodological Backgrounds and Practical Applications”. As for the appropriate use of survey data, it was addressed in the workshop entitled “Analysis of Data from Surveys of Complex Design: Theory, Applications and Software Limitations”.

Today, in the Waksberg address, which will be given this year by Jon Rao, we will hear about the interplay between sample survey theory and practice, how survey methods are stimulated by new theoretical developments, and how theory is challenged by survey practice.

Over the next three days, we will hear talks on a wide variety of topics related to these two themes. There will also be two panel discussions on ethical issues for statistical agencies and on access to data for academic and policy research. In addition to the talks, tomorrow and Friday during the morning coffee break there will be poster presentations for the first time in one of our symposia. I hope you will take the time to view these posters.

At this year’s Symposium, we have more than 400 participants from 24 countries around the world. This symposium is truly international, and I’m sure we will learn a lot from each other. I hope you will find the symposium to be stimulating and informative, and that you will enjoy your stay in Canada.

And now, before I declare this 22nd Symposium officially open, I would like to thank the Organizing Committee, the presenters, the session organizers and chairpersons, and all the volunteers who have made this event possible. I would also like to pay particular tribute to the leaders of yesterday’s workshops—Lon Hofman and Jelke Bethlehem of Statistics Netherlands, and Luc Tremblay and Yves Lafortune of Statistics Canada—for their important contribution to this Symposium.

My sincere thanks to each of you

And now, I would like to open the sessions of this 22nd Methodology Symposium by introducing our keynote speaker. Dr. Fritz Scheuren does not require a long introduction, but I would like to mention a few key items of his career. Dr. Scheuren is the 100th President of the American Statistical Association and a long-time member of the Statistical Society of Canada. He has been an Associate Editor of the publication *Survey Methodology* for almost two decades. He also spent one summer with us, here at Statistics Canada, as a Research Fellow. He is always proud to tell you of his mother's Canadian roots in the Maritimes.

Currently Dr Scheuren is the Vice President for Statistics at the National Opinion Research Center, a national organization for survey research at the University of Chicago. Formerly he was a Senior Fellow at the Urban Institute, a Principal at Ernst and Young, and earlier still, he worked in federal government in the United States. He has extensive experience in applying statistical and sampling methods to complex issues using large data sets, and has played a leadership role in several important studies. He has been a long-time teacher of sampling and other survey research topics at the George Washington University. Most of his recent pro bono work has been on human rights, both in the States and in elsewhere.

His presentation this morning will introduce us to the concept of 'paradata', and their role in the survey taking process.

Please join me in welcoming Dr. Fritz Scheuren.