

Editorial

Dear SBS-BVS members,

In the B-Stat News editorial of May 2008 I wrote that ‘helping young statisticians at the pre-doc and post-doc level to become high level professionals’ is a challenge for the BVS-SBS. I therefore invited young PhD holders in statistics to submit a one page summary of their thesis to B-Stat News. In the next two issues I have seen one (1) thesis summary (there were 7 in 2007) ... Of course for PhD students the real important players are the advisers, but still I believe that, once the PhD thesis is there, it would be nice that the BVS-SBS-members can learn about their achievement by reading an ‘informative and not too technical’ summary of the thesis in B-Stat News. I think we should try to organize this idea in an efficient way.

While thinking about this issue, I looked at the content of the B-Stat News issues from 2007-2009. Typical (recurrent) material includes list of members, minutes of the general assembly, information on statistical events and information on the annual meeting of BVS-SBS. Under the presidency of A. Albert, B-Stat News started to interview retired statisticians (May 2008: Herman Callaert en January 2009: Pierre Dagnelie). This is an interesting ‘light and easy to read’ add to the B-Stat News. Elaborating on this idea we should invent further ways to make the bulletin a discussion forum, so that – based on short contributions – we learn what other colleagues think about statistics, in which networks they are active, how they contribute to society, ...

Maybe B-Stat News can offer more to members by having other columns/sections in B-Stat News. What about a ‘young statisticians corner’, where starting PhD students tell, for example, why they find ‘stochastics’ a nice and attractive research domain?

What about a column on ‘statistics and society’? Let me give an example. A few days ago a positive advice is given (by the Flemish government) to create a Flemish Center for Supercomputing (VSC). At the official launch (23 March, 2009), Dr. Thomas Lippert, director of the Institute for Advanced Simulation (Jülich Supercomputer Centre), argued that progress in scientific understanding can be based on analytic arguments (say ‘proofs’) or experimental findings (think about experimental physics) and that, for a number of scientific disciplines, simulations (for which high performance computing provides appropriate support) are a – by now – accepted (somewhat virtual) way to replace classical experiments. It would

be nice to hear opinions about 'progress in statistics using high performance computing'. The example is on the interaction between statistics and the scientific society (in this case informatics), but many more questions are there when talking about the interaction between statistics and society in the broad sense.

What about a section on 'members in the picture'? It often happens that members become, for example, promoter or co-promoter of an important scientific network or they become holder of a scientific chair. Many universities will publish such achievements in their local magazine. It might be nice that a copy of such magazine contributions is also sent to the editors of B-Stat News, so that these scientific successes are shared with the broader statistical community in Belgium.

If you agree with (some of the) ideas mentioned above and you have good concrete suggestions, let us know. During the next few board meetings we will put these issues on the agenda and we hope to have some ideas for additional content of B-Stat News by the time of the next annual meeting... where we expect you as participant!

Paul Janssen
President of BVS-SBS