Editorial

Carlo Lauro and Vincenzo Esposito

Following the editions of 1992 and 1995 in Bonn (Germany), the third edition of the “New Techniques and Technologies for Statistics” (NTTS) Seminar, established and sponsored by EUROSTAT (the Statistical Office of the European Communities), took place in Sorrento (Italy) from 4th to 6th November 1998. The Seminar was jointly organised by EUROSTAT (the Statistical Office of the European Communities), DMS (Department of Mathematics and Statistics) of the University “Federico II” of Naples, and ISTAT (Italian National Statistical Institute) in association with ISI (International Statistical Institute), SIS (Italian Statistical Society) and ABS (Association of Balkan Statisticians).

The Seminar provided a forum for decision-makers, researchers, and official statisticians, national and international organisations and users interested in the programmes of research and development in Statistics and in the emerging techniques and technologies. The discussion of user needs and problems, recent solutions, strategies and political issues was strongly encouraged. In fact, it was attended by a wide variety of participants interested at different statistical issues from particular perspectives.

The central purpose of the Seminar was to explore the possibilities offered by new technologies and their impact on statistical methods, on the construction of information systems, on data collection procedures, on the processing of information and on data quality.

The main interest areas of the seminar were: Data Production, Statistical Methods for Knowledge Extraction, Integration and Systematisation, Dissemination of Information, Computational Statistics, Policies and Management for NTTS.

The NTTS'98 Seminar programme included: 2 Key-note lectures on the themes, respectively, of Official Statistics and Computational Statistics; 24 specialised papers on the themes of: Methodological Issues in Official Statistics, Advanced Technology for Data Collection, Data Analysis and Statistical Modelling,

Multidata Sources and Data Fusion, Statistical Disclosure Control, Recent Advances on Metadata, Visualisation Techniques and Data Capturing from very small Firms and the Informal Sector; 89 contributed papers.

As announced during the Seminar, a selection of the most methodological and computationally oriented papers is now appearing as a Special Issue of the *Computational Statistics* International Journal published by Physica-Verlag. It is meaningful that the specific topics dealt by the 14 selected papers are actually multi-faced thus reflecting the variety of the most recent research trends in this area. Namely, some of the papers relate to more strictly computational and geometrical issues, others to the applications of computationally intensive algorithms to Official Statistics problems, others to the newly defined symbolic approach within the Multidimensional Data Analysis techniques, some others to the handling of complex information such as metadata and datawarehouses and, finally, a few papers, though dealing with classical themes such as time series analysis, statistical inference and regression-based methods, show how the interaction between methodological results, available technologies and demands from real-world problems may lead to innovative and meaningful contributions.

We take this opportunity to express our deep gratitude to Wolfgang Härdle, co-editor of the Journal, for its enthusiasm and co-operation in making this special issue possible and to all Authors for their contributions.

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Guest-Editors