

Cruncher



Contents

Business software

<i>Data capture services</i>	2
<i>Data translation service</i>	2
<i>SPSS hints</i>	2
<i>SPSS user groups</i>	2
<i>Nudist</i>	2
<i>SPSS on the Mac</i>	2
<i>SPSS 10</i>	2
<i>SPSS scripts</i>	2
<i>SPSS Hints</i>	2

Science/Eng S/Ware

<i>Academic trial program</i>	3
<i>Systat 9</i>	3
<i>Structural Dynamics</i>	
<i>Toolbox</i>	3
<i>Dr.Frame and Dr.Beam</i>	3
<i>Diffpack</i>	3
<i>Mathematica special offer</i>	3
<i>Mathcad 2000</i>	3
<i>ChemDraw Special Deal</i>	3
<i>MATLAB Release 11.1</i>	3
<i>AutoSignal</i>	3

Training/Seminars

<i>MATLAB training</i>	4
<i>Advanced SPSS Statistics Courses</i>	4
<i>David Vose risk analysis courses</i>	4
<i>Mathcad Courses</i>	4
<i>Basic SPSS training</i>	4
<i>Next seminar series</i>	4

Bits and Pieces

<i>Holiday break hours</i>	4
<i>Catalogues</i>	4
<i>Contacting HRS</i>	4
<i>Staff Photo</i>	4

Our New Catalogue

You should find our new catalogue is enclosed with this newsletter. We have improved the layout, added new products, and referred to new web site connections. The main layout change is to put all the statistics programs together, all the maths programs, and so on. We have included a page that explains the most appropriate uses for the different

programs of a similar class.

The new products are mainly from SPSS, both its science and business divisions having worked on new products over the last year or so.

Do let us know what you think of the catalogue, whether good or bad.

Why use specialist software?

We find that many people can't see why they would need software other than the programmes they already know about. They don't at this stage need a dissertation on the clever way Mathcad chooses the correct integration method for a particular problem, but they are interested to see why mathematics programs in general could have a place in their tool kit. Similarly, they know they can use Excel to analyse data, but they could be interested to see how the right statistics software help you work faster and give better insights. We are writing such documents for our web site, and invite contributions from clients.

Situation vacant

We have reached the stage where we know we can generate enough work to keep a consultant busy supporting our clients in a number of data analysis areas. We particularly want someone who has experience in data mining, preferably with some operations research background as well (especially in forecasting and optimisation). Since this is a new position, we do not have a closely defined job description, but if you are interested, or know anyone who could be interested, do give Ray Hoare a call (0800 477 776).

Webordering

Ordering software from web sites is commonplace, but we do not offer it yet. This is deliberate, because the nature of many of our products requires direct contact with a salesperson to establish precise details of the order. If you think we are making life difficult for you by not having this facility, please return the fax back form with your opinion.

Trends in technical software distribution:

We believe these things will happen – we don't necessarily think they are a good thing:

- Software will be available only on CD or by download from the Net.
- Upgrades will only be available by download
- Very little technical software will be written specifically for the Mac (but see the announcement from SPSS, that may be the start of a new trend.)
- Many products will come out with Client/Server versions, so the hard work is done on the server
- Many products will run from Web browsers
- Manufacturers will do all sorts of tricks to get you to register your software
- Manuals will be available only on the CD.

There is some indication that technical software will be written in Java. However, the momentum for this seems to be fading.

Politics

We believe everyone who gets this newsletter is already a part of the "knowledge economy", and I am sure you all agree that it is great to see political parties emphasising how important we are. Let us hope that when it gets to budget time they remember what they said. On the other hand, working smarter is not a new idea, so HRS will not wait for the politicians, but will continue its mission to persuade everyone that it is in their own interest to use up-to-date techniques.

Business Software

Data capture services

We think there is a demand for data capture services, so that people can concentrate on designing and interpreting their surveys, and leave the routine work to others. We would rather act as a broker than do it ourselves, and although we know of agencies in other countries that will do data capture, it makes more sense to keep the operation in New Zealand.

We want to hear from people who provide a service to take data from paper forms into electronic format, and we also want to hear from people who want to use such services. For obvious reasons, we would rather the captured data be supplied in SPSS format.

Data translation service

We now offer a service that can translate many data file formats into other ones. We recently translated for a client a 150,000 case, 100 variable file from SAS to SPSS. If you have a one-off job that takes us less than half an hour we won't charge you. You can also buy software to do it yourself. Call Glen, 0800 477 776.

By the way, SPSS 9 handled the 150,000 case file very easily. Sorting took a couple of minutes, but summaries and cross-tabs were very fast.

SPSS hints

We always find that when we do training courses there are some points that people who have trained themselves have not found. Since these can be great time savers, we will put brief references to them in successive newsletters.

SPSS user groups

Is there anyone out there who is keen enough on a user group to offer to coordinate one? We will offer our services and some financial help, but we have been advised by other companies in this industry that user groups only work if they belong to the users. We think that there are enough users in Wellington and in Auckland to reach sufficient size. If you are interested in running one, or in joining one, please indicate it on the fax-back form, or send email to glen@hrs.co.nz.

Nud*ist

We have been selling but have not often publicised this software used in the management of qualitative data analysis projects. If you need to analyse lots of text, this is the product for you.

SPSS on the Macintosh

SPSS have recently entered into a contract with a partner to convert SPSS version 10 to run on the Macintosh. SPSS explain that this has been difficult to do before now because some technologies used by SPSS on Windows machines have not had Macintosh equivalents. With the features available on recent Macintosh platforms, and the availability of a suitable development partner, SPSS is delighted to be able to proceed with this product.

It is expected to be ready about the 3rd quarter 2000, there will not be a student version, and it will require MacOS 8.5 or higher. In the mean time, we can still supply SPSS 6.1 for Macintosh, and you can run SPSS for Windows version 9 on a Mac with Windows emulation.

SPSS 10

This important new release of SPSS is on its way. It is designed to make it possible to leave your data in its native database, e.g. Oracle, and process it without making an SPSS file, and without sending the data over a network. This is a major improvement for very large files. Another feature facilitates the moving of summary or model information from one program to another, via XML.

We will ship version 9 to new purchasers for a few more weeks, and then supply version 10, but we will not start the general update to all users until after Christmas. We are holding off the general update because an update to 10.0.5 will come out near the end of December, containing features which were unable to be included in the first release of version 10.

We believe that most users would rather update their system only once in a month, to 10.0.5. However, if you are an existing user with an immediate need for version 10 features, please let us know.

SPSS scripts

If you have experience with Visual Basic, scripts are not hard to write, and they can do all sorts of nice things with your SPSS output. Most of us can't write them, but we can certainly use them. Have a look in the Scripts directory of your SPSS program folder, and go to the web www.spss.com/software/spss/scriptexchange/ to find more. We recommend Traffic light.sps and Export to word (RTF).sbs.

SPSS Hint One:

Use "Split file" (on the Data menu) if you want to repeat an analysis for each value of a categorical variable. E.g., if you split file by Gender, and ask for the average age, you will get one table for men, and another for women.

SPSS Hint Two:

The system variable \$CASENUM can be used in any Compute command, to reference the case number of any row of data. Use it to add a case identifier if you don't have one already.

Science and Engineering Software

Academic trial program

If you are interested in trying SPSS Science products in any course you have or are developing, then ask us about the Academic Trial Program. This program allows you to use named SPSS Science products, such as SYSTAT, SigmaPlot or AutoSignal at no charge for up to 6 months, until you make your decision whether to continue to use them. We know you will love them, so we take all of your risk out of the decision to use them. Call Glen, 0800477776, and organise a trial for first semester 2000.

SYSTAT9

This product has been sold for several months now, and is getting lots of good reports for stability and its wide range of features. See the quote in the side bar, and **the enclosed flyer**.

Structural Dynamics Toolbox

We have been appointed the NZ distributor for this third-party MATLAB toolbox. This Toolbox is intended to provide low cost, modular and versatile access to methods in experimental and analytical structural dynamic modelling. Please email andrewh@hrs.co.nz for more details.

ChemDraw Special Deal

Until 24 December we can offer you a special 25% discount on ChemDraw (Pro and Ultra). This covers new purchases, upgrades, and crossgrades from competitive products. See www.hrs.co.nz/more/csspecial.htm for more details, or phone Andrew, 0800477776.

AutoSignal

This new program from SPSS Science is an ideal tool for people who need to do in-depth signal analysis, but do not wish to take the time to develop a specific application in MATLAB. It contains a huge range of signal processing techniques, with high quality graphical presentation of your results, and an amazingly detailed tutorial and help system. We are sure many of our customers will find this a useful addition to their present set of tools. Email glen@hrs.co.nz for details.

Mathcad2000

This latest version of Mathcad is smarter, has better add-ins, and is more powerful. You have a lot more control over your document's appearance, and you can solve problems that could not be solved in previous versions. See the **enclosed information sheet** for more details.

Dr.Frame and Dr.Beam

These products did not make it into our catalogue, but we can supply them. They are "structural sketchpads", which allow engineers to explore model behavior interactively before making critical design decisions. Both products have gone through significant improvements over the last year - download the latest demo versions of each from www.drsoftware-home.com and contact ray@hrs.co.nz to purchase it.

MATLAB Release 11.1

The next major revision of MATLAB will be Release 12 next year. However there will be an interim version, Release 11.1, sent to all subscribed MATLAB customers very soon. This CD contains updates to several toolboxes, as well as providing the distribution media for the following new items:

- Quantized Filtering Toolbox,
- C/C++ Graphics Library,
- Financial Time Series Toolbox,
- GARCH Toolbox,
- Data Acquisition Toolbox,
- xPC Target, xPC Target Embedded Option,
- Dials and Gauges.

For more information regarding any of these items, please email andrewh@hrs.co.nz.

Diffpack, from Numerical Objects

This is an industrial-strength object-oriented C++ framework for solving two or three-dimensional PDE's. It is multiplatform, and will support parallel processing and sparse matrix methods. See the introduction to the product at www.nobjects.com.

Mathematica special offer

Until 24 December 1999 we will offer 6 months of Premier Service at no cost, to anyone who upgrades their *Mathematica* to version 4. This will give them priority support and any upgrades that are released in that period. Contact: andrewh@hrs.co.nz.

Tenth Birthday

The Cruncher is 10 years old this year! Actually, we are counting from SYSTAT News, issue one, June 1989. It was renamed The Cruncher in November 1992.

Quote:

"... while it has its quirks SYSTAT is still the primary package of choice for me and what I encourage students and other colleagues to get ... better than SPSS (even though this is free from the university to faculty), SAS and the others as my primary package. It seems substantially ahead of the other packages to me in most ways..."

Dale Pietrzak, Kent State University, Systat-L news group, 20 Oct 99.

Training and seminars

MATLAB training

Auckland University will again host Ian Noell, a trainer from the MathWorks' UK office, to run a week's worth of MATLAB training in February. They are changing the format from previous years, to more closely match the expected needs of the students. We will only be publicising this by Email so do let andrewh@hrs.co.nz know if you are interested.

David Vose risk analysis courses

We will not run a public risk analysis course in the next 6 months. However, we will be very pleased to help you to set up an internal company course tutored by David, and structured to meet your needs. Please let glen@hrs.co.nz know what you want.

Mathcad Courses

We will be announcing a schedule of public courses in January. If you want an in-house course, please let us know.

Advanced SPSS Statistics Courses

We have arranged for a trainer to come from Australia at the end of November to teach courses in the more advanced aspects of SPSS, and a separate course in the use of AnswerTree. See the **enclosed flyer** for details.

Basic SPSS training.

The next public "Introduction to SPSS" training course will be announced in January, and will incorporate some of the new methods available in SPSS version 10. You can request training at any time, for just your own staff, by contacting glen@hrs.co.nz.

Next seminar series

We did a very successful round of seminars, in Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch recently. Thank you, all who attended them. We will run another series in February 2000 – expect the notice in your mail when you return from holiday.

Contacting HRS

We are based in Hamilton, but supply, support and demonstrate our products around NZ as needed.

Free Phone

0800 HRSPRO

(0800 477 776)

Phone 07 839 9102

Fax 07 839 9103

Email info@hrs.co.nz

Web site

<http://www.hrs.co.nz>

P O Box 4153

Hamilton East

510 Grey St

Hamilton East

Bits and Pieces

Holiday break hours.

We hope to get away by about 10 am on Friday 24 Dec. The office will be manned again from Wednesday 5 January. However, it is worth sending us technical support or other queries between these dates because the answerphone will be interrogated and email checked at least once per day. Faxes will only be checked occasionally.

Catalogues

We printed lots of them. If you would like us to pay for the distribution of your next professional society newsletter, and maybe contribute to your funds as well, call Cormac, 0800 477 776, to discuss whether it would be a good idea to distribute the catalogue to your members.



Our staff - Cormac (marketing), Sue (orders), Glen (statistics sales), Ray (M.D.), Stuart (technical support), Ros (admin), Andrew (maths sales).

We hope you found this issue of the Cruncher to be useful.

The last one was in June, 1999.

If you have colleagues who could benefit from a personal copy of the Cruncher and our Software Guide, please get them to contact us or give us their names and contact details on the faxback form sent out with this copy.