

Big Data: A Perspective from the BLS (2013)

Bureau of Labor Statistics Associate Commissioner Michael W. Horrigan wrote this article as the guest columnist for the January 2013 edition of the American Statistical Association's online magazine, [Amstat News](#). He discusses the role that Big Data may play in the future of the United States statistical system, and presents examples of how big administrative data sources are already used throughout the BLS. He warns that sound methodology and validity assessment must always be central.

***Big Data:** "nonsampled data, characterized by the creation of databases from electronic sources whose primary purpose is something other than statistical inference"*

"what is the future of the use of Big Data for the U.S. statistical system? I see one immediate potential: the use of Big Data to improve the quality of our estimates within our current methodological frameworks. This may include studies of comparability between official and Big Data-derived estimates, the use of Big Data for modeling and imputation, and—in some cases—the use of Big Data for direct estimation."

The full article can be found at <http://magazine.amstat.org/blog/2013/01/01/sci-policy-jan2013/>