**NLSY97 User Workshop**

A user workshop is being planned to introduce both new and experienced NLS researchers to the NLSY97 data. The National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1997 user workshop is scheduled to take place July 21-25, 2003, at The Ohio State University in Columbus, OH. The main focus of the workshop will be school-to-work transitions. Attendees will learn to work with data from NLSY97 rounds 1 through 5.

The workshop will be divided into three overall areas of focus. The first 1½ days will focus primarily on basic information for using and accessing NLS data. These sessions will include hands-on instruction on household rosters, coding, and the NLS Investigator extraction software. The next 1½ days will include some lectures as well as hands-on instruction focusing on the core modules of the NLSY97 questionnaire. Specific modules that will be covered include school, employment, CPS, training, and income. To allow users to investigate additional topics of interest, our closing sessions will cover ancillary topics that reflect the significant interests of the workshop participants, such as the self-administered questionnaire (SAQ), fertility, marriage, expectations, and program participation.

More information and applications for the user workshop will be available this winter. Watch future issues of NLS News and the NLS Web site (http://www.bls.gov/nls) for details.

**Release of the 2001 Mature and Young Women Data**

Researchers can now obtain data for the 2001 survey of mature and young women on a new release. This release includes information gathered during the 20 interviews of the mature women and 21 interviews of the young women conducted since 1967 and 1968, respectively. The data are available for download free of charge by visiting http://www.bls.gov/nls and choosing the “Ordering Data” link. Data also are available on compact disc for a $20 fee.

The 2001 survey collected information from 2,318 members of the mature women cohort, or 57.9 percent of the original respondents who are not known to be deceased. (Some respondents who have left the survey for other reasons may now be deceased.) In the young women cohort, 2,806 respondents, or 57.0 percent of original respondents not known to be deceased, participated in the survey. If the retention rate is recalculated to include deceased respondents, the mature women’s retention rate is 45.6 percent and the young women’s retention rate is 54.4 percent.

Like the three previous rounds, the 2001 survey of the mature and young women was administered using a computer-assisted personal interview (CAPI). The two cohorts were again surveyed during the same period with the same instrument, increasing the efficiency of the survey and making it easier for researchers to compare the cohorts. The downloadable data images and the CD-ROM both present the data for the two cohorts separately.

In 2001, the survey generally collected the same core information as in previous years. Respondents completed modules on household member characteristics, education, health, income, assets, training, pensions, labor force and work history, husband’s work experiences, and geographic mobility.

One change in 2001 was the return and expansion of a section of questions similar to those asked in 1997 on transfers of time and money between respondents and their parents. In 1999, the transfers section focused on respondents and their children. The 2001 survey updates the status of respondents’ parents from 1997 and records whether the parents are living or dead. It further records cause of death for those who have passed away since the last interview.

Respondents whose parents died between 1997 and 2001 were asked if their parents’ estates had been settled and, if so, the details regarding the settlement. Respondents with parents who had died prior to the 1997 survey, but whose estates had not been settled at that time, were asked in 2001 if the estates had since been settled. If so, the survey gathered additional information about the settlement.

The 2001 survey also included a series of questions intended to give researchers the data needed to determine why large transfers of funds, valued at $2,000 or more, between respondents and their parents occur. Respondents were asked for the reason for the transfer—such as medical expenses, holiday gift, educational expenses—and the total amount of all such loans or gifts. These transfer questions did not ask only about transfers since the date of last interview. Instead, they also asked about large transfers occurring since the respondent was 19 years of age.

Respondents not interviewed in 1997 were asked in 2001 to provide information on their parents or parent figures. They then answered questions closely resembling the ones asked in 1997 about transfers over the last 12 months.

Respondents who were interviewed in 1997 answered transfer questions again in 2001, this time referring to the 12 months prior to the 2001 interview.
The 2001 survey also included a modified, four-item Rotter Scale. The Rotter Scale is a locus-of-control personality test that assesses the extent to which an individual possesses internal or external reinforcement beliefs. The last time the mature women cohort was administered Rotter Scale items was in 1977. The last time the young women cohort answered these types of questions was in 1988. This new series of questions will allow researchers to compare past and present respondent locus-of-control measures.

Minor changes in the 2001 questionnaire include some adjustments to the em-locus-of-control measures.

The data files described above also may be ordered on CD-ROM for a $20 fee. The CD-ROM also includes data from all other NLS surveys. Most of these data sets, however, are available via Web download free of charge.

Supplemental documents, including a sample questionnaire, may be ordered on the Web site. Cohort user’s guides are linked on the same order page. Printed copies of documents offered electronically may be ordered from NLS User Services. (See back page for contact information.)

The NLS Goes Online

Using NLS data and obtaining information on all of its aspects is getting easier, as survey administrators expand the NLS information available on the World Wide Web. All online NLS information is accessible from one main Web site: http://www.bls.gov/nls.

Linked from this site are cohort overviews, the latest cohort user’s guides, economic news releases, an NLS bibliography, a data/documentation order form, an archive of NLS News newsletter issues, and other tools and information for researchers. Survey administrators will continue to add to this Web site. Researchers are encouraged to visit the site often. Specific resources available online are described under the sections below.

General NLS information available online

Several sections of the NLS Web site contain cross-cohort resources that are useful to both researchers who are new to and those very familiar with the data sets.

Ordering Data. The ordering data link is a recent addition to the Web site. It contains a list of all available NLS products and their order prices. Researchers may link to free documentation pieces from this page.

One of the strengths of the NLS program over the years has been the ease with which the data could be accessed on CD-ROM. For many years, researchers had the option of ordering cohort-specific compact discs. Today, researchers may order a single compact disc containing data sets from all of the NLS surveys. The ordering data page provides instructions on ordering discs, as well as a listing and short description of the data sets.

Now, users can obtain NLS data more quickly and cost effectively by downloading the files from the Web. These files are an exact image of the files found on the CD-ROM, including data, documentation, and Investigator, the search and extraction software. Investigator software allows the user to search the database for variables based on any word found in the variable title, survey year, reference number, and question name; view the codebook information associated with that variable; select and extract variables, and create a codebook for the variables chosen.

Downloading data requires users to have only 600 MB of hard drive space available for each cohort’s body of data and allows researchers to access the data at no cost and at their convenience.

All NLS data sets previously released on CD-ROM are available for download with the exception of geocode data sets. Due to confidentiality issues, the latter data sets will continue to be available on CD-ROM only.

Survey staff have also created a Web version of the NLS Investigator software that allows researchers to search the data files and view codebook pages for variables of interest directly online. Users can then mark variables for which they want to obtain the actual data, submit the extract to the server, and receive their data files almost immediately. This section of the Web site includes a user manual containing the answers to common questions about the Investigator software package. This option is available for the NLSY97 and NLSY79 cohorts only, but will soon be available for all cohorts.

These changes are all part of an effort to make the NLS data even easier to access.

Publications and other documentation.

The publications and other documentation link provides access to the NLS Handbook, NLS News, technical manuals, and other NLS publications.

NLS Handbook. The NLS Handbook provides an introduction to and overall picture of the six cohorts that make up the National Longitudinal Surveys: NLSY97, NLSY79, including the young adults and
children, mature women, young women, older men, and young men. It is particularly useful for those who are unfamiliar with the surveys and their data. Each cohort-specific chapter of the Handbook is accompanied by detailed tables that provide users with information about some of the variables of common interest contained in each of the surveys over time. The Handbook is available in either PDF or HTML format.

NLS News. The NLS News page provides links to electronic copies of this quarterly newsletter. NLS News includes announcements of NLS data releases and recent NLS research.

Technical manuals. The technical manual section contains links to the latest versions of the user’s guides for each cohort. These guides provide cohort-specific information and help researchers understand how to best use the data.

In addition, the technical manual section includes links to some survey questionnaires.

NLS publications. The NLS publications section provides links to electronic copies of Work and Family briefs, NLS discussion papers, reports on youth employment, Monthly Labor Review articles, and the NLS annotated bibliography.

NLS bibliography. The NLS bibliography is a searchable database of research articles that use NLS data. This up-to-date archive contains references to more than 4,000 NLS-based journal articles, working papers, monographs, presentations, and dissertations. It allows researchers to search, retrieve, and print customized, annotated listings of NLS research based on user specifications in fields such as author, title, cohort, descriptor, and keyword.

The bibliography section of the Web site also includes a form for researchers wanting to submit citations for NLS-based research that do not already appear on the bibliography listing.

Related links. This section allows researchers to access labor force statistics from the Current Population Survey, Census Bureau population and household topics, and information on other national data sets.

Frequently asked questions. As the name implies, this link answers a handful of the most commonly asked questions about the NLS, such as:

- How do I order NLS data and documentation?
- What is the confidential geocode data, and how do I order it?
- What other types of confidential data are available?
- How many jobs are held in a lifetime?
- Where can I get information on worklife estimates?

Contact us. This page provides mailing addresses and e-mail links for NLS administrators and user services personnel. The people listed on this page can answer specific data questions or questions on obtaining permission to access confidential data.

Researchers may access all of these general online resources by visiting the Web address at the beginning of this article.

Online resources for the NLSY97

Several online resources exist for this newest cohort in the NLS family, starting with an overview of the survey that describes the sample, scope, and special aspects of the project.

Complete HTML versions of the cohort’s user’s guide, main file codebook supplement, and NLSY97 chapter of the Handbook may be referenced. The Web is also the place for researchers to find the latest errata and press releases for the NLSY97.

Of special interest to those not familiar with the data set is the NLSY97 variable selection and data request page. This page allows users to get a taste of the data by requesting and downloading up to 250 variables from the 1997, 1998, and 1999 surveys. The variables are from the public-use data set. A step-by-step tutorial in this section leads new users through the process of creating an NLSY97 data set with the available variables.

A new feature on the Web for the NLSY97 is the custom weighting link. This page allows those whose research spans multiple survey years to create a custom set of survey weights, which adjust both for the complex survey design and for the use of data from multiple years. To create the weights, researchers simply select the NLSY79 survey years from which they are using data. Next, the researchers decide if they want the weights to adjust for mortality. The selections are then submitted by choosing the “create custom weights” button. The set of custom weights is e-mailed to the researchers in zip format at the address they entered on the Web page.

To access NLSY97 resources on the Web, visit http://www.bls.gov/nls and follow the links to this cohort.

Online resources for the NLSY79

Like the resources for the NLSY97 cohort described above, the NLSY97 Web links include a cohort overview, a complete HTML user’s guide, errata, the NLSY97 chapter of the Handbook, and press releases.

Custom weights for the NLSY97 also are available. (See the description of this feature in the NLSY97 section above.)

To access NLSY79 resources on the Web, visit http://www.bls.gov/nls and follow the links to this cohort.

Online resources for the NLSY79 child/young adult cohorts

Like the resources for the NLSY97 and NLSY79 cohorts, the NLSY79 child/young adult Web pages include a cohort overview.

In addition, the user’s guide, questionnaires, supplements, and the NLS Handbook chapter that describes the child/young adult cohorts may be accessed from this section of the NLS site.

To access NLSY79 child/young adult resources on the Web, visit http://www.bls.gov/nls and follow the links to this cohort.

Online resources for the original cohorts

The original cohorts of the NLS include the mature women, young women, older men, and young men cohorts.

NLS Web resources for the mature women and young women offer overviews of these cohorts and provide links to their cohort-specific user’s guides. The mature women and young women sections of the Handbook, cohort errata, and information about the original cohorts’ geocode data are also available.

Custom weights for the mature women and young women also are available. (See the description of this feature in the NLSY97 section above.)

As the only NLS cohorts that have been
discontinued to date, the older men and young men have the fewest online resources. Web offerings for the two cohorts are currently limited to descriptive overviews and supplemental information found in the general Web resources described at the beginning of this article. NLS survey administrators hope to post user’s guides for the older men and young men in the future.

To access original cohort resources on the Web, visit http://www.bls.gov/nls and follow the links to the cohort of interest.

The future of the NLS on the Web
As Web technology continues to develop, the online availability of NLS resources will continue to expand. Survey administrators are committed to their goal of ensuring that NLS data and related documentation are available to researchers in the most convenient, user-friendly fashion. Future plans for the NLS Web pages include the development of online Web Investigator software for each cohort and the addition of selected documentation items, including the questionnaires, for download. Some of these features are already available for certain cohorts. Users are urged to visit the online NLS resources frequently to obtain updates on the latest information about all the NLS cohorts.

Commuting variables offer avenue for research
Researchers interested in studying whether people work in traditional or alternative settings, how far they commute to work, and how long work commutes take may find that NLS data can assist them in their efforts. The NLSY79, NLSY79 young adult, mature women, young women, older men, and young men cohorts all answered questions related to transportation to and from work.

NLSY79
The NLSY79 questionnaires have gathered the greatest amount of commuting information in the NLS.

In the early years of the survey, from 1979 to 1981, respondents provided data on the amount of time it took to travel to their current job. This question was revisited in 1988 and 1993. In the 1994 survey, respondents answered two time-related questions for all jobs; however information on up to only five jobs was released. First, respondents provided information on the length of time it took them to get from their home to work. Next, they gave the length of time it took to get from their place of employment back to their home at the end of the workday. Respondents working primarily at home were given the option to report that information as well.

In 1993 and 1994, respondents also provided the round-trip distance, in miles, that they traveled to work.

In 1981, respondents were asked about their method of transportation from home to work. Possible answers included own automobile, ride with someone else, bus, streetcar, subway/elevated train, train, taxi, walking, bicycle, motorcycle/moped, and other. In 1993, respondents answered a similar question, and, in 1994, they answered the mode of transportation question for all jobs.

Also asked in 1993 and 1994 was a question asking the respondent for the total cost in gas, oil, tolls, fares, and parking costs to get to and from work, round trip. Commuting variables in the NLSY79 may be found by using an “any word in context” search for terms such as commute, commuting, transportation, travel, and cost. Users also may search by area of interest under JOB INFORMATION, CPS, TIME USE, and MISCXX.

NLSY79 young adults
The NLSY79 young adult cohort consists of those children aged 15 and older whose biological mothers are respondents in the NLSY79 cohort. These young adults were asked commuting questions in both 1994 and 1996. Like their mothers, these young respondents provided answers on mode of transportation to and from work, cost of transportation to and from work, the time required for their commute both to work from home and from work to home at the end of the work shift, and the distance traveled in miles to their place of employment.

To find commuting variables in the young adult data, researchers should search under the transportation items in the young adult area of interest called YA JOB INFORMATION.

Mature women
In 1967, 1969, 1972, 1977, 1982, 1987, and 1995, mature women respondents answered questions on the amount of time it took for them to travel to work. In those same years, with the exception of 1982 and 1987, they gave their method of travel to work, the number of miles round trip, and the total cost to get to and from work.

In the first two fieldings of the mature women survey, respondents also reported on the cost of parking and tolls for the trip to and from their job. Many of the variables collected in 1995 contain information on up to seven jobs.

These variables may be found by using an “any word in context” search for the word travel.

Young women
Young women respondents reported, in 1973, 1978, 1983, 1991, and 1995, the amount of time it took to travel to work. In 1973 and 1978, they also gave the cost of the trip to and from their current job. For the years 1973, 1978, and 1995, these women provided information on their method of travel to their job and the number of miles round trip to their place of employment. Data on the cost of parking and tolls for round trip travel to work were collected only in 1968. Many of the variables collected in 1995 contain information on up to nine jobs.

These variables in the young women data set may be found by using an “any word in context” search for the word travel.

Older men
The older men cohort answered questions relating to their commute to work in 1971 and 1976. Like members of the other cohorts, these respondents provided information on the time it took them to travel to work, their usual methods of travel to work, the number of miles they traveled, and the total cost of the trip.

Commuting information may be accessed in the older men data files by doing an “any word in context” search for the word travel.

Young men
Respondents in this cohort reported on their commutes to work during the 1971, 1976, 1978, 1980, and 1981 fieldings. In each of these survey years, respondents gave the amount of time for travel to work. In 1976, 1978, and 1980, respondents also provided information on their usual meth-
ods of travel to work, the total cost of the trip to work, and the number of miles round trip. In 1980, each respondent told the interviewer how many days per week he traveled to work in his own automobile.

To find commuting variables in the young men data set, researchers may do an “any word in context” search for the word travel.

Getting to the final destination

Work commute data in the NLS provide the opportunity for researchers to look at many things, including changes in the way Americans get to work and the places in which they work. Information collected by the U.S. Census Bureau up through the 2000 census provides the chance to cross-check NLS and national census data. Census 2000 results are due for release in December 2002. Census data up through Census 1990 are available at http://www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/journey.html.

American Educational Research Association offers funds for research using NLS data

The American Educational Research Association (AERA) Grants Program provides funding for quantitative education policy and practice research using large-scale, nationally representative data sets such as the NLS. This article gives an overview of AERA’s information on the grant program.

Purpose of the program

With support from the National Science Foundation (NSF), the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), and the Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI), the program aims to stimulate research in its target areas, to improve the U.S. educational research community’s firsthand knowledge of the range of data available and how to use them, and to increase the number of U.S. educational researchers using the data sets.

Available grants

Research grants are available for faculty at institutions of higher education, postdoctoral researchers, and other doctoral-level researchers. Applicants must have received the doctoral degree by the start date of the grant. Awards are up to $20,000 for 1-year projects, or up to $35,000 for 2-year projects.

Research topics

Research topics may cover a wide range of policy-related issues that include, but are not limited to, school persistence and career entry; teachers and teaching, including supply, quality, and demand; policies and practices related to achievement; policies and practices that influence student and parental attitudes; contextual factors in education; education in middle schools; educational participation and persistence; at-risk students; early childhood education; U.S. education in an international context; school finance; materials development, research, and informal science education; undergraduate science, engineering, and mathematics education; the supply of students taking mathematics and science courses from kindergarten through 12th grade; research career development; the quality of educational institutions; and methodological studies.

Researchers must utilize at least one NSF or NCES data set in the study. Additional large-scale, nationally representative data sets may be used in conjunction with the NSF or NCES data set.

Acceptable Data Sets for AERA Grants

A variety of large-scale, nationally-representative data sets may be utilized through the AERA grant program, including the National Longitudinal Surveys (NLS), Longitudinal Study of American Youth (LSAY), Division of Science Resources Statistics (SRS), and Third International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), Early Childhood Longitudinal Study (ECLS), Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS), Adult Literacy and Lifeskills Survey (ALL), Library Statistics Program (Lib), Baccalaureate and Beyond (B&B), and many others. A complete listing and descriptions of these data sets are available on the AERA Grants Program Web site at http://www.aera.net/grantsprogram/index.html.

Recently Funded Research Grants

“Family matters: The role of home environment in determining achievement,” Lori Kowaleski-Jones, Northwestern University (11/1/98-10/31/99)

“Transfer decisions, graduation rates and earnings of four-year college students,” Audrey Light, The Ohio State University (9/1/00-10/31/01)

“The effects of student employment on educational and earnings outcomes,” Geetha Waehrer, Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation (4/1/99-4/30/01)

Recently Funded Dissertation Grants

“How high schools matter: Within and between school stratification and the dynamics of women’s welfare recipiency,” Irene Beattie, University of Arizona (2/15/01-2/14/02)

“Entry into and exit out of poverty among women: Do education and job training make a difference?” Annie Georges, Pennsylvania State University (6/1/97-5/31/99)

“Thirty years of maximally maintained inequality in postsecondary education,” Eric Grodsky, University of Wisconsin (9/1/00-8/31/02)

“Differential participation in and returns to education over the life course,” Jenifer Hamel-Luker, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill (6/1/01-5/31/02)

“Trends in group differences in academic achievement and post-high school outcomes,” Amy Thoreson, University of Chicago (6/1/00-12/31/01)

For a complete listing of projects supported by the AERA Grants Program and a listing of grant-generated publications, visit the AERA Web site at the address given in this article.

Application process

Grant applications require an AERA Research Grants Program cover sheet, a research proposal, a symbolic or figural model outlining the framework for the study, a proposed budget, and a current curriculum vitae for the principal investigator(s). Proposals are evaluated on
the importance of the proposed policy issue, the strength of the methodology, and the relevant experience and research record of the applicant. Full details are available on the program Web site.

Grant recipient responsibilities
Grant recipients are expected to submit a progress report and a final report. Final reports should be of suitable quality and format for publication in a scholarly journal. NCES will also consider publishing the report in its Working Paper series.

For complete details on the AERA Grants Program, visit the program’s Web site at http://www.aera.net/grantsprogram/index.html.

Frequently Asked Questions
NLS User Services encourages researchers to contact them with questions and problems they have encountered while accessing and using NLS data and/or documentation. Every effort is made to answer these inquiries. Some recently asked questions that may be of general interest to NLS users are listed below with their answers.

Q1: Is it a problem if I were to use the NLS data in a scholarly research project with a team of researchers in Japan and the sponsoring public organization wants me to surrender the data I use?

A1: The Bureau of Labor Statistics does not permit the use of geocode data outside of the United States. Aside from this limitation, all of our survey data are public domain items. The main file data are available for download free of charge to users around the world.

Q2: I am planning on using a variable in the NLS of Mature Women data for husband’s age. This is provided in 1967 (B00688.00), but only in a category format. In later years, there are some questions about current and noncurrent husband’s date of birth. I was thinking that the most straightforward way to get this information, at least for the earlier years, would be to use the household member information, such as relationship to spouse and age of member. Can you make any other suggestions?

A2: Your solution is right on target. The easiest way to get husband’s age is to take it from the household record.

Q3: Are NLSY respondents also in the CPS? If so, can the two data sets be used together?

A3: NLS and CPS respondents are sampled independently. There is no connection between being an NLS respondent and being a CPS respondent. It would simply be coincidence if someone were selected for both surveys. However, the CPS section of an NLS questionnaire is modeled after the CPS questionnaire.

Q4: Why was the formula used for computing Armed Forces Qualification Test (AFQT) scores revised?

A4: The AFQT is a composite score computed using some of the subtests of the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB). The AFQT formula in use at the time when the ASVAB was administered to the NLSY79 (summer of 1980) included a speeded subtest on word knowledge. A speeded subtest tests the performance for speed and accuracy at simple tasks in a limited amount of time. A problem with the speeded subtests developed because some respondents received a coding sheet that had circles to be filled in by pencil. Other respondents used coding sheets that had rectangles to be filled in. The problem is that it takes longer to fill in a circle than a rectangle. A respondent could score a little bit better or worse depending on the coding sheet they were given. The difference was small, just a couple of seconds, but still required a correction. The Department of Defense chose to rework the AFQT formula to remove the word knowledge section but still measure trainability. The revised formula became available in 1988 and is the better one to use.

Completed NLS Research
The following is a listing of recent research based on data from the NLS cohorts that has not appeared in its current form in a previous issue of the NLS News. See the NLS Annotated Bibliography at http://www.nlsbibliography.org for a comprehensive listing of NLS-related research.


Cooksey, Elizabeth C.; Mott, Frank L.; and Neubauer, Stefanie A. “Friendships and Early Relationships: Links to Sexual Invitation among American Adolescents Born to Young Mothers.” Perspectives on Sexual and Reproductive Health 34,3 (2002): 118-126. [Children of the NLSY79, NLSY79 Young Adult]

Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2000, 59-86. [Children of the NLSY79]


Eamon, Mary Keegan. “Influences and Mediators of the Effect of Poverty on Young Adolescent Depressive Symptoms.” Journal of Youth and Adolescence 31,3 (June 2002): 231-242. [Children of the NLSY79]


Moore, Kristin Anderson; Halle, Tamara G.; Vandivere, Sharon, and Mariner, Carrie L. “Scaling Back Survey Scales: How Short is too Short?” Sociological Methods and Research 30,4 (May 2002): 530-567. [Children of the NLSY79]


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**Are You Working With NLS Data?**

If you are, we are interested in your work!

- Have you received funding to sponsor a project using NLS data?
- Are you working on a paper that uses NLS data?
- Have you published a recent paper using NLS data?

If you have received funding on a project, are working on a paper, or published a recent paper that uses NLS data, please contact: NLS User Services, Center for Human Resource Research, 921 Chatham Lane, Suite 100, Columbus, OH 43221; (614) 442-7366; e-mail: usersvc@postoffice.chrr.ohio-state.edu. Or use our online submission form—just go to [www.nls.bibliography.org](http://www.nls.bibliography.org) and click on “Submit Citation.”
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NLS documentation, data, and data updates: usersvc@postoffice.chrr.ohio-state.edu

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