



# Daily News

Thursday, 25 August, 2011

## Virtual Statistical System - Tip of the iceberg



It is fair to say that Willem de Vries is a real heavy-hitter when it comes to official statistics. He is a former Deputy Director-General of Statistics Netherlands and Deputy Director of the United Nations Statistics Division. He has extensive experience in technical cooperation in

statistics in various parts of the world, including the former Soviet Union, the Middle East, Africa and the Caribbean. Since his retirement in 2004 he has been working as an independent statistical consultant, particularly for the World Bank and the European Union.

Willem will present his paper today "VSS - Tip of the Iceberg", which is part of the wider special topic session "Web-based Statistical Knowledge Management: Virtual Statistical System" (STS013, 8.30am@Wicklow Meeting Room 1).

The VSS is an online resource for national statistical offices, other data producing agencies, data users, including policy makers, academics,

students, or anyone who wants to know more about official statistics. The knowledge the VSS offers will be presented at different levels. The highest level is the Activities and Themes level which includes the textual information that can be accessed directly. This information, which serves as an introduction to various topics, is however only the tip of the iceberg.

More important are the thousands of hyperlinks embedded in the VSS, which guide you deeper into its various levels. Many of those links refer to key documents while others take the user to sites of international organisations and country websites.



## TRAD NIGHT AT TRINITY

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# Web-based mentoring for students in developing countries

For the international web-based mentoring programme for Ph.D and Master students in Statistics at universities in developing countries, we are looking for new volunteer mentors and to-be-mentored students.

Statistical communities - academic and governmental - are growing in many developing countries and

statisticians play key roles in production, decision-making and government within the areas varying from healthcare to agriculture, business to energy, transport to education. However, the resources and infrastructure necessary for their proper functioning are often lacking. Therefore, the aim of this mentoring programme is to

create a network of support for Ph. D and Master students in developing countries, Asia and Africa in particular, and attract volunteers among senior statisticians from all over the world who would act as mentors.

As a Ph.D student or as an academic statistician you can join the mentoring

programme via <http://statmentoring.nr.no>. We need many new mentors in various applied areas!

The programme is run by Oslo based Professors Magne Aldrin and Arnoldo Frigessi. Feel free to contact them at [statmentoring@nr.no](mailto:statmentoring@nr.no).



Keynote speakers at the Water Plenary Session yesterday

## Editorial

The week is absolutely flying by! This will become even more obvious today as the Exhibition Hall is officially closing at 2pm. This is to allow the CCD time to prepare the space for the Gala dinner on Friday night.

There is a huge variety of articles in today's Daily News ranging from topics such as forecasting bus arrivals in Mexico to data capture in the Indonesian Census and new challenges in Mathematical Statistics. We have an article from the eminent Professor Kanti Mardia who tells us that if the last century in Science belongs to Physical Sciences then this century must belong to Life Sciences.

We have been taking photographs of what has been happening around the CCD over the week of the Congress. To view these photos, go to the website [www.isi2011.ie](http://www.isi2011.ie)

## The Editor

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## Daily Announcements

1. The Exhibition Hall on the ground floor of the CCD will be closed from 2.00pm today to allow preparations to begin for the Gala Dinner event tomorrow night. In order to accommodate delegates, there will be lunch facilities available in the main lobby.
2. Visit the SAS stand this morning where they are raffling off two statistical programming SAS books at 10.45am.
3. Don't forget to upload your presentation in the Speaker Ready Room before your allotted session time.
4. All abstracts for the scientific programme are available online ([www.isi2011.congressplanner.eu](http://www.isi2011.congressplanner.eu)) and are also on the USB key in the delegate bags.
5. The ISI General Assembly meeting will be held today from 4.00pm to 6.00pm in the Main Auditorium of the CCD. Members and non-members of the ISI are invited to attend. Voting is reserved to the honorary, elected and ex officio members of the ISI only. All delegates are also invited to attend the ISI and ISI Sections' Awards Ceremony preceding the General Assembly Meeting from 3.00pm to 4.00pm. The ISI and Sections Awards Brochure containing detailed information on the Awards can be viewed at <http://isi-web.org/awards>. It was also distributed in the delegate bags at the start of the week.
6. Every delegate received a Congress Feedback Survey in their delegates pack at the start of the week. We would be most grateful if you could return the completed surveys to the registration desks in the main lobby of the CCD at your convenience.
7. The ISI and National Statistical Offices and International Organisations' Lunch Time Event (by invite only) is today between 1:40pm and 2:50pm in the Ecocem Room of the CCD.

# Forecasting bus arrivals in Mexico



Dr. Carlos Hernandez-Suarez is a Professor at the Universidad de Colima in Mexico. Dr. Hernandez was conferred with his PhD at Cornell University in 1997 and is CEO of Montecristo Data Mining, which among other things has developed and implemented a system to forecast arrivals at bus stations in some cities in Mexico (called Deja Bus).

Today he presents a paper entitled "Dynamic Forecasting of Bus Arrivals to Stations" which forms part of the invited paper session "Forecasting Using Massive Amount of Data" (IPS008, 8.30am@Liffey Suite 2).

Dr. Hernandez' work relates to delivering real-time information on the time of arrival of buses at a bus stop using mobile media. Knowing how long it will take for a bus to arrive at a bus stop allows for short-time planning and reduced stress levels.

In this project, a user punches a few keys at a bus stop and information on the time of the next bus arrivals is

obtained. Anticipating a bus arrival at a bus stop is very difficult in cities in which buses do not have dedicated bus lanes and have to compete with regular traffic, causing arrivals to become highly irregular.

There are two main problems associated with producing useful forecasts: the first is that there are many uncontrolled factors that influence the time of arrival at a bus stop, including traffic, weather, accidents, construction, etc, and the second is that to be useful, the time elapsed between the request and the response must be short, that is, calculations must be fast.

The author presents how he overcame the difficulties inherent to real time data collection and analysis by using a technique based on analog positions, where analog refers to a similar position at a similar hour in a similar day. By using this technique, the author reduced the amount of calculations in real time to a minimum, although he required some time to develop a trustworthy dataset where the analogs are stored.



# Diary data for measuring well-being



Dr. Kimberly Fisher, from the Centre for Time Use Research at Oxford University ([www.timeuse.org](http://www.timeuse.org)), is the Secretary of the International Association for Time Use Research (IATUR) and she manages the Multi-national Time Use Study (among other data harmonisation projects). The title of the talk that she will give today is

"Measuring Societal Well-Being: The Value of Diary Data" and this talk forms part of the special topic session on "Quality of Life and Daily Routines during Times of Change" (STS038, 8.30am@Wicklow Meeting Room 5).

The well-being of individuals is shaped by and reflected by people's daily activity patterns. Nonetheless, collecting a representative picture of any given individual's regular routines requires qualitative techniques not suited to large-scale application. Time diaries, which collect daily activity patterns across a society on any given day, reveal the range of routines across large populations. This presentation uses the Multinational Time Use Study, a cross-time, cross-national

harmonised time use database, to illustrate uses of diary data for comparative well-being research.

Diaries facilitate monitoring of three dimensions of routines associated with quality of life: (1) healthy behaviours; (2) energy and resource use; and (3) quality of leisure. Monitoring these dimensions has value in its own right, but also facilitates comparison between regions and the monitoring of trends in one region across time. When diary surveys collect emotion data at the same time as collecting activity information, the diaries reveal which patterns of behaviour make people feel better or worse.

# Constructing an indicator of objective well-being in China

Zhanjun Xing (School of Political Science and Public Administration) and Lei Chu (School of Philosophy and Social Development) both work at the Shandong University in Jinan City in China. Today, they will present their research on "Constructing a Composite Indicator of Wellbeing for Chinese People" at the concisely named special topic session on "Obtaining Weights: From Objective to

Subjective Approaches in View of More Participative Methods in the Construction of Composite Indicators of Well-Being" (STS045, 11.15am@Wicklow Meeting Room 3).

The study of Quality of Life (QoL) indices have been around since the mid-1980s in China. Recently, some progress had been made in this research field. Many researchers defined QoL as

a composite structure which included subjective and objective elements. Many summary well-being indices had been constructed from different levels (e.g. cities, province, and nations). In the mean time, statistical methods played an important part in determining the weights of these indices.

The paper being presented today defined the concept of QoL as the quality of people's

being. This was used to analyse not only the well-being of people's objective living conditions but also reflected their subjective well-being. Based on this concept, an analytical system of the Chinese people's objective well-being was proposed.

Through the analysis of content validity of experts and correlation analysis, 46 indices were constructed.

## How new methods are advancing modern life-sciences



Professor Kanti Mardia is Senior Research Professor at the University of Leeds in the UK, a position that was created especially for him. One of the many accolades that he has collected

throughout his career was the "Guy Medal in Silver" from the Royal Statistical Society in 2003, which was received for his many groundbreaking contributions to statistical science. Today he will speak about "How New Shape Analysis and Directional Statistics Are Advancing Modern Life-Sciences" at the invited paper session "Statistical Shape and Functional Data Analysis" (IPS043, 8.30am@Liffey Suite 1).

Professor Mardia tells us that if the last century in Science

belongs to Physical Sciences then this century must belong to Life Sciences with many breakthroughs starting from DNA and proteins! The proteins are biological macro-molecules that are of primary importance to all living organisms and there are various open problems including the Nobel-Prize-type problem related to protein folding. All these questions mainly depend on the 3-dimensional shape of the protein which can be summarised in terms of either the configuration of points (landmarks) or more

compactly by conformational angles. Thus it has led to new tools in statistical shape analysis and directional statistics.

The topics that will be discussed at the presentation include shape alignment methods, distribution of conformational angles and prediction of protein structure. Professor Mardia informs us this work is a precursor to a full paper submitted elsewhere which also contains relevant case studies.

## The best learning is challenging and fun



Non-traditional learning resources such as popular science and business books, as well as relevant YouTube and other video clips, provide great potential with which our students can actively engage. So says Damien Raftery who is lecturer in the

School of Business and Humanities at the Institute of Technology, Carlow in Ireland. Since September 2008 he has been partially seconded to the Institute's Teaching and Learning Centre as eLearning Development Officer. He is presenting his paper "Popular Books and Video Clips: Two Ways to Engage Students with Statistics" today as part of the invited paper session on finding novel ways to teach statistics (IPS053, 8.30am@Ecocem

Room).

In recent years, the Institute has attempted to rebalance the traditional emphasis on calculations to increasingly include a statistical literacy and understanding focus. An important part of how they have implemented this shift in emphasis has been the integration of popular books and video clips allied to changes in assessment, including the introduction of a book chapter review and a graph critique. Students

work in small groups to review a chapter of a popular book and then present their work to the class using a poster. They also select a recently published graph and present a critique. A parallel change is the introduction of short video clips, often humorous yet relevant, to presentations to enhance the students' experience of lectures. In this paper, Damien presents his reflections and student feedback on these changes.

## Students' attitudes toward statistics



Esma Emmioglu and Ye'im Çapa-Aydin from the Middle-East Technical University in Ankara, Turkey will today present a paper today at the special topic session "The Role of Subject Attitudes in Learning Statistics: Empirical Evidence" (STS034, 11.15am@Ecocem Room).

Statistics has increasingly become a part of our daily

lives. The internet, newspapers and television continually present statistical knowledge. Accordingly, understanding statistics has become a necessary requirement for any individual who lives in the modern world. Not only understanding statistics but also having a positive attitude toward statistics is seen as an important characteristic for an individual to effectively utilise statistics.

In the current study, the authors examine the relationship between students' attitudes toward statistics and their statistics achievements through a meta-analysis of earlier

studies. A meta-analysis is a systematic way to integrate the findings of the studies by means of analysing the results of several individual studies.

The meta-analysis showed that students' attitudes toward statistics are significantly related to their statistics achievements. More specifically, our results demonstrated that when students believe that they can understand statistics (cognitive competence), they have positive feelings toward statistics (affect toward statistics) and they think that statistics is not a very difficult subject (attitudes toward the difficulty of statistics). Also, when they think that statistics

is valuable (attitudes toward the value of statistics) they have higher statistics achievements.

Considering the results of the current study, the authors propose that statistics educators use appropriate instructional methods to encourage their students' positive attitudes. We also suggest further studies to examine the relationship between attitudes toward statistics and statistics achievements by conducting further meta-analyses as new studies are added to the literature.

## Data capture in Indonesia goes high-tech

Indra Cahyono from Statistics Indonesia and Michael Levin from the Harvard Centre for Population and Development Studies (Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA) team up today at a session called "Census Data Capture Issues in the 2010 Population and Housing Censuses" (STS029, 11.15am@Wicklow Meeting Room 5) to present a particularly interesting insight into the Indonesian case.

Indonesia is the fourth most populous country in the world (234 million people in 2010 behind China, India and the US). Therefore, of course, carrying out a population census will always be a particularly difficult task to complete. In 2010, Statistics Indonesia carried out its sixth population census. The previous population censuses were conducted in 1961, 1971, 1980, 1990, and 2000, and computer processing was introduced for the first time in 1971. In 1961, because of the

conditions in Indonesia at the time, as well as the limited resources of Statistics Indonesia, data were manually collated for the population census. As a consequence, only 10 percent of collected information could be processed.

By the time the population census in 2010 came around, Statistics Indonesia had made a large leap forward by using Optical Character Recognition (OCR) technology. They

made huge efforts to improve the data capture operation in order to get the data to the users as quickly as possible. Data capture occurred in 33 locations in each of Indonesia's provinces. By using this new technology, they were able to obtain a completely edited file for the whole country by November 2010 and they produced publication tables before the end of the calendar year. The whole process took 11 months from the beginning of enumeration to printer-ready copy.

## Conducting censuses under challenging situations



Rogelio E. Fernandez-Castilla who has a doctorate in Medical Demography is presenting his paper today on "Conducting Censuses under Challenging Situations, Crisis and Post Conflict" in the invited paper session on "Census Strategies" (IPS064, 11.15am@LiffeyA).

Population and housing censuses should produce

statistics that are relevant to data users, as a core statistical objective of censuses. Under situations of crisis and emergencies quality data are more difficult to obtain. Population upheavals and massive movements, usually associated with crisis and conflict, tend to quickly render data obsolete. At the same time the situation on the ground becomes more complex and logistics more difficult. Urgent humanitarian situations require information to guide interventions, making the most efficient use of scarce resources.

Post crisis and post conflict

situations, every part of the territory presents characteristics that are unique and require different approaches for census planning, execution, and utilisation of data for emergency responses. Accurate, updated and disaggregated data by small areas, gender, social groups and local administrative districts is needed. Conducting censuses in post conflict, crisis and emergency situations pose special challenges that go beyond the usual challenges of census taking.

Responding to requests from countries and the UN Country Offices, UNFPA

launched a Special Initiative on Census, to provide a more systematic response to special needs during the 2010 International Round of Census. This Initiative worked with other units of UNFPA especially the UNFPA Regional and Country Offices, to help National Statistical Offices conduct their 2010 Population and Housing Censuses. This paper presents an analysis of some operations, focusing on lessons learned and good practices.

## New challenges in mathematical statistics



Professor Peter McCullagh from the Department of Statistics at the University of Chicago chairs what should prove to be a very interesting and thought provoking panel discussion at the invited paper session "New

Challenges in Mathematical Statistics" (IPS009, 8.30am@Wicklow Suite 2B). Some of the other attendees at this discussion will be Rosemary Bailey from Queen Mary College in London, Xiao-li Meng from Harvard University in Cambridge Massachusetts US, Joan del Castillo from the University of Barcelona in Spain and Elvira DiNardo from the University of Basilicata in Potenza, Italy.

Professor McCullagh tells us that it will be a broad-ranging discussion of current issues and recent developments in statistical theory and its applications. Topics that may be covered include recent developments of a mathematical type, including

random matrices, free probability, cellular automata and Levy processes; developments in combinatorics and experimental design; emerging areas of application in the biological sciences; new algorithmic techniques connected with sparsity, large  $p$  and small  $n$  problems; issues connected with the use of randomised algorithms for computation; computational developments of a combinatoric or symbolic nature; network models and machine learning. Finally, statistical issues related to financial volatility, trading algorithms and stock market pricing will be covered.

# Sensitivity analysis should go global



Stefano Tarantola and Andrea Saltelli both work at the Econometrics and Applied Statistics Group which is a Joint Research Centre of the European Commission based in Italy. Today they will present their paper "Sensitivity Analysis Should Go Global" at the special topic session on "Uncertainty and Industry and Statistics" (STS002,



8.30am@Wicklow Meeting Room 4).

Mathematical modellers from many different disciplines and from regulatory agencies worldwide agree on the importance of a careful sensitivity analysis (SA) of model-based inference. The most popular SA practice seen in literature is that of

analysing 'one-factor-at-a-time' (OAT). This consists of investigating the effect of varying one model input at a time while keeping all the others fixed at some baseline, or nominal, value. In spite of the existing shortcomings of OAT, its widespread use among modelers raises concerns the quality of the associated sensitivity analyses.

In this presentation the authors provide a geometric proof of the inefficiency of OAT and propose a global approach that characterises how the global variation in input, due to its uncertainty, impacts on the overall uncertain nature of the model. The global approach is far more effective than OAT as it is based on exploring the space of the inputs over its finite (or even infinite) space of uncertainty. Within such space, alternative input assumptions are selected within some plausible range and are explored.

## Use of tax data in Official Statistics



Wesley Yung, who is an Assistant Director in the Business Survey Methods Division at Statistics Canada, presents his paper today on the "Use of Tax Data in Official Statistics – The Canadian Experience" at the special topics session on "The Roles of Tax Data in Official Statistics" (STS003, 8.30am@Liffey Meeting Room 4). He co-authored the paper with Gaétan St-

Louis from Statistics Canada and Dave LeBlanc from the Canada Revenue Agency.

Statistics Canada has a long history of using tax data coming from the Canada Revenue Agency. In the early 1970s, a partnership between Statistics Canada and the Canada Revenue Agency (Department of National Revenue as it was then known) was created to allow the sharing of tax data between the two departments.

At first, studies were performed to evaluate the fitness-of-use of tax data for statistical purposes. Once these studies showed the potential of tax data, Statistics Canada started to use them in indirect ways including data confrontation and frame maintenance. At the same time, the partnership

between the two departments continued to strengthen.

In the late 1990s, to address respondent burden issues and fiscal restraints, Statistics Canada developed a strategy to significantly increase the use of tax data. This strategy included using tax data to replace survey data, to fill data gaps and to improve the edit and imputation processes of economic surveys.

Today, tax data are an integral part of the economic statistics program. They are used to estimate the contribution of small units in the population, to replace survey data for many medium sized units and as auxiliary information in the edit and imputation processes.

## Finding the causes of anaemia

Anaemia is a widespread public health concern. It is estimated that globally 47% of young children are anaemic (WHO, 2005). In children, anaemia can impair development and increase susceptibility to infectious diseases. The lack of sufficient food rich in iron and other micro-nutrients are the most common cause of anaemia. Being underweight, which is an indicator of short and long term malnutrition, may reflect poor feeding practices or recent episodes of illness.

Shadrack Kandala from the University of Southampton in the UK further investigates the causes of anaemia today at the special topic session "Advanced Techniques for Modeling Maternal and Child Health in Africa" (STS009, 8.30am@Liffey Meeting Room 5).

The author investigates the link between children's nutritional status (underweight) and anaemia. She carries out a cross-sectional study of 3,157 children aged between 6 and 54

months from the Democratic Republic of Congo. Initially, 24% of children were underweight (weight-for-age below -2 standard deviation) and 74% were anaemic. It is suggested that anaemia is significantly associated with children's nutritional status (underweight) and most of the risk factors associated with anaemia are also found to be related to a child's weight-for-age. These include bed net use, breastfeeding, succeeding birth interval, source of drinking water and wealth quintiles.



## Setting the scene in Dublin for ISI 2013: Youth Theme Day



At the turn of the twentieth century, the well known author, H.G. Wells, predicted that "one day statistics will be as essential to society as is the ability to read and write". Indeed, with the advances in technology and the

associated increased ability to produce and process large masses of numeric readings, data handling and statistical techniques have become essential skills at all level in the work place, such that statistics training is an essential component of training youth for the workplace.

In 2013, the ISI World Statistics Congress in Hong Kong will devote one day to sessions addressing the many statistical challenges that are associated with "Youth" by having a "Youth

Theme Day" (YTD). The Theme Day is a new addition to the traditional ISI meetings, with the objective being to highlight statistics development along a particular theme.

The YTD will comprise a single day devoted to highlighting the showcasing of statistics as an essential tool for the workplace amongst the young and will take the form of keynote addresses, panel discussions, invited sessions, workshops, etc. A number of sessions and

activities to plan the YTD in 2013 have been organised for ISI2011 in Dublin and attendees can have input into defining events that will shape this important focus day.

The YTD Steering Committee chaired by Delia North (northd@ukzn.ac.za) and Byeong Park (bupark@stats.snu.ac.kr) invites members of the ISI and its Sections to contribute to the planning of the program.

## y-BIS: a dynamic Young Statisticians Group

The International Society for Business and Industrial Statistics (ISBIS) has established a Young Statisticians Group, y-BIS. What's young? Well, if you feel young, that's good enough, you can keep reading!

Its purpose is to facilitate international collaboration between young researchers and professionals working on business, financial and industrial statistics, by supporting their career development, networking and enjoyment. Here are some of our activities:



**Interest Group:** "Ask y-BIS", which aims to promote the exchange of knowledge in business, financial and industrial statistics among young statisticians;

**Networking:** facilitating international collaboration between younger and more senior statisticians and users of statistics working in business, finance and industry;

**Career:** a jobs network and a database of CVs, to assist employers and prospective employees in finding each other. You are welcome to post your job ad or search for jobs using our forum.

## The International Environmetrics Society (TIES)

The Society, constituted in 1989, is an ISI Section since April 2008. TIES fosters the development and use of statistical and other quantitative methods in the environmental sciences. TIES is open to all ISI members and to members of the other ISI Sections. We hope that we can continue to grow together.

TIES is actively participating in Dublin 2011 sessions, via Invited Paper and Specialised Topics sessions.

In 2011 we organised a number of activities on special topics: the TIES North American Regional Meeting, July 18-20, La Crosse, Wisconsin, USA and SARMA/ TIES Workshop on Visualisation of Climate Data, August 15-18, Reykjavik, Iceland. Next month, on September 1-2, we have

the European Regional Conference SPATIAL 2 in Foggia and Baia delle Zagare, Italy. The last two events are Satellite Meetings to ISI Dublin 2011. The next TIES conference will take place on January 1-6, 2012 at CRRAO AIMSCS, UOH Campus, Hyderabad, India. The theme is "Environmental Challenges Facing Developed and Developing Countries in a Globalized World: Quantitative Approaches to Comprehensive Solutions".

We encourage the participation of researchers from developing countries and of young people by awarding the Abdel El-Shaarawi Young Researcher's Award since 2001. At our conferences the best student presentation and best poster presentation receive special awards.

For more information you are invited to visit our website <http://www.environmetrics.org/>.

You are also invited to check out Environmetrics, our official journal at <http://eu.wiley.com/WileyCDA/WileyTitle/productCd-ENV.html>.

Remember that TIES members have free online access to articles in the society journal.

Daniela Cocchi (President) and Don Stevens (Incoming President)



## Daily Numbers

Source: www.worldometers.info

**3.26** Forest loss (in millions of hectares) so far this year

**4.34** Land lost to soil erosion (in millions of hectares) so far this year

**20,818** CO<sub>2</sub> emissions (in millions of tonnes) so far this year



### SUDOKU

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### Today's Weather



**14°C - 16°C**

Cloudy with some sunshine and a slight risk of rain



#### Hay Fever by Noel Coward

Venue: Gate Theatre, 1 Cavendish Row, Dublin 1 (10 mins walk from CCD)

Phone: +353 (0)1 874 4045, Website: [www.gate-theatre.ie](http://www.gate-theatre.ie)

Performance Time today: 7.30pm, Price: €34.50

#### Theatre



#### Rónán Ó'Snodaigh (lead singer from Kila) and Mick Molloy

Venue: Cobblestone, North King St, Smithfield, Dublin 7

Phone: +353 (0)1 872 1799

Website: <http://www.myspace.com/thecobblestone>

Performance Time today: 8.30pm, Price: €10

#### Live Music

For further information on entertainment in Dublin please see [www.entertainment.ie](http://www.entertainment.ie)

#### Emergency Contact Numbers

**Police, Fire, Ambulance:** Telephone: 112 or 999 **CCD Medical Centre:** Telephone: 01- 819 4999 **CCD Security:** Telephone: 01-818 4999  
**Tourist Victim Support:** Telephone: 1890 365 700 The Irish Tourist Assistance Service (ITAS) offers assistance to tourists who become victims of crime.