

# Social Science Data and ETDs: Opportunities and Challenges

Joan F. Cheverie

*Head, Digital Library Services, Georgetown University, Washington, DC, USA, cheverij@georgetown.edu*

## **Abstract**

Students engaged in the social science research process are seeking ways to enhance knowledge in their respective fields. During this process, the students explore the possibility of using existing data and/or determining whether new data must be collected to best answer the research question they are seeking to answer in their theses and dissertations. Technological advances are having a significant impact on the way that research in the social sciences is produced and disseminated. New methods of collecting and analyzing data are enabling the development of more realistic models of complex social and behavioral phenomena, the integration of disparate datasets to enable deeper study and knowledge creation, and the collection of better data through simulations via the Internet. Our institutions are facing a number of opportunities and challenges as we make these complex ETDs available. A series of questions arise: How can we best work together to improve the digital landscape supporting social science ETDs? What policies, standards, and infrastructure are needed to connect this scholarship with its underlying data? What tools are needed to support access to and reuse of these datasets? This paper describes the current landscape, proposes services to support ETDs incorporating social science datasets, and suggests points to consider for administrators, researchers, and information professionals.