

63rd ISI World Statistics Congress – Virtual from 11-16 July 2021

Post-Congress Report

The first-ever [virtual ISI World Statistics Congress](#) (WSC) took place in July on a virtual platform over 5 days in different time zones. It was also the first WSC to be organised by the ISI without a host country. Originally planned for The Hague, The Netherlands, the ISI decided to hold the WSC on an online platform due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Almost 1600 delegates joined from 106 countries. There were more first-time delegates at the virtual WSC than any previous WSC. This report contains the highlights of the virtual WSC. The official WSC Proceedings will become available in 2022.

Opening Ceremony & Welcome Reception & International Prize in Statistics

The [Opening Ceremony](#) was held on Sunday, 11 July, on the WSC's virtual platform and is available to [watch here](#). The master of ceremonies, Professor Jennifer Rogers, welcomed delegates. ISI President John Bailer then gave his opening speech noting that this is the first

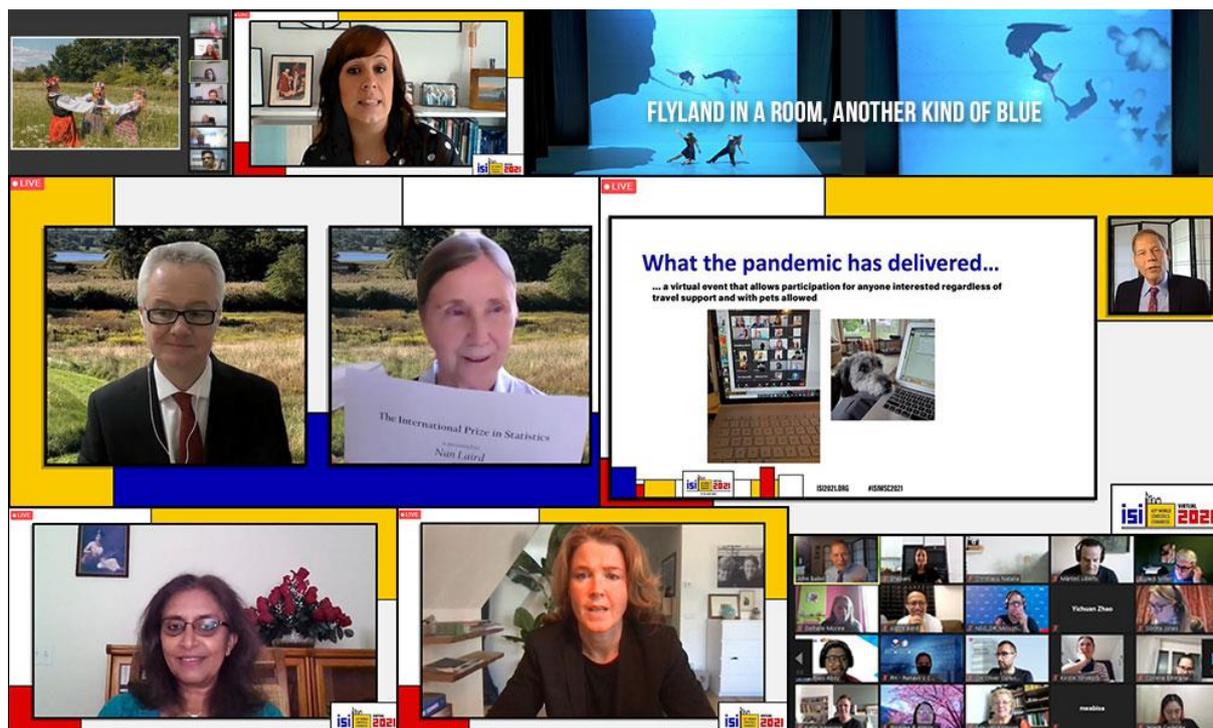


WSC during which delegates could wear anything from the comfort of their homes. A short compilation video of ISI/Association representatives and members was shown where they answer questions about their first WSC and why attending WSCs is a tradition they continue. The MC then read a [message](#) on the importance of statistics in today's world from Her Majesty Queen Máxima of The Netherlands, *pictured on the left*.

The International Prize in Statistics Foundation Chair Guy Nason presented the third edition of the [International Prize in Statistics to Professor Nan Laird](#) of Harvard University for her work on methods of analysing data from Longitudinal Studies, which was also the theme of her plenary talk the next day *Contributions to Longitudinal Studies* (available to [watch online](#)). This was followed by the beautiful and artistic dance production *Flyland in a Room* by dance production company [Another Kind of Blue](#). Statistics Netherlands Director-General Angelique Berg welcomed delegates and [Scientific Programme Committee](#) (SPC) Chair Nalini Ravishanker presented the scientific programme.

For the Welcome Reception, delegates were divided into different virtual rooms based on topics with ISI Executive Committee and Council members as moderators. Delegates were asked to figure out who in the room has to travel the most distance to WSC 2023 in Ottawa and to WSC 2025 in The Hague. It was a fun way to start chatting with fellow delegates!

See a variety of images from the Opening Ceremony and Welcome Reception



Scientific Programme

The Scientific Programme Committee was responsible for the entire scientific programme. The SPC reviewed and scheduled the live and non-live/pre-recorded Invited Paper Sessions (IPS) and Special Invited Sessions (SIPS). It was quite the challenge to bring together the speakers of the live sessions in a time zone that worked for all presenting in a particular session. The Contributed Paper/Poster Sessions (CPS) were also reviewed and developed into a programme by the SPC. The scientific programme can be reviewed on the [WSC 2021 website](#). The ISI would like to thank SPC Chair Nalini Ravishanker, SPC Vice-Chair Kees Zeelenberg, SPC Vice-Chair Mark Podolskij and the SPC members for their hard and challenging work on putting together an excellent scientific programme.

| Number of Scientific Sessions | |
|-------------------------------|-----|
| SIPS | 24 |
| IPS | 171 |
| CPS Oral | 37 |
| CPS ePoster | 50 |

ISI Young Statisticians' Event

On Saturday, the day before the Opening Ceremony, the [ISI Young Statisticians Committee](#) held a [virtual event](#) with breakout rooms that each had a different interest with time built in to network. After the breakout sessions, delegates watched an interview with the event's guest of honour ISI President-Elect Stephen Penneck followed by a Q&A session. The YS Committee provides a networking forum for students, post-docs, young researchers and professionals in all fields of statistics, to discuss and share ideas and research with the statistical community at large.

Jan Tinbergen Awards Session

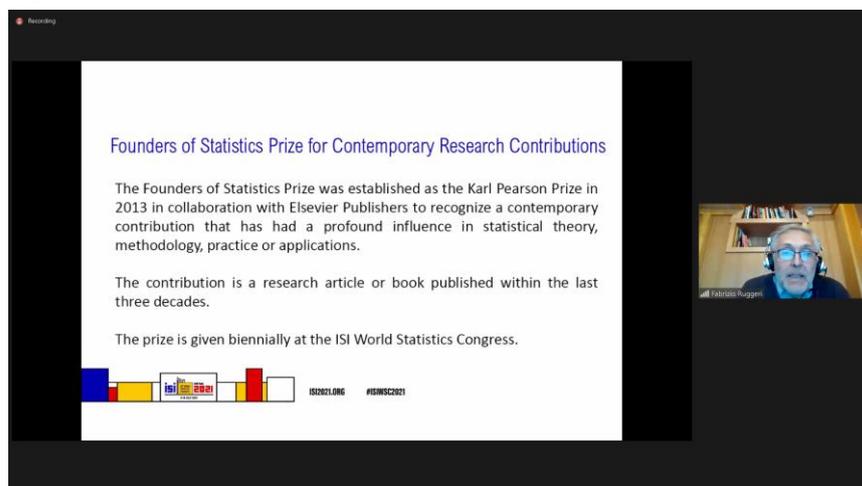
On Tuesday, 13 July, the winners of the 2021 Jan Tinbergen Awards presented their papers. These biennial awards, named after the famous Dutch econometrician, are for best papers by young statisticians in addressing statistical problems of real relevance in building statistical capacity in countries with limited statistical infrastructure. The first prize winners in Division A, General, Mr. Jie Li and Mr. Qirui Hu from China, presented their paper Prediction Interval of Air Pollutants Concentration by Nonparametric Regression Analysis. The first prize winner in Division B, Statistical Systems, Ms. Mozghan Taavoni from Iran, presented her paper High Dimensional Generalized Semiparametric Model for Longitudinal Data.

ISI Committee for Women in Statistics' Networking Event – Sponsor L'Oréal

On Tuesday, 13 July, the [ISI Committee on Women in Statistics](#) (CWS) organised a [networking event](#). A short presentation on the aims and work of the CWS was followed by breakout groups. All delegates came back to the main room to share the observations of their breakout groups. The CWS aims to promote and strengthen the representation of women statisticians in the ISI and its Associations; and to help in providing opportunities for women members to assume active and visible roles in the ISI and other statistical associations.

ISI Founders of Statistics Prize – Sponsor Elsevier

Professor Robert Tibshirani was the recipient of the 2021 ISI Founders of Statistics Prize for his 1996 paper on *Regression Shrinkage and Selection via the LASSO*, published in the Journal of the Royal Statistical Society. Robert Tibshirani is Professor of Biomedical Science and Statistics at Stanford University. His presentation on Tuesday, 13 July, was titled *The Lasso and Sparsity: past, present and future*.



ISI Mahalanobis International Award Session – Sponsor Government of India

On Tuesday, 13 July, Professor Heleno Bolfarine was posthumously awarded the ISI Mahalanobis International Award. Mrs. Bolfarine accepted the award on Heleno Bolfarine's behalf and spoke at the session. Heleno Bolfarine was Full Professor at the Institute of Mathematics and Statistics at the University of São Paulo, Brazil. The Mahalanobis International Award is sponsored by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation

of the Government of India. The award recognises an individual for lifetime achievements in statistics in a developing country or region.

ISI General Assembly 2021

The [ISI General Assembly](#) took place on Wednesday, 14 July. During the meeting, the ISI President talked about ISI's work of the past two years, including the ISI finances. The Presidents of the ISI Associations presented their own activities for the same period; the ISI Annual Report 2020 was approved; the 64th ISI WSC 2023 to take place in Ottawa, Canada, from 15-20 July, was presented.

ISI President's Invited Keynote Lecture

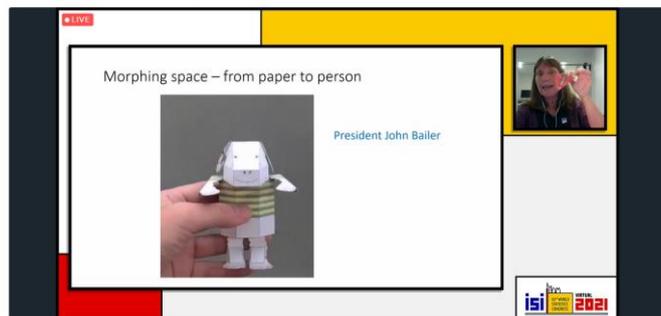
Professor Kerrie Mengersen, *pictured below*, gave her plenary talk *The Origami of Data Science* on Thursday, 15 July, and available to [watch online](#). Many of us know about origami,



whereby a flat square of paper is folded into a sculpture that inspires appreciation and imagination. In the same way, we might think about origami (or perhaps more accurately 'oridēta') in the context of data science, whereby a data analysis method or computational algorithm is folded into a software product that inspires interpretation and implementation. Kerrie

Mengersen discussed our attempts at the origami of data science. Although the foundations are statistical, our sculptures require a broad team of experts from the mathematical, statistical and computer sciences, and they need to be appreciated, interpreted, imagined and implemented by domain experts and users. Kerrie Mengersen is Distinguished Professor of Statistics at Queensland University of Technology in the Faculty of Science and ISI Vice-President (2021-2025). Kerrie Mengersen's work spans Bayesian statistics, computational statistics, environmental, genetic and health statistics, statistical consulting and more including citizen science.

Plenary - President's Invited Speaker: The Origami of Data Science

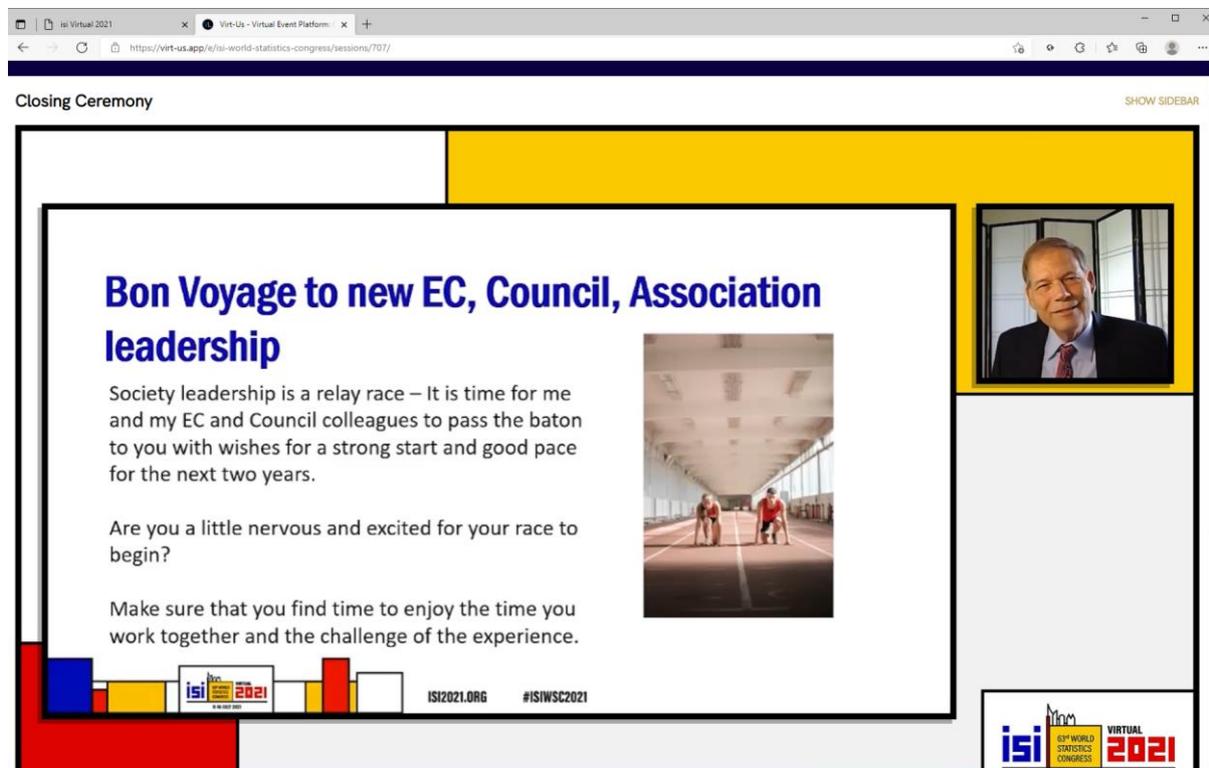


Authors' Workshop – Sponsor Wiley

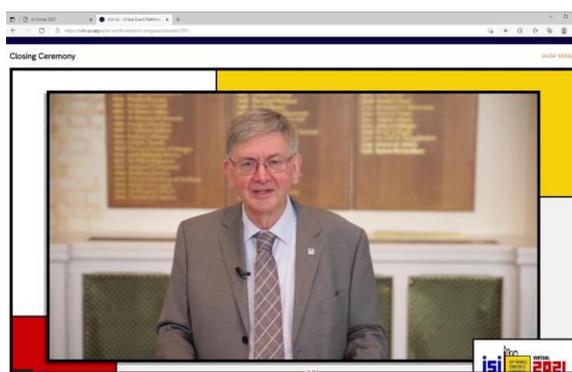
On Thursday, 15 July, the [ISI Author Workshop](#) took place. During this Author Workshop, Editors-in-Chief from ISI journals provided useful tips and insights on how to get published in their journals: providing information to assist authors in selecting a journal, writing an article, navigating the peer review process and more. A Q&A session with the Editors took place at the end of the workshop. Speakers were: Professor Helen Zhang, Editor-in-Chief *Stat*/University of Arizona, USA; Professor Fabrizio Ruggeri, Editor-in-Chief *ASMBI*/CNR IMATI, Milano, Italy; Professor Nalini Ravishanker, Co-Editor-in-Chief *International Statistical Review*/University of Connecticut, USA; Professor Scott Holan, Co-Editor-in-Chief *International Statistical Review*/University of Missouri and US Census Bureau, USA; and Mr. Stephen Raywood of John Wiley & Sons.

Closing Ceremony

The [Closing Ceremony](#) took place on Friday, 16 July, and is available to [watch here](#). Highlights from the WSC-week were shown. ISI President John Bailer, *pictured below*, gave his thanks to the WSC delegates, ISI and Association members, his fellow ISI Executive Committee and Council members, as well as a special thank you to the ISI Permanent Office staff.



Delegates were then informed about future plans from incoming ISI President Stephen Penneck, *pictured on the right*. A video on WSC 2023 in Ottawa followed. The Chief Statistician of Canada Anil Arora welcomed delegates to join in Ottawa and Mr. Penneck enjoyed speaking to a Canadian High Commission representative in London, who told us more about Ottawa as a city. The Closing Ceremony finished with a final thank you from ISI Director Ada van Krimpen. The virtual platform was promised to remain open for another 30 days post-WSC. The ISI has decided to keep the virtual platform open until 31 December 2021.



Awards Brochure and Presentation

In lieu of a formal Awards Ceremony where we can applaud our awards' recipients, the ISI produced a [brochure](#) and [presentation](#) for all delegates to access on the WSC's virtual platform. ISI Awards Coordinator & ISI Vice-President Fabrizio Ruggeri gave a short video introduction (link is included in the presentation). The ISI thanks Professor Ruggeri for his dedicated work for the ISI's awards.

New Additions: Meet the EC & Data Walks

There was some benefit to hosting a virtual event. The ISI organised special Meet the EC sessions where delegates could spend 30 minutes or more talking with an ISI Executive Committee member. These special moments were spread out throughout the week and took place in different time zones to afford everyone the opportunity of joining live.

Another special feature was asking delegates to share photographs on the network chat or using social media. We wanted to see where our delegates live. A different theme was announced for each WSC day. A [photo gallery](#) can be viewed on the WSC 2021 website. The themes were:

Day 1: Street Board Names

Day 2: Nature Around Us

Day 3: Things with Wheels

Day 4: Evening Lights

Day 5: Street Food

Sponsors

The ISI is very grateful to the WSC 2021 sponsors. Through their contributions and support, the ISI was able to organise a successful virtual WSC. There were sponsors who were partners in supporting the WSC in general, sponsors who supported specific events, and general advertising. The sponsorship acquisition for the WSC 2021 started in 2019 and was initially planned for the physical congress in the World Forum The Hague. The decision to change the congress format to a fully virtual event was taken in August 2020. All sponsors continued to support the ISI and WSC even as a virtual event. The complete list of sponsors can be found [here](#).

Two sponsors held live workshops during the WSC. The [Esri Workshop](#) was about the Power of GIS and Spatial Analysis and was held on Tuesday 13 July. The [IPUMS Data Collection Workshop](#) was on How to Access & Use Free Census & Survey Microdata and happened on Thursday 15 July.

The American Statistical Association and Wiley sponsored the registration fees of 53 students from developing and developed countries.

Exhibition

The Exhibition had its own area in the form of a special page on the congress platform. In this area, the booths were visible in a vertical presentation, numbered and ordered from 1 to 7, with a cover image for each Exhibitor. Visitors could click on the cover image to enter the booth. The booth was an individual page where Exhibitors could log in and customize it with their branding and content, such as videos, images, and downloadable documents (PDFs). The representatives of each Exhibitor were listed on their page and were available for appointments with WSC participants.

The WSC participants were invited to visit the Exhibition via announcements in the WSC e-mails and social media posts, and during the WSC-week via short promotional films shown before and after the daily opening by the MC.

Communication

Communication was by e-mail and social media prior to and during the WSC. The main communication channel during the WSC was on the virtual platform with daily openings by our MC Jennifer Rogers and on the platform there were announcements and reminders. In addition, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn were also used several times per day. On the last day of the WSC, the ISI sent a feedback survey to delegates and the comments received were overall positive – this was also evident in the chats during the WSC.

Satellite Meetings

[Satellite Meetings](#) were held in conjunction with the WSC except that these were not necessarily kept close in dates to the WSC. With the advantage of having virtual meetings, the different organisers of the Satellites had more flexibility in their planning.

Short Courses Programme

The ISI and Associations' short course programme is usually held just prior to the WSC in the WSC city. Due to the virtual nature of the WSC and the screen time, the ISI and Associations decided to hold the [short courses](#) in the months of May and June. A second set of courses will be held in early 2022.