



Four Decades of ISSP- Past, Present, Future

Tietoarkisto-seminaari 2025: ISSP Suomessa 25 vuotta

Stephanie Steinmetz

The past



The Origins of the ISSP

- **Four founding countries:** Australia, Germany, the UK, and the USA
- **Vision:** foster international collaboration and scientific knowledge production, develop methodological research and support evidence-based policy making.
- **Idea:** to create high-quality data based on comparative annual survey(s) on the same topic(s) across countries

**Collaborative programme of cross-cultural social science surveys
active since 40 years**



The present

ISSP in a nutshell

- 45 Member countries
- Annual survey (representative probability samples of adult population)
- Established methodological standards
- Democratic organisational structure with decentralized data collection



Democratic organizational structure

- 45 Member countries (1-2 delegates) with voting rights
- Secretariat (currently CH, 2x3 years)
- Standing Committee (elected)
- Methodological Committee (elected)
- Thematic sub-groups and task forces (open, voluntarily)
- Drafting groups (elected)

Survey Modules

- 11 thematic modules + (modified) repeated every 10 years
 - Role of Government, Religion, Social Inequality, Health, Environment, Digitalisation etc.
- Two parts:
 - Substantive questions - input harmonized (DG and GA)
 - ISSP standard background variables - output harmonized



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HEALTH**

New data releases

ISSP 2021 (Health) - final
release spring 2025
(30+3 countries)



spring 2025

fall 2025

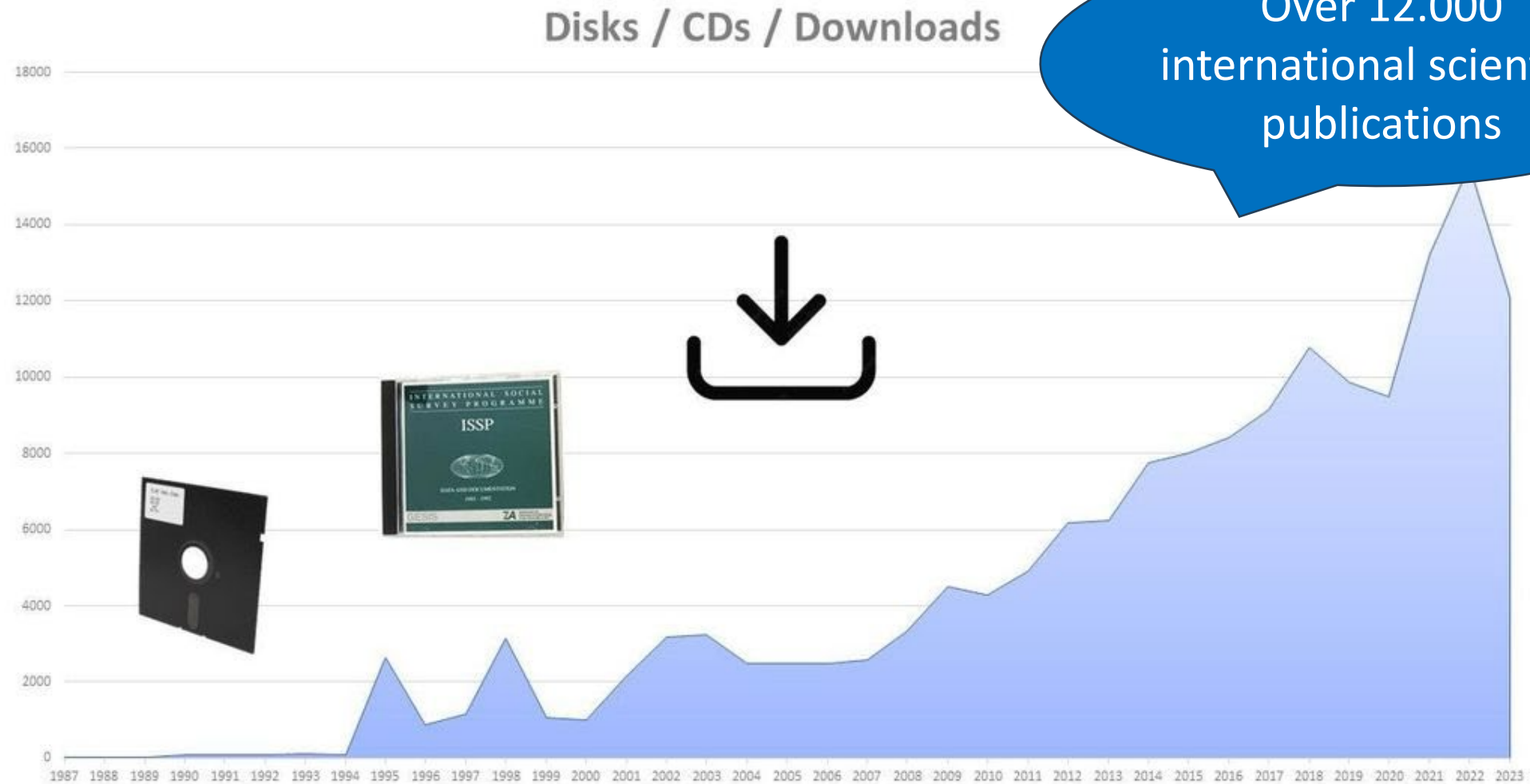
ISSP 2022 (Family) - final
release fall 2025
(31 countries)

Other outreach activities

- **User conference**
 - **4nd user conference** (Nov 24th, 2025) ⇒ ‘Health and Healthcare’
- **Conference sessions**
 - ISSP sessions at **WAPOR 2025 Asia** (Tokyo, Nov. 21-23)
- **Webinar series**
 - ISSP webinar series (2nd edition Fall 2025)
- **Social media presence** to promote ISSP research and other ISSP activities



Downloads/publications - 40 years





Finland's role in the ISSP

Finland's Involvement in ISSP

- Joined the ISSP in 2000 (Lisbon)
- **Three institutions:** Faculty of Social Sciences at Tampere University, Statistics Finland and the Finnish Social Science Data Archive.
- Finland has been an active member contributing with high-quality data **every year!**
- **In numbers:** 25 year of continuous support, 25 modules, 25 GA's and organization of one GA (2014, Tampere, also 30 years of ISSP, 39 member countries attending)

Finland's Contribution to Global Knowledge

- Offers a **Nordic welfare-state perspective** in global comparisons
- Enables researchers **to compare Finland with other European and global contexts**
- Strengthens Finland's visibility in **international academic publications**
- Can inform **policy making**



Why Continued Membership Matters



Ensures Finland remains part of a major global data infrastructure



Strengthens collaboration and methodological exchange with global partners



Supports the scientific community and next generations of researchers



Reinforces Finland's commitment to open science and international cooperation

The future

“Being part of one of the most important surveys worldwide.”

“Transitioning to online sampling and securing financing despite the presence of numerous other surveys.”



Opportunities and Challenges

Challenges

- Rising fieldwork costs and declining response rates
- Cross-cultural comparability
- Decline in funding for RIs
- Navigating political, ethical and data protection concerns

Opportunities

- Exploring new sampling strategies and mixed modes
- Expanding to underrepresented regions
- Adding new modules or integrating new topics
- Contributing to scientific knowledge transfer and exchange

Concluding remarks

- High quality surveys will remain an important tool to study societies
- ISSP stands as a cornerstone of international comparative social research
- It demonstrates the power of scientific collaboration
- Importance will grow in a neoliberal climate and political polarization

**Future will depend on innovation, inclusivity, and adaptability
but also on the willingness of funders to support the ISSP!**

THANK YOU!



- Secretariat: issp.sec@gmail.com
- Website: <https://issp.org/>
- Download and use the data via Data Archive at GESIS
- And follow us on

