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ILR researchers creating Social Science Gateway for National Science Foundation

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A new National Science Foundation (NSF) grant to create a Social Science Gateway to TeraGrid -- the NSF's national supercomputing infrastructure -- has been awarded to two ILR faculty members.

John Abowd, Edmund Ezra Day Professor of Industrial and Labor Relations, and Lars Vilhuber, an economist who is an ILR School senior research associate, said the gateway will unlock for researchers enormous amounts of social sciences data on people, jobs and firms. Researchers will be able to access the gateway from their own workstations.

"Research strategies such as very large scale resampling and synthesis, which were previously proposed but not technically feasible, will be implemented," Abowd and Vilhuber said in their proposal.

"The expected explosion of use will lead to new results in a multitude of social sciences," they said. The TeraGrid's potential for social scientists will be expanded through the Social Science Gateway.

"The long-term goal of this proposal is that the tools put together for the research community through this proposal will be the building blocks for bigger and more transparent mechanisms granting social scientists easy access to large-scale computational facilities," they said.

A \$393,523 grant funds their work on the gateway, and its maintenance through 2012. Based on the two researchers' prior work with the Virtual Research Data Center at Cornell, the gateway is expected to open later this year.

The TeraGrid opened in 2001. It is the world's largest, most comprehensive distributed cyberinfrastructure for open scientific research.

Currently, TeraGrid resources include more than a petaflop (one million gigaflops) of computing capability and more than 30,000 terabytes of online and archival data storage, with rapid access and retrieval over high-performance networks. (The typical desktop computer has between 10 and 40 gigaflops). Researchers can also access more than 100 discipline-specific databases.

More information on the Social Science Gateway will become available at the [Virtual Research Data Center website](#).

The National Science Foundation is an independent federal agency created by Congress in 1950 "to promote the progress of science; to advance the national health, prosperity, and welfare; to secure the national defense ..."