New Life Cycle Approach

Version 3.0 of the DDI specification is modular in structure and is intended to reflect points along the life cycle of research data. Version 3.0 also provides new features and functionality including stricter data typing, elimination of redundancies, and new opportunities for documenting data characteristics for purposes of comparison.

Data Documentation Initiative

www.ddialliance.org

Secretariat:

    ICPSR/DDI Secretariat

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The Data Documentation Initiative (DDI) is an effort to develop an international XML standard for social science metadata. The effort is sponsored by the DDI Alliance, a group of organizations representing the data archive, data producer, and data user communities.

Fiscal year 2007 saw great progress as we advanced toward publication of DDI 3. Below are highlights of the year:

Meetings and Outreach

Expert Committee. The full Expert Committee of the Alliance met in Montreal, Canada, in May 2007 after the annual IASSIST conference. The agenda focused on public review of the draft DDI 3 specification; use cases to demonstrate proof of concept; tools for working with DDI 3; and much more. The committee approved a resolution to continue to test and develop the specification through a Candidate Release mechanism, with publication in spring 2008.

Training. At IASSIST, several sessions centered on DDI, and two companion workshops were offered. The first workshop, "A Crystal Clear Introduction to DDI Version 3.0," provided participants with the basic knowledge necessary to get started and to be productive with DDI 3. Workshop leaders were Sanda Ionescu (ICPSR), Ann Green (Digital Life Cycle Consulting), and Mary Vardigan (ICPSR). The second workshop, "Taking Advantage of DDI 3.0," focused on features that are new to DDI 3.0 and the ways in which organizations, large and small, can take advantage of these features for managing collections and supporting their services. Presenters were Wendy Thomas (University of Minnesota), Arofan Gregory (Open Data Foundation), and Joachim Wackerow (GESIS-ZUMA).

Alliance Members

- University of Alberta, Canada
- University of California, Berkeley
- California Digital Library
- Centro de Investigaciones Sociologicas, Spain
- CEPS/INSTEAD, Luxembourg
- University of Connecticut, Roper Center
- Danish Data Archive
- Data Archiving and Networking Services, The Netherlands
- Emory University
- Finnish Social Science Data Archive
- GESIS - Zentralarchiv für Empirische Sozialforschung
- GESIS - Zentrum für Umfragen, Methoden und Analysen (ZUMA)
- University of Guelph
- Harvard University
- IZA - Institute for the Study of Labor, Germany
- Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT)
- University of Michigan, ICPSR
- University of Minnesota
- National Opinion Research Center (NORC)
- Norwegian Social Science Data Services (NSD)
- Open Data Foundation
- Princeton University Library
- Socio-Economic Panel Study, Germany
- Stanford University
- University of Surrey
- Swedish Social Science Data Service (SSD)
- Swiss Data Archive for the Social Sciences (SIDOS)
- United Kingdom Data Archive
- University of Wisconsin, Madison
- World Bank, Development Data Group (DEGDG)
- Yale University

Presentations. The FedCASIC conference, held in March in Washington, DC, featured a session on metadata with presenters Pascal Heus (Open Data Foundation), Julia Lane (NORC), Alice Born (Statistics Canada), and Mary Vardigan (ICPSR).

Membership and Finances

The DDI Alliance had 29 paid memberships during FY 2007, providing a funding stream to support the administrative structure, some meeting costs, and XML consultants. The balance sheet of the Alliance shows that revenues for the year exceeded expenditures, with the ending fund balance totaling $80,423.

Statement of Revenue and Expenses
Fiscal Years 2004 – 2007

	FY2004	FY2005	FY2006	FY2007
Total Revenue	$62,456	$64,913	$64,906	$72,382
Total Expenses	$36,509	$38,395	$68,875	$40,455
Revenue Over/ (Under) Expenses	$25,947	$26,518	($3,969)	$31,927
Ending Fund Balance	$25,947	$52,465	$48,496	$80,423

Benefits of Using DDI

- **Interoperability.** Documentation marked up using the DDI specification can be exchanged and transported seamlessly.

- **Richer content.** The DDI encourages the use of a comprehensive set of elements to describe social science datasets as completely and as thoroughly as possible.

- **Single document — multiple purposes.** DDI documentation contains all of the information necessary to produce several different types of output, including, for example, a traditional social science codebook, a bibliographic record, or SAS/SPSS/Stata data definition statements. Thus, the content may be repurposed for different needs and applications. Changes made to the core document will be passed along to any output generated.

- **Online subsetting and analysis.** Because the DDI markup extends down to the variable level and provides a standard uniform structure and content for variables, DDI documents are easily imported into online analysis systems and other applications.

- **Precision in searching.** Since each of the elements in DDI-compliant documentation is tagged in a specific way, field-specific searches across documents and studies are enabled.

- **Preservation.** XML documents are nonproprietary and optional for long-term preservation. DDI embeds "intelligence" in documentation for future users.

Why Join the Aliance?

This DDI is a standard developed by and for the social science research community. Through membership in the Alliance, you and your organization can influence the development and the direction of this important social science standard. Membership means that you have the opportunity to participate with colleagues in shaping the format, content, and delivery of social science information. Representatives from the member institutions lend their unique talents and expertise to the Working Groups, ensuring that the standard meets the needs and expectations of the community.

Become a Member

To join the Alliance, complete a membership form (at www.ddialliance.org, "About the DDI Alliance") and obtain appropriate signatures at your institution. Send the form to the DDI Secretariat:

ICPSR/DDI Secretariat
P.O. Box 1248
Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1248
Fax: 734.647.8200

After the form is received, your institution will receive an annual invoice.

Projects Using DDI

- California Digital Library's "Counting California" Project
countingcalifornia.cdlib.org

- Center for Comparative European Survey Data
www.ccesd.ac.uk/

- Centers for Medicare/Medicaid Services (CMS)
Denominator File Project — www.resdac.umn.edu

- CESSDA Data Portal
www.nsd.uib.no/cessda/home.html

- Cultural Policy and the Arts National Data Archive
(CPANDA) — www.cpanda.org

- DAIS Nesstar System at Health Canada
www.hc-sc.gc.ca

- Dataverse Network — www.thedata.org

- Data Liberation Initiative Metadata Collection at
Statistics Canada — www.statcan.ca/english/Dli/dli.htm

- DevInfo

- Documenting the Survey Lifecycle Using DDI – Canada
Research Data Centres and GSS

- ICPSR Data Catalog — www.icpsr.umich.edu

- ICPSR Social Science Variables Database (SSVD)
www.icpsr.umich.edu/ssvd/index.html

- Israel Social Sciences Data Center (ISDC)
geobase.huji.ac.il:8080/catalog

- MIDUS II — Midlife in the United States: A National
Study of Health and Well-Being— midus2.ssc.wisc.edu

- National Survey of Family Growth, Wave VI
www.cdc.gov/nchs/nsfg.htm

- Nesstar — www.nesstar.com

- Social Science Research Services (SSRS) and Social
Science Libraries & Information Services (SSLIS) at
Yale University — ssrs.yale.edu
www.library.yale.edu/socsci

- Survey Documentation and Analysis — sda.berkeley.edu

- Vision of Britain — www.VisionOfBritain.org.uk

- World Bank International Household Survey Network
(IHSN) and Microdata Management Toolkit
www.internationalsurveynetwork.org/home

<ddi>

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