

DIRECTIONS

A newsletter of the Data Documentation Initiative

Welcome to the first issue of *DDI Directions*. These are busy times for the DDI community, and the goal of the newsletter is to keep us all informed about the various activities and events taking place. Please feel free to contact me with suggestions for newsletter content (vardigan@umich.edu). We hope to publish quarterly.

With DDI 3.0 scheduled to be released soon (first quarter 2008), there has been a great deal of interest in the specification and an increased need for promotion of the effort, training, and tools. Members of the DDI Alliance and others have stepped up productivity in all of these areas. In this issue, you can learn more about what has been done and what is planned for 2008. Many thanks to all of you who are working so hard to advance DDI around the world.

Mary Vardigan, Director, DDI Alliance

In-Depth DDI Training

On October 24–26, GESIS (German Social Science Infrastructure Services) sponsored a workshop on “Using DDI 3.0 to Support Preservation, Management, Access, and Dissemination Systems for Social Science Data,” at Dagstuhl, a computer training facility in Wadern, Germany. Course instructors were Arofan Gregory (Open Data Foundation, Tucson, AZ); Wendy L. Thomas (Minnesota Population Center, Minneapolis, MN); and Joachim Wackerow (GESIS-ZUMA, Mannheim, Germany).

According to Achim, “For mostly all participants it seemed to be an interesting and fruitful workshop. Dagstuhl provides a very well organized and efficient environment. Wendy and Arofan did a great job putting together the slides and presenting the details of DDI 3.0. I think most of the participants really understood the details of the life cycle idea and the use of DDI in this sense.”



DDI 3.0 workshop participants relax after training at Dagstuhl, a computer training facility in Wadern, Germany.

[View training materials developed for the workshop.](#)

After the training, the DDI’s Technical Implementation Committee (TIC) met to set goals for the future. In attendance were Arofan, Wendy, Achim, Angat Bhat (UK Data Archive), Jeremy Iverson (Algenta), and J Gager (Aeon Consulting).

At the end of September, Sanda Ionescu, Metadata Specialist at ICPSR, gave a **half-day workshop** on DDI 3.0 at the CESSDA Expert Seminar, held at the UK Data Archive, University of Essex. The overall structure and technical mechanisms of DDI 3.0 were presented, as well as several use cases. As CESSDA members are all DDI users, and currently disseminate their holdings through

Nesstar, the workshop raised a lot of interest and prompted discussions about the benefits and challenges of producing DDI 3.0 instances, as well as designing and building software to support the new version.

Other DDI Presentations

Chris Nelson and Arofan Gregory taught a course for Eurostat called



Some of the participants in the CESSDA DDI 3 training took a tour of London following the workshop.

“New Advanced Technologies for Data Collection and Transmission” on November 19–21. The course was targeted at national statistical agencies and provided training in standards including SDMX and DDI. It was taught in the UK, just outside of London.

Ron Nakao, Director of Stanford Library’s Social Science Data and Software (SSDS), gave a [DDI presentation](#) at the Fall Forum of the Digital Library Federation in Philadelphia, PA, on November 7.

Mary Vardigan, Director of the DDI Alliance, presented a [poster on DDI](#) at the e-Social Science meeting in Ann Arbor, MI, on October 8.

Upcoming DDI Events

- In December, Arofan will be presenting at the XML 2007 conference in Boston, where he will provide an overview of various standards. [View abstract for Arofan’s presentation.](#)
- Pascal Heus will present a paper he co-authored with Wendy Thomas and Mary Vardigan and a poster co-created with Wendy Thomas at the Digital Curation Conference to be held December 11–13 in Washington, D.C.
- Metadata Technology will offer courses on DDI 3.0 on March 5–7

and April 16–18, 2008, in Godalming, outside of London, in Surrey.

- Plans are shaping up to hold a new type of DDI workshop at IASSIST (this year’s conference is at Stanford University, May 27–30, 2008), as well as sessions on DDI tools and a DDI booth that is on display throughout the conference.
- On June 25, 2008, as part of the International Conference on Survey Methods in Multinational, Multiregional, and Multicultural Contexts (3MC), Wendy Thomas and Achim Wackerow will present a half-day workshop entitled “Using Data Documentation Initiative (DDI) Guidelines.”

DDI Usability and Outreach Group

Now that official publication of DDI 3.0 is getting close, this group has become more active in promoting the DDI. The group has held several phone conferences and has set up a Google Groups Web site. If you are interested in joining the effort, please contact [Ron Nakao \(ronbo@stanford.edu\)](mailto:ronbo@stanford.edu), who can sign you up for the Google Group. The UOG has developed a general DDI brochure — see the link on this page. Also planned are new Web site content (“DDI 101,” to introduce people to DDI in a user-friendly way) and a library of PowerPoint presentations to use for DDI training and informational purposes.

DDI Foundation Tools Program

The DDI Alliance, the Danish Data Archive, the National Opinion Research Center (NORC), the Open Data Foundation, the UK

Data Archive, GESIS-Mannheim, and the Canadian Research Data Centre Network have come together in a partnership to establish the DDI Foundation Tools Program. Deliverables are open-source tools that constitute a DDI Toolkit.

Project Manager Pascal Heus says the effort has made good progress, and he expects to announce a Web site and a roadmap for tools development shortly.

Components of the DDI 3.0 Toolkit are:

- Architecture Documentation for Developers
- DDI 2.* to 3.0 Conversion Tool
- DDI 3.0 URN Resolution Tool
- DDI 3.0 Display Stylesheets
- DDI 3.0 Grouping Tool
- DDI 3.0 Validation Tool

The program kick-off occurred at IASSIST in Montreal on May 16, 2007. The final deliverables are targeted for December 2008. ■

[View the new DDI brochure!](#)

