

# DIRECTIONS

A newsletter of the Data Documentation Initiative

There is a lot of good DDI news to report. Use of the standard is spreading, as evidenced by its take-up by two major software packages – StatTransfer and Blaise. And new DDI working groups are forming, bringing more opportunities to become involved. Read more in this issue to learn about these exciting developments.

*Mary Vardigan, Director, DDI Alliance*

## Paris Microdata Group and DDI

*By Wendy Thomas*

The Paris Microdata Group will soon become the OECD Expert Group on International Access to Microdata, reporting directly to the OECD Committee on Statistics (CSTAT). In the process of becoming an OECD Expert Group, membership to the group will be opened to all OECD member countries. The DDI Alliance is considered an instrumental member of this group due to the emphasis on a common metadata standard as a prerequisite to supporting efficient cross-national access to official microdata.

One of the intended functions of this group is to facilitate and support the shift to a standards-based metadata management model within NSOs through

value-added access systems, providing information on available tools and process models appropriate to NSOs, and where possible sharing development work and experience.

The work plan for 2011/2012 includes two major papers and continued support for the MacArthur Project on Labor Force Survey Harmonization undertaken by the OECD. This project is using DDI-Lifecycle, and their work will also inform the process of improving the comparison module of DDI-Lifecycle.

The first paper in the work plan will detail a business model for facilitating international access to official microdata, including confidential data. The intent is to support direct import of DDI-Codebook, DDI-Lifecycle and SDMX metadata into the new system.

The second paper is focused solely on metadata. The intent is to make a compelling argument for the adoption of a DDI-SDMX metadata structure to underlie the international access system and as a recommended model for data management with NSOs. This recommendation would include both DDI-Codebook and DDI-Lifecycle, so the coordinated advancement of the two development models is quite important. The current intent is that the proposed access system would be DDI-Lifecycle based but would import both DDI-Codebook and SDMX metadata content cleanly. The system could also export in these standards (where content was compatible). This would allow NSOs who contribute to the proposed access system to receive DDI- or SDMX-compliant metadata from the system.

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*Wendy Thomas chairs the DDI Alliance Technical Implementation Committee (TIC) and is the DDI Alliance representative to the Paris Microdata Access Group.*

## Call for Papers ~ Third Annual European DDI Users Group Meeting (EDDI11)

**Date:** December 05 - 06, 2011

**Place:** Gothenburg, Sweden

**Theme:** "DDI - The Basis of Managing the Data Life Cycle"

**Paper submission deadline:** September 25, 2011

**Hosted by:** Swedish National Data Service (SND)

EDDI 2011 is organized jointly by [SND - Swedish National Data Service](#), [GESIS - Leibniz Institute for the Social Sciences](#), and [IDSC of IZA - International Data Service Center of the Institute for the Study of Labor](#). The meeting will bring together DDI users and professionals from all over Europe and the world. Anyone interested in developing, applying, or using DDI is invited to attend and present. To submit a paper, use the IZA [online submission system](#) at IZA.

### *Keynote Address*

[Bo Sundgren](#) will deliver the plenary speech for EDDI 2011. He is professor of informatics at Stockholm University and has a long career in leading positions at Statistics Sweden.

### *DDI Courses*

A half-day DDI introduction will be offered on Monday morning, December 5, as two parallel

courses with a business focus (Wendy Thomas, University of Minnesota, Minnesota Population Center) and a technical focus (Jeremy Iverson, Algenta Technologies, Minneapolis).

### *Registration Fee*

There will be a subsidized rate for registration of 80 EUR per person.

### *DDI Developers Meeting*

A three-day meeting of developers working on DDI implementations will take place after EDDI11 on Dec 7-9. Agenda topics will include interoperability, open source tools, promoting DDI tools, sharing experiences, and future collaboration. To participate, please send email to [eddi11developers@iza.org](mailto:eddi11developers@iza.org).

### *Meeting on Qualitative Data and DDI*

A three-day meeting on qualitative data will take place after EDDI11 on Dec 7-9. This meeting will continue the work of the DDI Alliance working group on qualitative data and will focus on a possible extension of the current DDI Lifecycle specification (DDI 3 branch). The meeting is open to everybody interested to contribute to this work. To participate, send email to [eddi11qualitative@iza.org](mailto:eddi11qualitative@iza.org).

### *General Information*

For more information about EDDI11, see the conference Web site at:

<http://www.iza.org/eddi11>

Also, see the [YouTube video](#) on EDDI11!



Members of the DDI Alliance Expert Committee at the May 30 meeting in Vancouver.

## Members Join the Alliance

The Alliance is pleased to welcome two new members:

- [Statistics New Zealand](#) – Expert Representative: Adam Brown
- [Centre for Longitudinal Studies](#) (Associate member) – Expert Representative: Jon Johnson

## StatTransfer Now Supports DDI Export

StatTransfer Version 11 now supports DDI Lifecycle 3.1. For more information see:

- [New features](#)
- [Formats supported](#)
- [Manual](#)

## Blaise/MQDS Export to DDI Now Available

[Blaise](#) computer-assisted interview software now provides access to a supplementary tool – the Michigan Questionnaire Documentation System (MQDS), developed by the University of Michigan’s Survey Research Center to help create questionnaire documentation. MQDS exports to DDI Lifecycle 3.1 format. See

<http://www.blaise.com/Tools> for more information.

## Meetings on DDI-SDMX Collaboration Continue

Meetings with a focus on the use of DDI and SDMX together will take place in coming weeks, beginning with a workshop in Luxembourg in September and a meeting during the METIS conference in Geneva in October.

## DDI Alliance Forms New Working Groups

The DDI Alliance has three new working groups and a task force starting up. The working groups are now in the process of taking on new members and defining their charges and timelines. To join a group, please send email to the Working Group Chair noted below.

### *Administrative Data Working Group*

This group will explore ways to enhance the DDI specification to document administrative data optimally.

Timetable:

- Stage 1: Survey the different ways administrative data is documented in different organizations.
- Stage 2: Summarize the special requirements of administrative data.



Joachim Wackerow led two sessions on Structured Metadata at the recent ESRA conference in Lausanne.

- Stage 3: Review the DDI content with respect to data collection and administrative data.
- Stage 4: Compare the requirements of administrative data with the capabilities of DDI.
- Stage 5: Create proposals for a modification of the DDI standard.

First results will be presented at the DDI Expert meeting in 2012.

Chair: David Schiller, Research Data Centre of the German Federal Employment Agency, Institute for Employment Research (IAB) – [David.Schiller@iab.de](mailto:David.Schiller@iab.de)

### ***Paradata Working Group***

This group will look at elements of paradata (data about the process by which survey data were collected) that should be incorporated into the DDI specification.

Chair: Sue Ellen Hansen, Survey Research Operations, University of Michigan – [sehansen@umich.edu](mailto:sehansen@umich.edu)

### ***Disclosure Risk Working Group***

This group will focus on ensuring that DDI properly documents disclosure risk and remediation.

Chair: Bill Block, Cornell Institute for Social and Economic Research (CISER) – [block@cornell.edu](mailto:block@cornell.edu)

### ***Governance Task Force***

This group will be looking at governance issues developing out of the recent DDI external review.

Members of the group are:

- Ron Nakao, Stanford University, Chair
- Dan Gillman, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics
- Vigdis Kvalheim, Norwegian Social Science Data Services
- Steve McEachern, Australian Data Archive
- Anita Rocha, University of Washington, Center for Studies in Demography & Ecology (CSDE)
- Jon Stiles, UC DATA, University of California, Berkeley
- Wendy Thomas, Minnesota Population Center
- Joachim Wackerow, GESIS
- Steering Committee consultation – Chuck Humphrey

The group is charged with creating a new Charter and Bylaws for the Alliance, developing a mission and values statement, and considering a tiered membership structure. The group will complete their work by the time of the next DDI Alliance Expert Committee meeting in 2012.

### **DDI Agency Registry Now Available**

Algenta Technologies has completed work on the DDI agency registry. The registry lets you obtain an agency ID from the DDI Alliance. Using this permanent identifier in your DDI instances allows you to specify the authoritative source of your data and metadata.

The registry is connected with the global DNS system, allowing DDI URNs to be resolved using standard tools.

The registry is available at <http://registry.ddialliance.org/>. The source code for the registry and several related tools is also available under an Open Source license from the web site.

### **Release Schedule Online**

In 2011, the DDI Alliance is moving to a [planned release calendar](#). This will keep the community apprised of upcoming deliverables and provide information on when specific features and bug-fixes will be implemented in the specification.