

2008 Annual Report of the Data Documentation Initiative

Focus on Outreach and Usability

Now that DDI 3.0 is a reality, the Alliance is shifting its focus to encourage the use of DDI across the broader social science research community. Thus, the Usability and Outreach Group, whose mission is to publicize DDI to new audiences, reorganized itself this year and will be ramping up its activities in FY09.



Data Documentation Initiative

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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 2008 was a notable year for the Alliance in many ways, and below we highlight a sample of the year's important events.

Publication of Version 3.0. The most recent version of the specification was published on April 28, 2008. The release of DDI 3.0 was the culmination of several years of effort on the part of DDI working groups and the Technical Implementation Committee, all of whom deserve congratulations for a job well done. DDI 3.0 is a full implementation of XML Schemas, is fully machine-actionable, and is designed to reflect the life cycle of research data. The importance of this accomplishment for the Alliance cannot be overstated.

Training. FY08 was an active year in terms of training:

- A workshop entitled "Using Data Documentation Initiative (DDI) Guidelines" was presented as part of the International Conference on Survey Methods in Multinational, Multiregional, and Multicultural Contexts (3MC), held in Berlin in June.
- At IASSIST, which was held in May 2008 at Stanford University in Palo Alto, CA, several sessions centered on DDI, and two companion workshops – "Putting DDI 3.0 to Work for You!" — were offered.
- A course for Eurostat called "New Advanced Technologies for Data Collection and Transmission," focusing on DDI and SDMX, was taught in November in the UK.
- GESIS-ZUMA (German Social Science Infrastructure Services, Centre for Survey Research and Methodology) sponsored a workshop in October on "Using DDI 3.0

Alliance Members

- University of Alberta
- University of California, Berkeley
- California Digital Library
- Centro de Investigaciones Sociologicas
- CEPS/INSTEAD
- Cornell University
- Danish Data Archive (DDA)
- Data Archiving and Networked Services (DANS)
- Emory University
- Finnish Social Science Data Archive (FSD)
- German Social Science Infrastructure Services, Central Archive for Empirical Social Research (GESIS)
- University of Guelph
- Harvard University
- Institute for the Study of Labor (IZA)
- Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR)
- Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT)
- University of Minnesota
- National Opinion Research Center (NORC)
- Norwegian Social Science Data Services (NSD)
- Open Data Foundation
- Princeton University Library
- Roper Center for Public Opinion
- Socio-Economic Panel Study (SOEP)
- Stanford University
- University of Surrey
- Swedish National Data Service (SND)
- Swiss Foundation for Research in the Social Sciences (FORS)
- United Kingdom Data Archive (UKDA)
- University of Wisconsin, Madison
- World Bank, Development Data Group (DECDG)
- Yale University

to Support Preservation, Management, Access, and Dissemination Systems for Social Science Data,” at Schloss Dagstuhl, Leibniz Center for Informatics, in Wadern, Germany. After the training, the DDI Technical Implementation Committee met to set goals for the future.

- The CESSDA Expert Seminar, held in September at the UK Data Archive, University of Essex, featured a workshop on DDI 3.0.

Presentations. Papers on DDI were presented at the 3MC Conference in Berlin in June, the SAS Global Forum in San Antonio, TX, in March, and the Digital Curation Conference in December in Washington, DC.

Membership and Finances

The DDI Alliance had 31 paid memberships during FY 2008, 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 \$121,963.

Statement of Revenue and Expenses, Fiscal Years 2005 – 2008

	FY2005	FY2006	FY2007	FY2008
Total Revenue	\$64,913	\$64,906	\$72,382	\$78,607
Total Expenses	\$38,395	\$68,875	\$40,455	\$49,880
Revenue Over/ (Under) Expenses	\$26,518	(\$3,969)	\$31,927	\$28,726
Ending Fund Balance	\$52,465	\$48,496	\$80,423	\$109,149

Benefits of Using DDI

- **Interoperability.** Documentation marked up using the DDI specification can be exchanged and transported seamlessly.
- **Richer content.** DDI encourages the use of a comprehensive set of elements to describe social science datasets as completely as possible.
- **Single document — multiple purposes.** DDI documentation contains all of the information necessary to produce several different types of output, including a traditional social science codebook, a bibliographic record, and 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 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

Why Join the Alliance?

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

- Australian Social Science Data Archive (ASSDA)
- Center for Comparative European Survey Data
- Canadian Research Data Centres (RDCs)
- Census Bureau's DataFerrett
- Centers for Medicare/Medicaid Services (CMS) Denominator File Project
- CESSDA Data Portal
- Slovenia Social Science Data Archive (ADP)
- Italian Social Science Data Archive (ADPSS-Sociodata)
- Danish Data Archive (DDA)
- Finnish Social Science Data Archive (FSD)
- German Social Science Infrastructure Services, Central Archive for Empirical Social Research (GESIS)
- National Center for Social Research (EKKE), Greek Social Data Bank (GSDB)
- Norwegian Social Science Data Services (NSD)
- Swiss Foundation for Research in the Social Sciences (FORS)
- United Kingdom Data Archive (UKDA)
- CIVICACTIVE Project
- Cultural Policy and the Arts National Data Archive (CPANDA)
- DAIS Nesstar System at Health Canada
- The Data Liberation Initiative Metadata Collection
- The Dataverse Network
- DevInfo
- Documenting the Survey Life Cycle Using DDI
- European Social Survey (ESS) and ESS-Edu-net
- Gallup Europe
- General Social Survey
- Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR) Data Catalog
- ICPSR Social Science Variables Database (SSVD)
- Institute for the Study of Labor (IZA)
- International Household Survey Network (IHSN) and Microdata Management Toolkit
- Israel Social Sciences Data Center (ISDC)
- MIDUS II — Midlife in the United States: A National Study of Health and Well-Being
- National Historical Geographic Information System
- National Survey of Family Growth
- Nesstar
- Questionnaire Development Documentation System
- Social Science Research Services (SSRS) and Social Science Libraries & Information Services (SSLIS) at Yale University
- Statistics New Zealand
- Survey Documentation and Analysis
- The Tromsø Study
- Vision of Britain

