

DDI Alliance Executive Board Meeting

December 14, 2015

Minutes

Present: George Alter, Jared Lyle, Steve McEachern, David Schiller, Leanne Trimble, Mary Vardigan, Achim Wackerow

Alliance leadership (Steve)

- a. Scientific Committee -- Since Steve is now Chair of the EB, he would like to step down as Vice Chair of the Scientific Board. Adam Brown, Statistics New Zealand, has also indicated he is stepping down as Chair. When considering new leadership of the Scientific Committee, it would be good to have participation from the National Statistical Institutes (NSIs). When choosing new leadership, we should consider revitalizing the scientific board to facilitate activities rather than just chair and vice chair -- i.e., a more active role.

Next steps: Think about whom to approach about chairing/co-chairing and then discuss at next meeting. Also discuss at next meeting what role we want scientific board to play. Jared and Steve to determine if it is appropriate to hold elections before the annual meeting, or to wait and hold election at annual meeting?

- b. Vice Chair for Executive Committee -- At the first meeting of the new EB, Steve McEachern agreed to serve as Chair. We need a nomination from the Board for someone to take on the role of Vice Chair (members can nominate themselves or others).

Next steps: Please contact Steve if you are interested in serving. If no one contacts Steve before the next meeting, he will ask members directly.

- c. David Schiller will be leaving IAB at the end of the year.

Next steps: Jared and Steve need to clarify whether David can continue to serve on the Executive Board.

- d. Procedural note -- Jared and Steve will need to review the [Bylaws](#) to confirm how to make leadership changes.

EDDI conference (Achim)

- a. Summary Report from Copenhagen Sprint 2015: <https://ddi-alliance.atlassian.net/wiki/display/DDI4/Copenhagen+Sprint+2015>

Marcel Hebing moderated the sprint. He did a great job and kept everyone focused on producing decisions and documents. [See the summary report](#) and the [package of detailed documents](#). The main outcome is the production of XML schema and RDF on a build server (a virtual machine with a build process so you can push a button when you change something in the model and the server then produces the desired results). This approach has implications: Bamboo is using an Amazon virtual engine that creates

some costs (we'll monitor those costs). Further outcomes of the sprint: 1) Made lots of design decisions, 2) Focused on idea of having XMI representation of the model, to use this as a work product which can then be imported using common UML tools. Must still do some work to achieve XMI flavor that can be imported by UML tools. The advantage of producing XMI as a work product is that software developers can import the model and then generate/validate. Also expect quicker uptake of the model. The business case of XMI as a product is described in the document "XMI as a Work Product.docx" available in the ZIP file at <https://ddi-alliance.atlassian.net/wiki/download/attachments/10748005/copenhagen-sprint-2015-2015-12-07.zip?version=1&modificationDate=1449525912056&api=v2>. 3) Looked at details of binding rules.

b. EDDI conference report

Eighty three participants came from 44 organizations and 15 countries. There was an increase in participants (18) from official statistics organizations (7). Overall, the conference was very well organized. Everything went smoothly, with presentations made at a good level. Impression was that people enjoyed the conference. The conference next year will be at GESIS Cologne on Dec 6/7, 2016.

Marketing and Promotion update (Steve/Louise)

- a. Update on WAPOR/AAPOR -- The Marketing and Partnerships Group is targeting [WAPOR 2016](#) to roll out a marketing approach for conferences. A [document](#) was created to define the strategy. This activity is in line with the [Marketing and Partnerships goals for the fiscal year](#). Several [proposals](#) were submitted. The group is also looking into a side meeting inviting CATI-CAPI providers and software vendors whom we can approach about DDI.
- b. Louise's report from UN ECE meeting 24-25 November 2015, CBS, Den Haag: https://docs.google.com/document/d/1FhbdltENzOo7P02IINh_mAZt4d2ERpnm3e0f_xjXno/edit.
To do: Louise to discuss her report at the next meeting.
- c. Liaison with SDMX re VTL (validation and transformation language). DDI was asked to have participant attend a meeting at same time as EDDI. Unfortunately, we weren't able to attend due to timing clash with EDDI.
To do: Address VTL in moving forward program and engage with SDMX re VTL.

Training Group update (Jared/Steve)

The Training Group has requested someone from the AG or the Executive Committee to join them. Mary sat on the training group before and was able to provide context and project direction. From Jane Fry: "This would be in the role of oversight mainly to ensure that we are matching the objectives of DDI as a whole. The AG member would be more aware of the directions that DDI is taking and could provide guidance to make sure that we are following the same direction. S/he would also serve in the role of consultant for our ideas. As well, the AG member would be able to report back to the rest of the AG as to our activities."

Achim is interested. Jared will notify Jane and the training group. Regarding training in general, it would be good to evaluate what we're doing with training in general and the train the trainer role, specifically.

Budget update (Jared)

- a) Nothing to report - discussion if requested.
- b) Question about selecting a membership level when new tiered membership option goes into effect next year.
To do: Before next year, and in conjunction with the annual meeting, communication should go out to invoice recipient about selecting tiered membership options.

Strategic Planning (Steve)

It was agreed at the August meeting to spend some time during this meeting on strategic planning for the future, looking five years out. The [Current Strategic Plan](#) of the Alliance runs through 2017. The idea with a five-year plan is to project farther into the future in terms of high-level goals and to gauge needs and acceptance of the standard, especially once the new version of DDI is available.

Broadly speaking, the existing strategic plan falls into three areas: 1) standards maintenance and development, 2) expanding the community, and 3) restructuring. Regarding restructuring, on the governance side, we're looking pretty sound; we'll want to monitor the revenue and changes in membership model.

The committee had a broad discussion about strategic planning. Ideas discussed included:

1. Only one specification in future (move toward a unified standard).
2. DDI should have a strong relationship to a set of use cases. The specification should be tested against these use cases (test suite).
3. Integrated and linked documentation on the basis of the model and use cases. High level, field-level, glossary, FAQ.
4. Training and self-learning material.
5. DDI should have a reference implementation (not necessarily a production mature application).
6. DDI should have a strong exchange with other metadata specifications which cover similar or adjacent areas.
7. DDI should support the usage of DDI together with other metadata specifications.
8. Metadata definitions in areas with overlap to other metadata specifications should be harmonized in order to support usage of DDI with other metadata specifications.
9. DDI covers a huge area. Subsets of DDI should be provided for multiple user communities, for multiple concerns of stakeholders. The subsets shouldn't require the use or knowledge of the whole DDI.

We could review the existing strategic plan and see what should be changed/removed and what added. A working group could look into this.

There should be a renewed focus on DDI adoption, with good migration paths to the new integrated standard. There should be good mechanisms for getting feedback on DDI usability so we can fix problems encountered quickly. And, of course, we should always be looking for new revenue sources, whether these are memberships, partnerships, grants, or something else.

Two areas we haven't done enough in:

- 1) Move much more aggressively toward NSIs. It's an important community that could be very involved and supportive of DDI. As part of that, making clear the links between DDI and GSM and developing capabilities of advising people in GSBPM.

- 2) Developing tools for data producers so it's adopted and to change the data production process. Not just implementing in the standard, but also doing activities to get it adopted in the process. The goal should be for DDI to be created when data are captured. Third-parties have developed these, which is good, but we're at a point where we're very close to a turning point when we can really transform the way people collect data. We should be aggressively promoting. See, for example, the work that Louise and UKDA people have done reaching out to CAI people. At the last RDA meeting in Paris, had a session about developing standards in a number of disciplines. For DDI, although we have a well-established standard, the standard was developed by repositories with very little participation from researchers. With astronomy, researchers had a lot of input and, consequently, had much more buy-in from the data collectors. One idea is to frame this as incentives for researchers.

Use cases anticipating what DDI can do (e.g., variable registry). Two groups: 1) What is the good practice in the field and how can it be modeled in DDI. 2) Looking into the future, how could the workflow be changed?

Create coordinating committee that aims at bringing DDI to NSIs. Regarding tool development, we can put out a vision and then try to support people who are working toward that vision (e.g., Colectica, Nesstar, MTNA). Discuss where there are needs and if someone fills that gap, the alliance can promise them we'll help market and gain adoption.

Regarding restructuring, create a Scientific Advisory Board, which is a completely different idea than our Scientific Board. This is the idea of an external committee (composed of people not members of DDI Alliance, but who are involved in related standards). Someone like Michele Dumontier would be good to have on the advisory board. This is pretty common for scientific institutes. GESIS, for example, has a scientific advisory board. The purpose is to get input from people who are not involved with DDI, but who are involved in related fields.

Encouraging adoption and making it easier for people to use.

Determine who is using DDI. There might be uses we don't know about. Also would be interesting to understand who is not using it. Are we turning off people due to complexity or other issues?

Try to involve more external people in DDI. For instance, universities looking into metadata standards, especially graduate students and libraries.

Include a mission statement and guiding principles on the Web site.

Strategic plan could be a five year plan -- e.g., 2017-2022. For instance, NSIs and large projects base decisions and large projects on strategic plans.

New strategic plan should be in place by 2017-18 financial year (by the 2017 annual meeting). This means a document with major thoughts should be available as input for the Bergen meeting. A mature draft document should be available at the end of 2016.

Should figure out how the environment is changing (technology, norms and culture) so we can meet them.

To do: Jared and Steve will draft a timeframe for working toward a strategic plan. Have something to talk about in Bergen (June 2016) – i.e., here are our initial thoughts and how to frame them over the 12 months before implementation. Will bring for discussion during the next Executive Committee call.

Thank you to Mary

This is to officially thank Mary for her many years of wonderful service.

Next call

Jared will send out Doodle poll to schedule our next meeting -- likely in February.

Future Agenda items

- 1) Budgeting
 - a) Items that can be automatically approved without need to contact director (e.g., supporting sprints).
- 2) Review of summary document from Dagstuhl Review.
- 3) License and Copyright of DDI products -- report and recommendations from the Technical Committee.