

Steering Committee Meeting

Monday, May 23, 2005
Edinburgh, Scotland

Individuals in attendance:

- Ernie Boyko, formerly of Statistics Canada, representing the International Association of Social Science Information Service and Technology (IASSIST)
- Ann Green, Yale University, past IASSIST representative
- Hans Jorgen Marker, Danish Data Archive, DDI Expert Committee Vice Chair
- Marc Maynard, representing Roper Center
- Ekkehard Mochmann, Zentralarchiv fuer Empirische Sozialforschung (ZA), representing the International Federation of Data Organizations (IFDO)
- Tom Piazza, University of California-Berkeley, Expert Committee Chair
- Mary Vardigan, Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR), DDI Alliance Director

Financial Position

The Steering Committee reviewed the financial position of the Alliance, which will carry forward a positive fund balance into Fiscal Year 2006, which begins July 1, 2005. More of the DDI funds are now being used to cover the time of two XML consultants working on the Version 3.0 specification and to cover an increased number of telephone conferences of the Working Groups. The Alliance lost two members in 2005, the Census Bureau (representative Pat Doyle passed away) and Pennsylvania State University, although the two losses were balanced out by new members. It continues to be important to try to involve the Census Bureau in DDI matters.

Composition of Alliance Host Institutions and Organizations

Kevin Schurer, Director of the UK Data Archive, is the new president of CESSDA, replacing Bjorn Henrichsen. Thus, Kevin will become the CESSDA representative to the DDI Steering Committee, although he was on sabbatical and could not attend the Edinburgh meeting.

Leadership

Tom Piazza's term as Chair of the Expert Committee will end in October 2005. Hans Jorgen Marker's position as Vice Chair technically ended in October 2004 since staggered terms were recommended for the Chair and Vice Chair. We will need to hold an election in the fall to identify a new Chair and Vice Chair. These two representatives from the Expert Committee are representatives on the Steering Committee.

In terms of selecting a new Chair of the Steering Committee to replace Bjorn Henrichsen, the group decided to wait until Kevin Schurer and Myron Gutmann are back from their sabbaticals before making a decision. This can be handled via telephone or e-mail.

Report on DDI Expert Committee Meeting, May 22 and 23

The meeting went very well and a great deal of progress was made. The Expert Committee appears to be on track to publish Version 3.0 of the DDI specification in 2006. There was sentiment among the Steering Committee, however, that users are impatient for a comprehensive DDI standard and that the process is moving too slowly. Additionally, we need to draw more on methodological and subject expertise and involve researchers and principal investigators in development of the standard, not just archivists. Also important are good tools for using DDI. There may be funding in Europe for such tool development.

Also raised was the importance of an object-oriented model for the DDI with the question/variable level being the entry point. Another point to consider was whether the additional complexity of assigning the components of a variable to different modules is worth the payoff. Finally, there was a suggestion that we might want to prioritize module development so that the first modules to be created are the ones that the majority of users will need.

Next DDI-Related Meeting

A meeting will be scheduled in October 2005 for the SRG and representatives from each of the Working Groups, either in conjunction with the ICPSR OR meeting or around the time of the CESSDA Expert Seminar in Madrid. The Steering Committee advised that we work up

estimates to determine which meeting could be held most cheaply.