

**DDI Alliance**  
**Conflict of Interest Policy**  
**September 14, 2011**

**For DDI Alliance Member Representatives, Alliance Director, and Consultants to the Alliance Engaged in Outside Professional Activities**

**Status of This Document**

This policy is binding on the DDI Alliance as of 1 January 2012. The DDI Alliance Steering Committee will be responsible for reviewing and approving all disclosures and will seek advice of counsel to review their own potential risks for conflict of interest. This policy was modeled on the Conflict of Interest Policy of the World Wide Web Consortium -- <http://www.w3.org/2000/09/06-conflictpolicy><sup>1</sup>.

**Overview**

In order to assure trust in the work of the DDI Alliance, DDI member representatives, the Director, and all paid consultants (all hereafter called “representatives”) must operate in a manner that avoids any conflict of interest between a representative and organizations other than the Alliance with which the representative is associated. This policy identifies the types of outside professional relationships in which representatives may engage, and provides disclosure and approval procedures to help avoid situations in which these relationships may cause conflicts of interest. This disclosure and approval process does not ban, a priori, any particular relationship, but relies on transparency and on the good judgment of representatives and the Steering Committee to discourage improper relationships.

**Purpose**

The role of the DDI Alliance as a decision-making body with control over the DDI specification requires that Alliance member institutions and the larger social science community have a high level of trust in its activities. In order to preserve this trust, the Alliance must assure that representatives make content, technical, and management decisions free from possible conflict or even appearance of conflict arising from commitments to other organizations or individuals. This policy governing professional activities with other organizations will help provide guidance to the Steering Committee in maintaining these standards.

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<sup>1</sup> Conflict of Interest Policy for W3C Team Members Engaged in Outside Professional Activities, Editor Daniel Weitzner, W3C/MIT, [djweitzner@w3.org](mailto:djweitzner@w3.org). Copyright © 2003 W3C (MIT, ERCIM, Keio), All Rights Reserved.

The goals of this policy are:

- Maintain the vitality of the Alliance as a trusted decision-making body
- Avoid conflict of interest or appearance of conflict of interest in professional relationships with other organizations
- Assure fairness to all representatives and others dealing with the Alliance

In pursuing these goals, the Alliance recognizes that its representatives have considerable expertise in matters of interest to the DDI community. This policy is not intended to discourage representatives from pursuing activities outside of the Alliance; rather its goal is to assure that these activities do not compromise the integrity of the Alliance and the specification.

### **Activities Raising Conflict Concerns**

The following activities have the potential to create actual conflicts of interest, or raise the appearance of a conflict:

- Long-term paid consulting (six days full-time work or more in a six-month period with a single organization) for organizations relevant to the Alliance
- Any consulting compensated with equity (shares of stock, stock options, or other forms of corporate equity) for organizations relevant to the Alliance
- Decision-making role/responsibility in other organizations relevant to the Alliance -- Board memberships, etc.
- Position on publicly visible advisory bodies, even if no decision-making authority is involved, for organizations relevant to the Alliance

More specifically, in the context of the DDI Alliance, potential conflicts can arise from these activities:

- Work on metadata standards other than DDI
- Work on software implementations related to DDI

Note that for the purposes of this policy, consulting is any work done in a related field in exchange for financial compensation.

When a representative engages in one of these activities, he or she should take the steps described in this document to provide adequate disclosure of the activity, seek approval in advance where required, and consult with the Steering Committee in the event there is any question about the impact of the activity on the Alliance and the general guidelines set out here.

The following activities do not require any approval under this policy:

- Honoraria for speaking or writing engagements
- Short-term consulting engagements (five days or less in a six-month period)

### **General Guidelines**

Assessing possible conflicts of interest should be guided by general reference to the Alliance's mission and the particular individual's responsibilities. The representatives should not engage in any outside professional relationship with another organization unless it is clear that the relationship is consistent with the following principles:

- Architectural and content integrity: No Alliance representative should have an outside professional relationship with an organization whose activity is in conflict with the Alliance's mission or the basic architectural and content principles of the specification espoused by the Alliance.
- Public appearances or endorsements associated with other relevant organizations: If any public statements, endorsements or product-related commentary are expected as part of the outside relationship, they must be approved by the Steering Committee in advance.

Any unresolved question regarding a potential conflict should be discussed and resolved by the Steering Committee.

### **Disclosure Mechanisms**

Annual disclosures for all concerned will be made to the Steering Committee (through email to the DDI Director) by May 15 of each year in advance of the annual meeting. These disclosures should cover current activities and those anticipated in the upcoming year. Individuals with nothing to disclose should send a brief statement noting that fact.

Each disclosure should contain the following information, repeated for all relevant activities undertaken during the year:

Representative's name and institution

- Outside organization name
- Nature of relationship
- Duration of relationship (start and end dates)
- Scope of work