

DDI Alliance Executive Board Meeting

August 26, 2015

Minutes

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

Board Procedures

As this was the first meeting of a new Executive Board (EB), members discussed procedures. It was agreed that the group would meet roughly every other month, with the Chair and the Director agreeing on an agenda in advance of the meeting. The Director will write up the minutes, share them with the Chair and then with the full EB, and then post them online. Also, the Chair and Vice Chair will meet with the Director monthly (or as needed).

It was decided that since there is less geographic spread on this EB, we might settle on a consistent meeting time. It was agreed to meet at 8am EDT, which is 1pm in Colchester, 2pm in Nuremberg and Mannheim, and 10pm in Canberra.

Selecting the Executive Board Chair and Vice Chair

The Bylaws stipulate that the EB elect a Chair and Vice Chair. Steve McEachern was nominated to serve as Chair; he accepted and the group approved the nomination. The group will deliberate further over email about a Vice Chair.

Steve is currently acting as Vice Chair of the Scientific Board as well, so that group may need to select a new Vice Chair.

Budget Review

The EB reviewed the financial status of the Alliance over the past five years and looked at budget projections for the future. This included a discussion of expenditures for the upcoming workshop at Schloss Dagstuhl, [Facilitating Interoperability and Collaboration with Other Metadata Standards](#). This workshop will combine a DDI4 sprint with a review of DDI4 by outside experts. It will also provide a face-to-face forum for representatives from different metadata standards to discuss common issues including interoperability. Roughly eight people representing other standards will be in attendance and this will carry additional costs since most

need funding for travel and accommodations, as will some of the sprint participants. The EB was asked to approve these additional costs and gave their assent.

There was a suggestion that we might approach CESSDA about supporting activities like this and Louise will pursue this idea. It was pointed out that the Alliance will need to spend more than usual in intensive development periods like the current one, which will probably last two more years. It would be good to come up with new sources of revenue.

Governance Review

The EB reviewed several governance aspects of the Alliance, including the new Charter and Bylaws drafted in 2013 and the move to a separate Scientific Board, which is intended to be independent of the member representatives. We will need to do a mailing to push old members to make a distinction between general membership and scientific/technical representation. Also reviewed were the Collective Mark and copyright registrations on behalf of the Alliance. In addition, there was a discussion of oversight of the DDI4 Moving Forward activity, which is guided by an Advisory Group (AG). It was pointed out that the AG should report out frequently, probably every month. Related to this, the AG has been looking for a volunteer to serve as Project Manager for DDI4 and there are now two people interested in this position, which would include a communications role.

Marketing Plan Review

At its June meeting, the Alliance approved a new [Marketing Plan](#). The plan calls for increased expenditures on marketing over the next three years to improve adoption and understanding of DDI.

It was noted that the Marketing and Partnerships Group will be developing a marketing “toolkit” and trying out several options in the next year. This includes replacing flyers with more useful objects like pens, thumb drives, etc., and formulating metrics for success of marketing efforts. These metrics might include things like new members, new people on committees, email addresses for contacts, etc.

DDI was present at ESRA in various exhibit stands and on the program, but there was no coordination. The EB pointed out that we should think about coordinating our presence for more strategic impact at future conferences. There is an RC33 Survey Methods Conference coming up that we might also think about. It is difficult to get attendees at these conferences to engage as many are more involved in CAI systems than metadata. Quality and harmonization are key concerns, so these may be good angles to pursue as we position ourselves at these conferences.

The group also discussed possible linkages with the Research Data Alliance and with environmental Big Data.

The Marketing Group identified AAPOR 2016, which will be held in the spring in Austin, as a good target for marketing DDI. There will be several people from the DDI community there who will be presenting and exhibiting. Louise, Jon Johnson, and Steve will begin to talk about how to coordinate the DDI presence at the meeting. It may also be possible to hold a workshop in connection with AAPOR to educate field directors and survey firms about exporting DDI XML profiles out of CAI systems.

It was pointed out that there are actually two related benefits with different audiences for using DDI: the first is continuous metadata capture related to CAI and the second is provenance and question banks -- that is, how questions relate to variables. DDI has value across the full data life cycle and curating data using DDI from the beginning has benefits downstream. The General Social Survey and National Election Studies in various countries all have a stake in these sorts of activities and should be engaged with DDI.

Training Plan Review

At its June meeting, the Alliance approved a new [Training Plan](#). The plan calls for increased expenditures on training over the next three years to improve adoption and understanding of DDI. The group discussed this work briefly.

Web Site Review

The Alliance is currently working on revising and updating the [DDI Web site](#). The content should be finalized for the most part by early September, at which time some user testing will take place. Usability testing was conducted at IASSIST and changes have been made in response to the findings. The group also hopes to solicit feedback from participants in the Dagstuhl training session in October as the attendees will be new to DDI and thus a good audience to evaluate the site.

The point was made that the site should provide a central location for people to upload questionnaire profiles based on DDI. It would also be good to emphasize successful big projects using DDI 3.2, of which there are an increasing number.

New Business

Five-Year Plan

At its June meeting, the Alliance called for a new five-year plan to envision the future after DD14 is completed. 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. It was suggested that the external participants in the Dagstuhl workshop could provide useful perspectives on this, so we will try to get feedback from them. At

the next meeting of the EB, we will devote time to brainstorming ideas related to the plan. After that a small team can be recruited to work on this in greater depth.

Data Collection Profiles

Louise Corti and Jon Johnson have been actively encouraging organizations to adopt profiles of DDI to document the survey questionnaire implementation process, which enables the tracking of provenance as questions become variables. Jon added to his tenders to survey firms a deliverable specifying output in DDI XML. It would be good to encourage data producers in general to adopt this strategy and to share their profiles with others via the DDI website. A test was done to import the questionnaire XML into Nesstar and it was successful, so this seems like a good approach.

Invitation to Workshop in the Hague

The High-Level Group for the Modernisation of Statistical Production and Services has invited the DDI Alliance to the annual Workshop on the Modernisation of Official Statistics, which will take place in The Hague, Netherlands on 24-25 November 2015, hosted by Statistics Netherlands. These workshops provide the opportunity to review progress over the last year, and decide the priorities for international collaboration activities to modernise official statistics over the coming year. The Alliance has traditionally funded someone to attend. Louise Corti volunteered to attend the November meeting.