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‹ddi› DIRECTIONS
A newsletter of the Data Documentation Initiative

From the Director

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In this issue of DDI Directions, the lead story focuses on Schloss Dagstuhl, the setting for many recent DDI achievements and innovations. We are extremely fortunate to have access to such a venue, which has provided support for both training in the use of DDI and development of the DDI standard itself. Other stories highlight individuals who are playing new roles in the DDI community and we welcome their participation and involvement.

Mary Vardigan, Director, DDI Alliance, vardigan@umich.edu

In This Issue

Schloss Dagstuhl – An Ideal Meeting Location

Since 2007, sixteen DDI development and training workshops have been held at Schloss Dagstuhl – Leibniz Institute for Informatics, an internationally renowned informatics center in Wadern, Germany.

What makes Dagstuhl so special? The primary feature of the venue is that everything is designed to support communication between participants. The remote location encourages participants to focus on the work without interruption, enabling intensive discussion and triggering new ideas. The seminar and break-out rooms are comfortable and conveniently located and bring people together for large and small meetings. Because participants stay for the week, they can work together through the day and continue into the evening if desired, but they can also take advantage of other social activities in the evening, such as ping-pong, billiards, or discussions in the wine cellar. Building relationships in this way results in more efficient communication and higher quality interactions overall, leading to enhanced productivity and good outcomes.

Schloss Dagstuhl in Wadern, Germany

Workshops and Outcomes

The DDI expert workshops have been supported and organized by the DDI Alliance and its members; GESIS – Leibniz Institute for the Social Sciences; the Open Data Foundation; and the University of Minnesota Population Center. Training workshops (also the two workshops on Semantic Statistics in 2011/2012) were organized by GESIS. Joachim Wackerow envisioned and initiated the Dagstuhl DDI workshops, and Arofan Gregory, Wendy Thomas, Mary Vardigan, and Joachim Wackerow have been the main organizers.

Combining training and expert workshops in sequence at the same location supports the process of building a community of qualified DDI users and specification developers. Often DDI users eventually become active contributors to further development. This is especially important for DDI as a community-driven standard.

Outcomes and products from the Dagstuhl expert workshops have included:

- **Next-generation DDI.** The vision for the model-driven DDI was shaped at Dagstuhl in 2012 and since then the work has progressed to include the UML model and production framework for the new specification.
- **RDF ontologies.** The DDI RDF Vocabulary Discovery (Disco) and XKOS, the Extended Knowledge Organization System, were created in workshops on Semantic Statistics in 2011 and 2012.
- **24 working papers.** A rich set of papers on various topics related to DDI have been produced at Dagstuhl, including the Generic Longitudinal Business Process Model (GLBPM) paper and several other papers focused on using DDI to document longitudinal data.

A detailed list of the Dagstuhl workshops and related results is available on the DDI Alliance website.

This Year's Workshops

Two more workshops at Dagstuhl are planned for 2015:

- A training workshop organized by GESIS and focusing on DDI Lifecycle will be held October 12-16, 2015. Participants will actively document real-world use cases to learn how best to employ the DDI model and associated technology.
- A combined metadata workshop and sprint will take place the following week. This workshop will bring together invited representatives from other metadata standards to provide an external review of current DDI work. In parallel, participants will continue to develop the model-driven DDI specification.

Four New Members Elected to DDI Alliance Executive Board

The June 2015 election resulted in four new members joining the DDI Executive Board:

- Bill Block, Cornell Institute for Social and Economic Research (CISER) – 2015-2019
- Louise Corti, United Kingdom Data Archive (UKDA) – 2015-2019
- David Schiller, Research Data Centre of the German Federal Employment Agency, Institute for Employment Research (IAB) – 2015-2017, completing the term of Gillian Nicoll
- Joachim Wackerow, GESIS - Leibniz Institute for the Social Sciences – 2015-2019

Bill Block   Lousie Corti   David Schiller   Joachim Wackerow

Continuing members include:

- Steve McEachern, Australian Data Archive (ADA) – 2013-2017
- Leanne Trimble, University of Toronto, Scholars Portal – 2013-2017
- George Alter, representing ICPSR, the Alliance Host Institution

The Alliance offers a warm welcome to the new Board, which will meet for the first time at the end of August.

Sincere thanks are owed to the outgoing Board members -- Mari Kleemola, Ron Nakao, Gillian Nicoll, and Anita Rocha -- for their excellent service and dedication. They accomplished a great deal during a short time and had a huge impact on professionalizing the organization.

New DDI Executive Director Selected

At its June 3 meeting in Minneapolis, the Board appointed Jared Lyle of ICPSR to serve as the next Executive Director of the Alliance, replacing Mary Vardigan, who had served in this capacity since the inception of the Alliance in 2003.
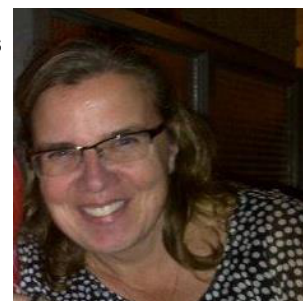
Jared will take over as Director in December, bringing new strengths and skills to the role. He is an Associate Archivist and Director of Curation Services at ICPSR where he supervises the ICPSR Metadata Unit. He advocates for best practices in data management and curation in many venues and is an instructor in the ICPSR Summer Program course "Curating and Managing Research Data for Reuse."

Jared Lyle

He has a Master's degree from the University of Michigan's School of Information and has been active in facilitating partnerships between domain repositories and institutional repositories. He also coordinates activities of the Data Preservation Alliance for the Social Sciences (Data-PASS), a voluntary partnership of organizations created to archive, catalog, and preserve data used for social science research.

New DDI Trainer Chosen

Michelle Edwards from the Cornell Institute for Social and Economic Research (CISER) at Cornell University in the US has been chosen as the new DDI trainer and will participate in the train the trainer workshop at Schloss Dagstuhl on October 12-16.

Michelle has an MLIS degree and has been active in the academic library community for several years. While at the University of Guelph, she helped to develop a Best Practices document for DDI markup to be used by data librarians across Canada. She also presented about the merits and benefits of DDI to the Statistics Canada Standards Division. With respect to

Michelle Edwards

instruction, she has taught several courses and workshops on topics such as using secondary data, working with statistical software, and quantitative literacy. Looking ahead, Michelle has a vision "to bring DDI to the researchers in a form they will embrace and use," and she has a number of concrete ideas related to realizing this vision.

Five very qualified people applied for the position, and we hope to offer this program again in coming years with support from the DDI Alliance and GESIS.

NADDI Meeting Held

Approximately 55 people from three countries attended the 2015 NADDI Conference, which was held April 8-9 and hosted by the Institute on Aging (IOA) of the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Barry Radler of the MIDUS project led the local organizers team, which also included Elise Dunham, Jeremy Iverson, Cindy Severt, and Dan Smith.

Dr. Tito Castillo, Founder & Managing Director, Xperimint Ltd., delivered the Keynote Address on the topic of "From 'Data Discoverability' to 'Data Navigability.'"

The conference program was notable in that several researchers presented about using DDI for complex longitudinal projects, and there were sessions related to libraries' data and metadata policies and experiences.

First DDI Model Product Released

The first draft release of the new model-based DDI was put out for comment in May, with the review period extended through mid-June to allow members to complete their review and submit issues.

The Technical Committee is now working on addressing the comments raised in the review. A total of 74 issues were filed. As of mid-July the Technical Committee had

performed an initial review on the first 60 issues. Related issues were grouped into categories -- for example, general documentation issues, RDF documentation issues, modeling rules, GSIM-related issues, consistency, etc. A number of reviewers provided comments on the review process itself, most of which were quite positive. When the Technical Committee completes the review of the submitted issues, it will prepare a report on the overall review results for the Modeling Team and the DDI Alliance.

Seventh DDI Sprint Takes Place in Minneapolis

Twenty people took part in the seventh DDI sprint, held May 24-28, the week before the IASSIST meeting in Minneapolis. A good deal of progress was made during the week in the areas of:

- Methodology
- Production framework
- Data description
- Drupal enhancements
- Comprehensive citation
- Data capture
- Simple codebook

The citation work built on outcomes of a meeting held at Schloss Dagstuhl in 2014. Funded by the NSF (1448107), the meeting focused on ensuring that the capability for comprehensive citation information would be integrated into the model-based DDI.

As noted above in the first story of the newsletter, the next sprint will take place October 19-23 at Schloss Dagstuhl, followed by another sprint before or after the EDDI meeting in Copenhagen.

Alliance Meetings Held in Minneapolis

The DDI Alliance Annual Meeting of Member Representatives and the Meeting of the Scientific Board were held on June 1 in Minneapolis, MN, in advance of the IASSIST 2015 conference. Both meetings were well attended and productive. Members expressed support for a tiered membership model and new expenditures for marketing and training. The meetings closed with a celebration of the 20th anniversary of DDI, which began in 1995.

New DDI Representative at University of Guelph

Carol Perry has taken over for Michelle Edwards at University of Guelph. Welcome aboard, Carol!

Call for Papers for EDDI2015 Announced

A Call for Papers for the 7th Annual European DDI User Conference (EDDI15) was recently announced, with a deadline of September 6, 2015. EDDI will take place December 2-3, 2015, in Copenhagen, Denmark, hosted by Statistics Denmark and the Danish Data Archive/National Archive of Denmark. The meeting will bring together DDI users and professionals from all over Europe and the world. Anyone interested in developing,

applying, or using DDI is invited to attend and present. More information is available on the Conference web page.

Blog Post Mentions DDI and Reusable Metadata

A recent blog post from the International Journal of Market Research gave DDI and the Call for Action for Questionnaire Documentation project a nice plug. Jon Johnson, Institute of Education, University College London, and Louise Corti, UK Data Archive, headed up this effort to document instruments in DDI through the use of profiles that structure the output of computer-assisted interviewing software.

CLOSER Knowledge Exchange Workshop on Metadata Held

On May 21, a CLOSER Knowledge Exchange Workshop was held at the British Library to provide an overview of best practice in using metadata to enhance data management processes. Speakers and topics included:

- Jon Johnson, CLOSER – "Why metadata is awesome – How DDI-Lifecycle can be used to enhance data management"
- Louise Corti, UK Data Archive – "How metadata drives The Archive"
- Gemma Seabrook, CLOSER – "Making use of DDI to drive the CLOSER search platform"
- Jeremy Iverson, Colectica – "An in-depth presentation on metadata management tools"

SledgeHammer Pricing Changes

The OpenDataForge SledgeHammer Pro software has been recently approved by the US General Services Administration (GSA) for purchase through the GSA Advantage program. US Federal government agencies can now license the tool at a preferred rate of $259/user, with further volume discounts available (10-50:$239/user, 50+: $219/user).

The same licensing rates are also being extended to US State agencies, qualifying academic institutions, and not-for-profit organizations. Low-cost subscriptions remain available at $29/3-month and $99/year. For further information, purchase, network/server deployment, or other custom configurations, please contact info@mtna.us.

Colectica Announces New Releases

Colectica recently released new versions of Colectica and Colectica for Excel.

Colectica 5.1 now supports DDI Codebook 2.x and DDI Lifecycle 3.1, and 3.2 and has the following new features:

- Metadata quality check reports
- SPSS 23 and Stata 14 support
- In-depth documentation and tutorials
- Expanded supported DDI content
- New Colectica SDK nugget packages
- Hundreds of new features and improvements

The new release of Colectica for Excel, version 5, supports:

- DDI 3.2
- Simplified code list editor
- Greatly improved performance
- Multiple identifiers for Variables
- Improved support for Excel 2013 multiple windows

The Professional version now supports importing Stata up to version 13 and importing SPSS up to version 23. Contact Colectica for more information.

Comments and Volunteers for Open Source Metadata Registry Sought

Sam Spencer at the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare has issued a request for comments and volunteers for an open source ISO 11179 metadata registry called the Aristotle Metadata Registry (Aristotle-MDR). Aristotle-MDR is a Django/Python application that provides an authoring environment for a wide variety of 11179 compliant metadata objects with a focus on being multilingual. Sam is hoping to raise interest among bug checkers, translators, experienced HTML and Python programmers and data modelers for mapping of ISO 11179 to DDI3.2 (and potentially other formats).

- The github
- The demo/dev instance
- Screenshots

If you find bugs or identify areas of work, feel free to raise them either by emailing Sam or by raising a bug on Github.