DDI DIRECTIONS

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Executive Director's Note

We look forward to seeing many of our members in Montreal for our annual Meeting of Members and meeting of the Scientific Board. We also look forward to a DDI 4 prototype release in mid-2018. More details are in this issue!

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Save the Date: DDI Alliance Annual Meeting in Montreal, Canada

The DDI Alliance will hold its annual meeting on Monday, May 28, 2018, in room LB-362 of the Webster Library, 1400 De Maisonneuve Blvd. W., Montreal, Canada (the day before the start of the IASSIST conference). This is an opportunity for members to learn about Alliance activities and provide feedback on priorities for the coming year.

The morning will be devoted to the Meeting of Members and the afternoon to the meeting of the Scientific Board, with lunch provided in between. As noted in previous years, in most cases it will be the same person attending both meetings, but do feel free to send different people.

More details about the meeting, including a full agenda, will be available soon. We hope to see many of you at the meeting.

IASSIST & CARTO 2018
Once Upon a Data Point: Sustaining our Data Storytellers

Update on DDI Work Product Development

Dear colleagues,

Since our inception in 1995, the DDI Alliance has developed work products to meet the evolving needs of our user communities and changes in technology. Our stable work products include:

- DDI-Codebook (DDI 2) - an XML structure for describing codebooks (or data dictionaries), for a single study.
- DDI-Lifecycle (DDI 3) - an XML structure that expands on the coverage of a single study along the data lifecycle and can describe several waves of data collection, and even ad hoc collections of datasets grouped for the purposes of comparison.

The Alliance continues to support, develop, and encourage the adoption of these specifications.

At the same time, the Alliance is continuing development to meet new user and technology needs, especially to address limitations of the standard. Our newest development is what we are calling DDI 4 and will be very different from earlier DDI work products because it will be based on an information model of the metadata content. This information model will be available for implementation in standard RDF vocabularies and standard XML structures,

which will be equivalent. This form of model-based standard is a best practice in the world of standardization, and several other standards in other domains have been using this approach for many years. Developing DDI 4 is a way of protecting the standard against technological change, and a way of guaranteeing alignment across different technology implementations. [1]

Work on DDI 4 has been underway for several years and we are planning to release a prototype of the specification in mid-2018. This preliminary version is not intended for production but will provide an opportunity to test and provide feedback on how the DDI 4 model describes and documents some basic research material, such as a dataset, an instrument, and a codebook. A specific list of possible use cases will be made available to review and apply once the prototype is released.

The Alliance will provide additional information about the prototype release in the coming months. In the meantime, feel free to contact ddisecretariat@umich.edu with questions.

DDI Alliance Executive Board
Steve McEachern, Australia Data Archive (Chair)
William Block, Cornell Institute for Social and Economic Research (Vice Chair)
Catherine Fitch, Minnesota Population Center
Dana Müller, Research Data Centre of the Federal Employment Agency, Institute for Employment Research
Barry Radler, University of Wisconsin-Madison
Joachim Wackerow, GESIS - Leibniz Institute for the Social Sciences
Margaret Levenstein, Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR)
Jared Lyle, ICPSR and DDI Alliance Director (ex officio)

[1] For more details about DDI 4, please see the Work Products of the DDI Alliance web page, as well as the Alliance working paper "Developing a Model-Driven DDI Specification".

New Members!

The DDI Alliance recently welcomed the Roper Center for Public Opinion Research (Kathleen Weldon. representative) as a Full Member!

DDI 4 Project Management and Consultants

In November, the Alliance hired two consultants to help with the DDI 4 prototype release. Both are one-year, term-limited positions, and were approved by the DDI Executive Board.

1. DDI 4 project manager (Kelly Chatain) -- This position collaborates with the several DDI 4 working groups, including the modeling team and the Technical Committee, to insure a coordinated and timely prototype release. Kelly is an active DDI community member and is knowledgeable about the technical side of DDI development work. She has moderated several Dagstuhl "Moving Forward" workshops, is chair of the Web Site working group, and is involved in the Marketing and Partnerships working group. Kelly is posting DDI 4 project management activities and updates here: https://ddi-alliance.atlassian.net/wiki/spaces/DDI4/pages/491651/Project+Management.

2. RDF consultant (Eric Prud'hommeaux) -- DDI 4 has the goal of being expressed in multiple bindings, including but not limited to XML Schema and RDFS/OWL. The Alliance requested assistance to provide the basic work on the creation of the RDFS/OWL binding of the UML model. Eric Prud'hommeaux, an engineer at the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C), has been selected as the expert consultant to develop concepts, select appropriate techniques, and give general advice regarding questions in the area of Semantic Web technologies. RDFS/OWL activities are being documented here: https://ddi-alliance.atlassian.net/wiki/spaces/DDI4/pages/246874113/RDFS+OWL+Team.

Additionally, the Executive Board recommended that the previous DDI 4 Advisory Group be updated so it moves primarily into a project management role. This included updating the group membership to:

- Project manager (Kelly Chatain)
- Executive Board chair (Steve McEachern)
- Scientific Board chair (Joachim Wackerow)
- Technical Board chair (Wendy Thomas)
- Executive Director (Jared Lyle)

After the mid-2018 prototype release, the Advisory Group composition and functions will be reevaluated. We want to personally thank past Advisory Group members Larry Hoyle, Dan Gillman, and Jon Johnson for actively contributing to the Advisory Group these past two or more years. And since all continue to lead or significantly contribute to DDI 4 development, they are still actively involved in the community.

North American DDI Conference: Registration Open + Agenda Posted

Registration is now open for the 6th Annual North American Data Documentation Initiative Conference (NADDI), which will be held at the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the U.S. Department of Labor in Washington, D.C. on April 5-6, 2018. The conference theme is "Benefits of Describing National Statistics with Common Standards," which emphasizes the benefits of using metadata to drive efficiencies in a research data lifecycle, as well as promotes subsequent re-use of end data products, especially those generated by federal and national statistical agencies.

A distinguished plenary panel will open NADDI 2018 on April 5th. Dr. Maggie Levenstein, Director of the Inter-university Consortium of Political and Social Research at the University of Michigan, will moderate a discussion comprised of the following discussants:

- Dr. John M. Abowd, Associate Director for Research and Methodology & Chief Scientist, U.S. Census Bureau; Edmund Ezra Day Professor of Economics, Cornell University
- Dr. Robert M. Groves, Executive Vice President and Provost, Georgetown University; Director, U.S. Census Bureau, 2009-2012
- Dr. John H. Thompson, Executive Director, Council of Professional Associations on Federal Statistics (COPAFS); Director, U.S. Census Bureau, 2013-2017; CEO, NORC at the University of Chicago, 2008-2013

Pre-conference workshops will be held on April 4th, with the main conference held April 5-6. Registration and the full agenda is on the conference web site. The deadline for early-bird registration is March 5, 2018.

EDDI Conference Held in Lausanne

[EDDI17](#), the 9th Annual European DDI User Conference, took place December 5-6, 2017, in Lausanne, Switzerland. The conference was hosted by [FORS](#) - Swiss Centre of Expertise in the Social Sciences, and organized jointly by FORS, [GESIS](#) - Leibniz Institute for the Social Sciences, and [IDSC of IZA](#) - International Data Service Center of the Institute for the Study of Labor.

There were nearly 100 participants from over 50 organisations and 20 countries. The conference [program](#) included 28 presentations and 6 posters, 3 tutorials, and 2 side meetings. Keynote addresses were given by Ron Dekker ("DDI Is Not Enough"), and Ingo Barkow ("Research Data Management in Switzerland - a National Perspective").

Save the date for the next EDDI!

EDDI2018 will be hosted by [SOEP](#) (The Socio-Economic Panel) at [DIW](#) (German Institute for Economic Research) in Berlin, Germany December 4-5, 2018.

Sprint Reports: Dagstuhl

Two DDI workshops were held in October 2017 at Schloss Dagstuhl in Germany. The goals were to combine the good and mature parts of the work of the last years in order to have three working functional views, a working class library, the resulting bindings and a working production framework. This is an important step for the publication of a pilot of DDI 4, which is planned for publication in the middle of 2018. The pilot is intended to demonstrate that the new approaches of DDI 4 work and make sense. This includes especially the model-driven approach, the functional views, and the datum-based data description.

The sprint reports, along with all supporting documentation, are available on the wiki pages:

[DDI Moving Forward: Production Framework and Bindings](#)

[DDI Moving Forward: Integration of Core Components / DDI-based Infrastructure Vision](#)