



Data Documentation Initiative



A metadata standard for the social sciences

Introduction

The Data Documentation Initiative is an international effort to establish an XML standard for technical documentation describing social science data. Initial funding for the effort was provided by the National Science Foundation.

DDI Features

- Modularity
- Data life cycle coverage
- Alignment with metadata standards: Dublin Core, MARC, ISO 11179, SDMX, FGDC, ISO19115
- Support for multiple languages
- Description of comparative content
- Capability to carry data inline
- Generation of registry entities such as question banks
- Extensibility

DDI Benefits

Interoperability. DDI documents enable seamless exchange and reuse by other systems.

Repurposing. DDI provides a core document from which different types of output can be generated.

Support for online analysis. DDI standardizes variable structure, facilitating import into online analysis and subsetting systems.

Enhanced data discovery. DDI enables field-specific, granular searches.

Multiple presentation formats. XML-based DDI can be rendered as ASCII, PDF, HTML, or RTF.

Preservation. XML documents are nonproprietary, containing embedded “intelligence” and optimal for long-term preservation.

A Sample of Projects Using DDI

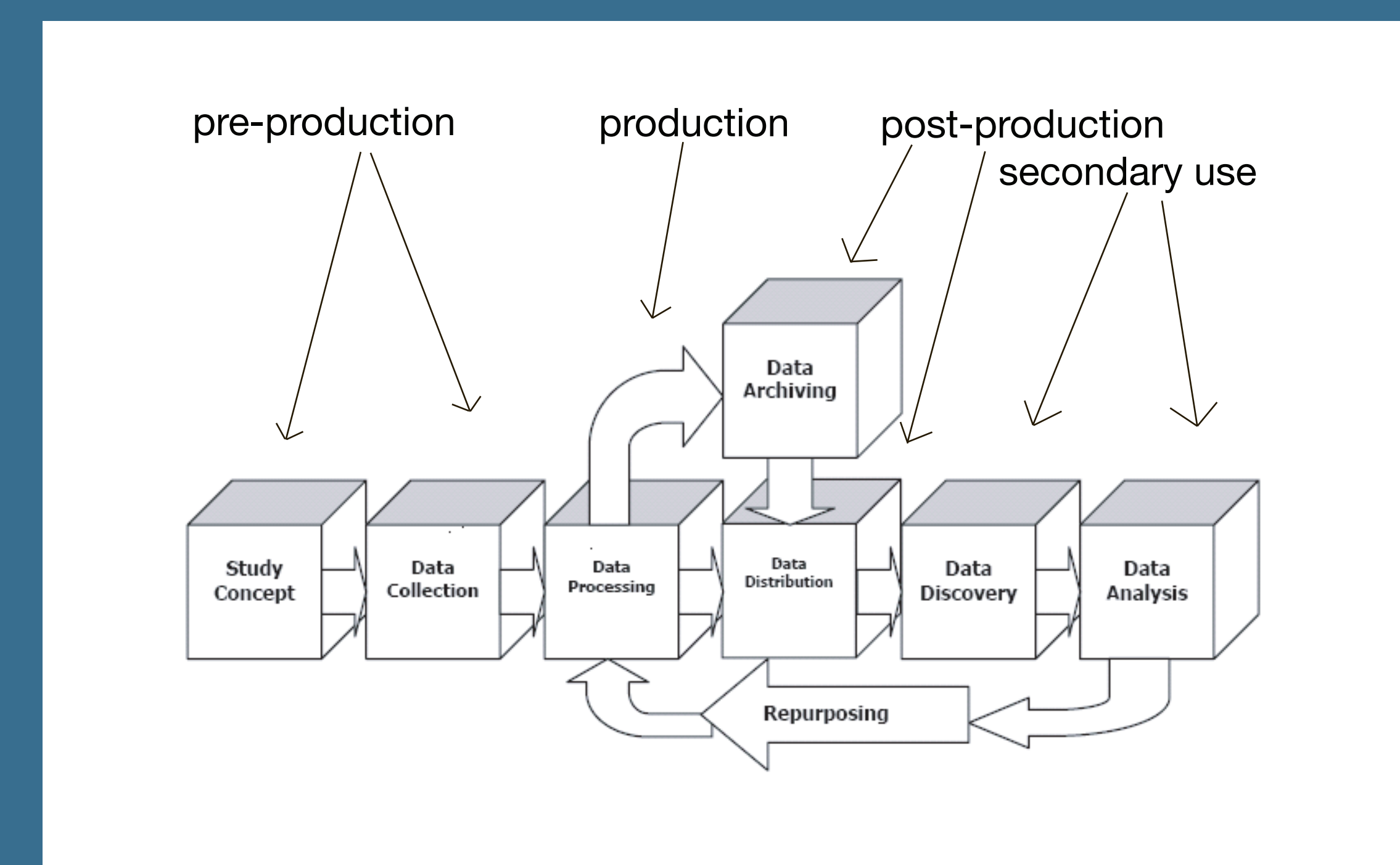
- Center for Comparative European Survey Data
- Census Bureau’s DataFerrett
- CESSDA Integrated Data Catalog
- Cultural Policy and the Arts National Data Archive (CPANDA)
- Data Liberation Initiative Metadata Collection, Statistics Canada
- DevInfo
- Harvard-MIT Dataverse
- ICPSR Data Catalog
- International Household Survey Network (IHSN) and Microdata Management Toolkit
- Israel Social Sciences Data Center (ISDC)
- MIDUS II -- Midlife in the United States: A National Study of Health and Well-Being
- National Historical Geographic Information System
- Nesstar
- Social Science Research Services (SSRS) and Social Science Libraries & Information Services (SSLIS) at Yale University
- Statistics New Zealand
- Survey Documentation and Analysis (SDA)
- Vision of Britain



Data Life Cycle Approach

The DDI life cycle view reflects points along the life cycle of research data, from the formulation of research questions, through data collection, to publication and dissemination.

DDI is designed to cover all stages in the life cycle of a data collection



About the DDI Alliance

The DDI is a standard developed by and for the social science research community. Currently, 30 institutions are members of the self-sustaining DDI Alliance. Institutions join the Alliance in order to contribute to the development and the direction of the social science metadata standard. Alliance working groups come together around technical implementation, substantive areas, and usability and outreach.

www.ddialliance.org