

As we head into our annual DDI Alliance meeting, to take place at Cornell University in conjunction with the International Association of Social Science Information and Service Technology (IASSIST) conference, there are some exciting things happening in the DDI community. Please read more to find out what your colleagues are doing!

Mary Vardigan, Director, DDI Alliance

Australian Bureau of Statistics Commits to DDI

By Alistair Hamilton, Director of Data Management, ABS

In October 2009 a meeting of the top management within the [ABS](#) committed to pursuing DDI (together with complementary use of the [SDMX](#) [Statistical Data and Metadata Exchange] standard, which is increasingly used internationally to support dissemination and exchange of aggregate statistics) as the key statistical information standard to underpin the statistical production process of the future.

It is thought that, in addition to realising a range of benefits for users (within and beyond the ABS) arising from data and metadata being structured in a standard, well designed, and well supported form, commitment to DDI will facilitate:

- Collaborations with other organisations in the development of new methods and systems to support the production and use of statistics
- More effective sharing of existing leading practice solutions among agencies

The ABS has since joined the DDI Alliance. Leading experts

such as Wendy Thomas, Arofan Gregory, and Joachim Wackerow spent several weeks with the ABS in the first quarter of 2010 building up the practical understanding of DDI and capabilities of ABS IT and statistical staff.

The same international experts are now providing technical advice, mentoring, and other

The screenshot shows the Australian Bureau of Statistics website. The main navigation bar includes 'Home', 'First Visit?', 'Statistics', 'Services', 'Census', 'Topics @ a Glance', 'Methods & Standards', 'News & Media', and 'Education'. The 'Topics @ a Glance' section is highlighted, providing access to key statistics across four main categories: Economy, People, Environment & Energy, and Industry. Each category lists specific sub-topics and includes a 'Please note' message about upcoming changes to the site's theme pages.

Economy	People	Environment & Energy	Industry
Economy Includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Business Indicators• Balance of Payments• Business Demography• Finance• Foreign Investment and Foreign Debt• Foreign Trade• Government Finance Statistics• National Accounts• Prices	People Includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ageing• Census• Children and Youth• Crime and Justice• Culture and Recreation• Demography• Disability, Ageing and Carers• Education and Training• Family and Community Statistics• Health	Environment and Energy Includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Environment and Energy	Industry Includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Agriculture• Construction• Innovation, Science & Technology• Manufacturing Statistics• Mining• Retail• Service Industries Statistics• Tourism• Transport

guidance to the team of ABS developers progressing on our initial practical “pathfinder” project called REEM (Remote Execution Environment for Microdata). REEM represents a new standards-based approach to “on demand” tabulation and confidentialisation, which uses as a starting point microdata - after collection and processing has been completed - described using DDI.

The same experts are also assisting with the design of the “backbone” of information management processes and supporting IT infrastructure (e.g., repositories, registries, and related information services) required to enable the ABS to apply DDI in an efficient, consistent, and integrated manner throughout the statistical production process in future. This strategic planning and design work is very much in its initial stages.

ABS is just one example of a number of producers of official statistics (both national agencies and international organisations) that recognise that the life cycle oriented nature of DDI 3, together with increased “systematically actionable” structures side by side with human-readable information, greatly extends the potential of DDI to add value for producers of official statistics - supplementing its traditional value for data archivists,



Members of the Alliance Technical Implementation Committee at the May meeting in Ann Arbor (from left): Arofan Gregory, Dan Smith, Joachim Wackerow, Wendy Thomas

researchers and others. The final report of a recent international [Work Session on Statistical Metadata](#), for example, illustrates burgeoning interest in DDI among producers of official statistics.

DDI Expert Committee and Steering Committee to Meet in Ithaca, NY

The [upcoming IASSIST meeting](#) in Cornell provides a venue for meetings of the DDI Expert and Steering Committees:

- The [Expert Committee](#) will meet on Monday, May 31, from 2-9pm in the Taylor Room of the Statler Hotel. The agenda will feature discussions relating to branding the two DDI

development lines, revisions to DDI 2, the evolution of the Alliance, and DDI and the Semantic Web.

- The [Steering Committee](#) will meet on Wednesday, June 2, in the Four Seasons Room of the Statler Hotel from 6 to 8pm. The agenda will focus on governance issues and related matters.

The IASSIST [program](#) will offer a two-part session on [DDI Tools: Possibilities for Implementers](#), with demonstrations of several new tools and services. There will also be a workshop on [DDI 3-Based Repository Management with Colectica](#) and a session on [Automated Curation Tools and Services for Metadata](#).

DDI Alliance Working Paper Series Published

The [DDI Working Paper series](#) is now published on the Web with two components: [Best Practices](#) and [Use Cases](#).

The Working Paper series itself has an International Standard Serial Number, or ISSN. Each paper has a number as part of its organizing theme (e.g., Best Practices, Document 1) and a [Digital Object Identifier](#) (DOI).

New Members Join the Alliance

The DDI Alliance is pleased to welcome two new members into the Alliance:

- [Australian Bureau of Statistics](#) - DDI Expert Committee representative: Michael Beahan

- [University of Washington](#) - DDI Expert Committee representative: Anita Rocha

Fall 2010 Events to be Held at Dagstuhl in Germany

Workshop on Longitudinal Data

An [expert workshop](#) on documenting longitudinal data with DDI will take place at the [Leibniz Center for Informatics, Schloss Dagstuhl](#), Wadern, Germany, on October 18-22, 2010. The event will bring together representatives of longitudinal data collection efforts with the goal of sharing expertise and exploring how DDI can assist in management and documentation of complex longitudinal data.

DDI 3 Training

A [training workshop](#) for DDI 3 will take place at Dagstuhl on October 25-29, 2010.

European DDI Users Meeting to Take Place in the Netherlands

The [second annual European Users Group meeting](#) (EDDI) will take place on December 8-9, 2010, in The Hague, Netherlands. A half-day of DDI 3 training will be offered on December 8.

DDI Technical Group Meets in Ann Arbor

During the first week of May, members of the DDI Technical Implementation Committee (TIC) met in Ann Arbor for a working meeting.

Agenda topics included enhancements to the DDI 2 line of development, integration of controlled vocabularies and survey design information into the standard, and as discussion of an RDF expression of DDI.

Attending the meeting were Wendy Thomas (Chair), University of Minnesota; Arofan Gregory, Metadata Technology; Dan Smith, Algenta Technologies; and Joachim Wackerow, GESIS-Leibniz Institute of Social Sciences.



Schloss Dagstuhl in Wadern, Germany.