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Save the Date: DDI Alliance to Meet in Minneapolis in June

The DDI Alliance will hold its annual meeting of members on Monday, June 1, 2015, in Minneapolis, MN, just before the start of the [IASSIST conference](#). More details about the meeting will be available soon.

NADDI 2015 Call for Papers Open

The [North America DDI Users Meeting](#) will take place in Madison, WI, on April 9-10, 2015, with a full day of training sessions preceding the conference on April 8. The theme of the meeting is "Research Data Management: Enhancing Discoverability with Open Metadata Standards." The deadline for paper submissions is February 13, 2015.

The Premier Data Documentation Conference

April 8, 9, and 10th, 2015. Madison, Wisconsin



For more information:

Email: naddi2015@gmail.com

Web: <http://www.ssc.wisc.edu/naddi2015/>

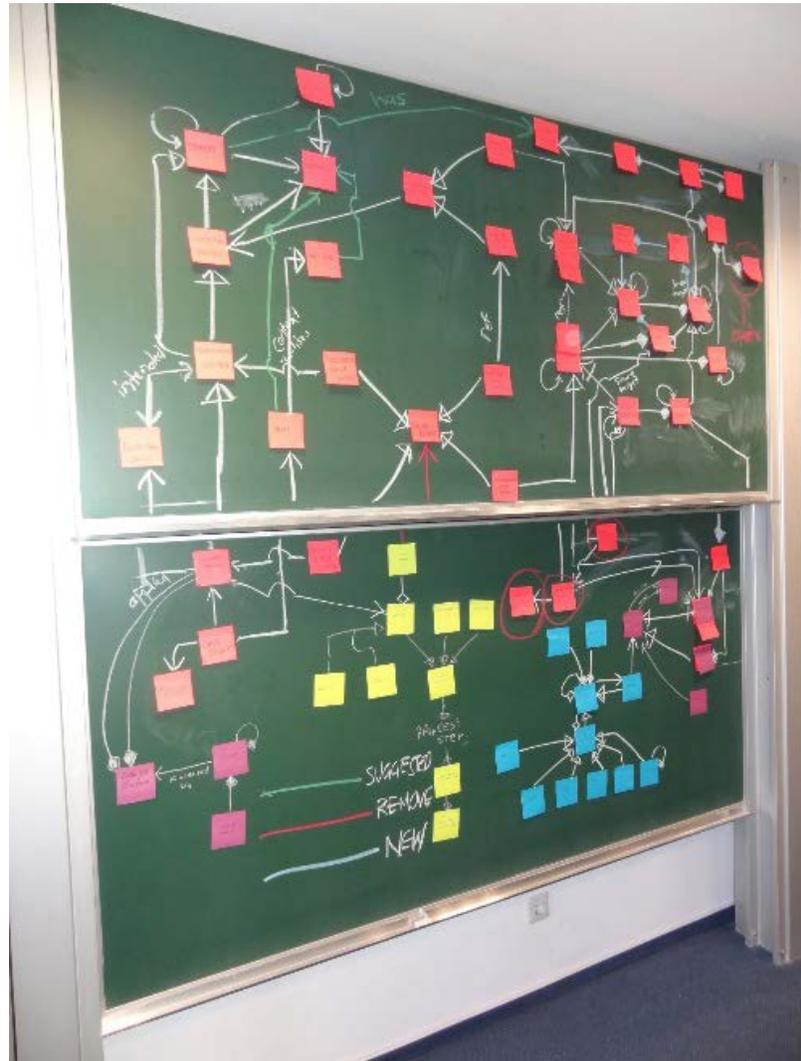
Twitter: #NADDICONF

NADDI Workshop on Open Data and Metadata Management

Metadata Data Technology North America is pleased to announce that it will offer a half-day hands on Open Data and Metadata Management Workshop at NADDI. The event will focus on the practical packaging of open data and metadata, in particular around statistical datasets. See [agenda](#) for details. They will also be giving away licenses [North America DDI Users Meeting](#) to the [SledgeHammer](#) software to three conference attendees. Visit the MTNA poster booth during the event to register.

DDI4 Moving Forward

The “DDI Moving Forward” project to develop a model-based DDI specification (DDI4) is making good progress. A [Sprint](#) focused on content modeling was held in Schloss Dagstuhl the week of October 20, 2014. This sprint included collaborative work on enhancing data citation information in DDI, funded by the National Science Foundation (ACI 1448107 and 1448127). Another [Sprint](#), more technical in nature, was held in London the week of November 24, 2014, with a goal of preparing the first set of DDI4 deliverables. This sprint was hosted by the Institute of Education, University of London.



The DDI4 model takes shape at Schloss Dagstuhl in October.

The [DDI4 Advisory Group](#) is now overseeing the development of DDI4 and is organizing the sprints and virtual meetings to advance the work. The Advisory Group has announced a [new release plan for DDI4](#), taking into account new deliverables prepared at the London Sprint.

Seeking Comment on DDI4 Priorities

DDI4 Advisory Group Chair Adam Brown recently announced that the Advisory group is seeking feedback on topics proposed for inclusion in Release 3 of DDI 4, due for public review in September 2015. Please [review the current proposals and provide feedback](#). Consultation closes 20th February.

DDI4 Project Coordinator Position Available

The Data Documentation Initiative (DDI) Alliance seeks a volunteer project coordinator to

support the development of [DDI Version 4](#), a model-based metadata specification for research data with a focus on the social and behavioral sciences. The work is progressing through a series of face-to-face sprints -- meetings where intensive work takes place -- and virtual meetings of the task teams.

The DDI4 Project Coordinator will work with the DDI4 Advisory Group (AG) to manage the work of the task teams. This work will include:

- Overseeing the work of the task teams, ensuring they meet regularly and stay on track to deliver agreed outputs [Team Leaders plus monthly oversight meeting with Project Coordinator]
- Identifying the issues and risks faced by the task teams and removing or reducing barriers to success [AG and Team Leaders]
- Ensuring connections are maintained across the work of different teams to avoid overlaps and duplication [AG and Team Leaders]
- Ensuring that the progress of the project is communicated to all interested communities [Project Coordinator]
- Maintaining and ensuring the project wiki is kept up to date [Project Coordinator]
- Coordinating logistical arrangements for face-to-face sprint meetings [DDI Alliance Director and Project Coordinator]
- Supporting the Advisory Group in other tasks as necessary [Project Coordinator]

is an exciting opportunity to play a key role in the development of the new standard. In this role you will work closely with the DDI Director and the Chair of the Advisory Group. If you are interested, please contact [Mary Vardigan](#), Director, DDI Alliance, by February 6, 2015.

EDDI Conference Held in London

[EDDI14](#), the 6th Annual European DDI User Conference, took place on December 2-3, 2014, in London. The conference was hosted by IOE - Institute of Education, University of London, and organized jointly by the IOE - Institute of Education, GESIS - Leibniz Institute for the Social Sciences, and the International Data Service Center of the Institute for the Study of Labor.

There were 108 participants from 69 institutions in 19 countries in attendance. The conference included [29 presentations in concurrent sessions](#), 3 tutorials (DDI introduction, RDF Discovery vocabulary, Java DDI library Stardat), and 5 posters.

The Keynote Address was given by Peter Knight (Deputy Director, Head of Research Information and Intelligence, Research and Development Directorate, Department of Health, United Kingdom Government). He focused on the challenges of collecting, getting access to, using, and analyzing data in the health sector in the UK and Europe and pointed out the importance of metadata for these purposes. Louis Corti of the UK Data Archive spoke in a second plenary presentation on "[Incentivising Uptake of Metadata in the Social and Behavioural Sciences](#)."

Save the date for the next EDDI!

EDDI2015 will take place in Copenhagen at Statistics Denmark and the National Archives on December 2-3, 2015.



Participants in the tutorial on “Working with the STARDAT DDI-Lifecycle Library,” led by *Alexander Mühlbauer*

Open Source License for Atlassian Products Obtained

The DDI Alliance applied for and received an open source license for use of the Atlassian suite of collaboration software products. This means the software is available to the DDI community without charge. We now have working instances of the following: [Confluence](#), [Jira](#), and [Bitbucket](#).

The DDI Moving Forward Project



The Atlassian Confluence site as designed by Thérèse Lalor

Call to Endorse Principles of Questionnaire and Data Documentation

A meeting on “Survey Metadata: Barriers and Opportunities” was held on June 26, 2014, in London to bring together survey owners, producers, Computer-Assisted Interviewing (CAI) software suppliers, and archives to discuss the challenges of working in a more harmonized climate that avoids the many hours of manual effort spent on creating high-quality survey data documentation. Participants in the meeting agreed to support a set of principles and to define a minimal metadata standard via a designated DDI profile for stakeholders to adhere to. The group is now asking colleagues and organizations that produce and utilize survey data to [endorse a set of principles](#) that will make it easier to re-use survey metadata across the data lifecycle.

OAI-PMH Server Kuha Announced

The Finnish Social Science Data Archive (FSD) has developed an OAI-PMH server named Kuha to publish its metadata. The server software was open sourced and its source code is now available on [Github](#) under the BSD3 license.

Kuha may be a good starting point for other organizations planning to publish their metadata via OAI-PMH but not already using digital repository software with OAI-PMH support. Kuha includes a loader for DDI Codebook XML files and a crosswalk from DDI to unqualified Dublin Core. Custom modules for loading and converting metadata in other formats can be written in Python.

For more information, please send email to: arttu.yla-outinen@staff.uta.fi

DDI in Evidence at HLG Meeting in November

The DDI Alliance, represented by Arofan Gregory, was invited to attend a meeting of the High Level Group for the Modernization of Statistical Production and Services in Geneva on November 19-20, 2014. Arofan provided this report:

There were approximately 50 people in attendance, coming from many different organizations and initiatives from among the official statistics agencies, both national and international, and some central banks. The program covered reports from the two “flagship” projects: Big Data and the Common Statistical Production Architecture (CSPA) services work. Following this, each of the four major modernization committees reported on work over the past year.

The general consensus was that since last years’ projects had produced some very interesting results, the best idea was to take the exploratory work that has been done in the areas of Big Data and the “plug-and-play” CSPA services, and continue with the goal of realizing these as production-level products, rather than just prototypes.

There was much discussion of DDI at the meeting. A proposal was made to take a few important steps regarding the use of DDI and SDMX in CSPA. The first step for DDI would to complete the DDI Profile work (based on GSIM), which was started in the past. With good profiles in hand for the CSPA services being created, these would be thoroughly documented with the NSIs as the target audience. Based on this, a simple API for reading and writing DDI would be created.

We did some exploration of this idea when we were at Dagstuhl this past fall. We looked at GSIM (the CSPA services are all GSIM-based) and were able to reduce the API to 14 functions, seven for reading DDI and seven for writing it. A prototype implementation to test the idea has been started. This approach was discussed at length with many people at the workshop, and found strong support.

In general, this was a successful meeting, with a clear commitment to the use of DDI in the CSPA work and elsewhere within the HLG.

Invitation to Participate in Building the GLBPM

Marcel Hebing has been using the [Generic Longitudinal Business Process Model](#), or GLBPM, in his work on DDI on Rails and in his thesis. The GLBPM is based on the Generic Statistical Business Process Model (GSBPM), developed under the “Frameworks and Standards for Statistical Modernisation” project by the High-Level Group for the Modernisation of Statistical Production and Services. Marcel has found the GLBPM helpful for both practical and theoretical work. He was involved in creating the first version of it at a [Schloss Dagstuhl workshop](#) and is now interested in developing this concept further.

He is currently working on the definition of digital objects (like questionnaires, datasets, etc.) that are used as inputs/outputs between the steps of the model. A next step might be to link the process steps directly to elements in DDI4.

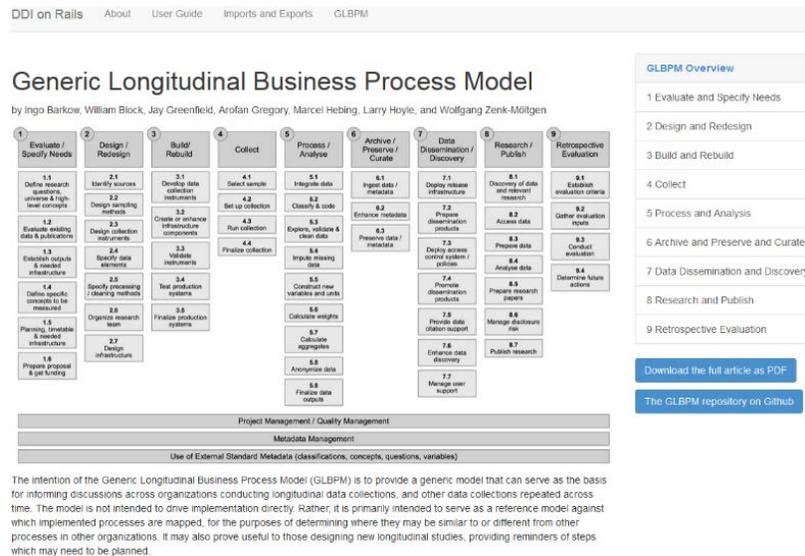
To make the GLBPM more visible, Marcel gave it a home on the Internet:

<http://www.ddionrails.org/glbpm/>

Furthermore, he created a Github project including a wiki for editing of the model:

<https://github.com/ddionrails/glbpm/wiki>

If you are interested in joining this project, please send email to [Marcel Hebing](mailto:Marcel.Hebing) with your Github user name and he will give you write access to the project.



New Version of fida for XML Revision Tracking Available

Jani Hautamäki from the Finnish Data Archive recently released Version 0.9.6 of the fida software, an element-wise XML revision tracking and version control tool written in Java. The software can be used to do both the revision tracking and the version control of any XML file that uses a language similar to DDI or SDMX.

The source code is available on [GitHub](https://github.com), and the official pages are maintained on [Google Code](https://www.google.com). If you are new to fida, the introduction tutorial is a good way to get started.

Colectica 5 Released

Colectica recently announced the release of Colectica 5. New features include:

- Support for DDI 3.2, in addition to 2.x and 3.1
- Roundtrips between DDI 3.1 and 3.2
- A new Designer user interface
- A new survey instrument creator
- IBM SPSS Data Collection support
- Improved SPSS and Stata v13 support

You can read more at <http://www.colectica.com/news/Colectica-5-released>

Colectica has also implemented a new pricing model. Many grant-funded projects have requested the flexibility to align their software usage with a grant timeline. To that end, in addition to the traditional perpetual licenses, Colectica Designer is also now available by monthly subscription. Also, a new version of Colectica Reader 5 is available for free.

DDI to be Featured at ESRA Conference

The [European Survey Research Association \(ESRA\) conference](#) will take place July 13-17, 2015, in Reykjavik, Iceland, and will include two sessions on metadata.

Recent Developments in Survey Metadata Capture, Discovery and Harmonisation

Session organizers: Jack Kneeshaw (UK Data Archive, University of Essex), Jon Johnson (Centre for Longitudinal Studies, Institute of Education), Joachim Wackerow (GESIS — Leibniz Institute for the Social Sciences)

Current versions of CAI software are limited in their ability to provide metadata for reuse, even as a by-product of their primary function of collecting data. This session will address the cultural, logistical and technical barriers to the contemporaneous capture of these metadata. It will also showcase emerging solutions to the problem, including developments in the extraction of survey metadata from CAI scripts to create XML files compliant with metadata standards such as the Data Documentation Initiative (DDI). In addition, the session will address recent developments in the UK and elsewhere in Europe where the creation of historical survey metadata repositories could be used to inform the future collection of metadata not only for discovery purposes but also to flag harmonisations and equivalences across surveys/studies.

Structured Metadata: Applications, Processes, Perspectives

Session organizers: Knut Wenzig (German Institute for Economic Research - DIW / German Socio-Economic Panel - SOEP), Daniel Bela (Leibniz Institute for Educational Trajectories - LIfBi / National Educational Panel Study - NEPS)

Various metadata systems for different stages of the data management lifecycle (e.g., questionnaire development, data preparation, documentation, data dissemination) are in use at institutions dealing with survey research. Resulting benefits are manifold: Data users can take advantage of metadata-driven portals which make it easy to search for variables; instrument developers can quickly find questions used in other surveys. Some of these metadata systems make use of evolving metadata standards (such as DDI or SDMX), some others are developed independently as custom solutions. Most of them have one idea in common: Structured metadata, stored in relational databases, make it possible to have one single source of information for data on data.

While metadata infrastructure in the first instance sets up the framework, processes have to be established to deploy these systems. This session aims to focus on systems which are already implemented and in productive use, with an emphasis the features of the systems, e.g., on the reuse of information on objects, the capability to deal with multilingual content or to drive data preparation, and their practical implementation. Workflows for managing and making use of metadata will also be addressed.

More information on the ESRA Conference:

<http://www.europeansurveyresearch.org/conference>

<http://www.europeansurveyresearch.org/conf2015/sessions.php>

DDI Annual Report Available

The [Annual Report for 2014](#) is available online. Highlights for the year include the new Alliance Strategic Plan and the establishment of the Scientific Board.

2014 Annual Report of the Data Documentation Initiative

Model-Driven DDI Work Continues

The model-based DDI specification (DDI 4) continued to be the focus of much Alliance activity during the past year. An Advisory Group with broad representation of stakeholders was formed to oversee DDI 4 development. Four sprints were held at locations in Europe and Canada to progress the work, and a new approach to the model involving functional views on the library of elements was developed. A description of this approach and the general production framework for the model is available in a [paper](#) that resulted from Sprint #3 held in Vancouver in April.



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The Data Documentation Initiative (DDI) is an open metadata standard for describing data and data collection activities. DDI's principal goal is making research metadata machine-actionable. The specification can be used to document and manage different stages of the data life cycle, beginning with conceptualization and progressing through collection and processing to data publication and archiving.

Fiscal year 2014 was a notable year for the Alliance in many ways, and below we highlight a sample of the year's important events:

- The organization adopted a new [Strategic Plan](#) with three major priorities for the period 2014-2017: (1) Standards maintenance and development, (2) Expanding the DDI community – Marketing and partnerships, and (3) Restructuring to achieve our priorities.
- The [Scientific Board](#) met as a body in Toronto in June. Led by Chair Adam Brown from Statistics New Zealand and Vice Chair Steve McEachern from the Australian Data Archive, the Scientific Board is charged with developing and shepherding the specifications.
- In keeping with the professionalization of the Alliance, a Project Manager was appointed to support the work on the DDI model. Thérèse Lalor from the Australian Bureau of Statistics served as Project Manager for several months and established a [communication platform](#) for DDI 4 development.
- Successful DDI user conferences were held in Europe at the Réseau Québécois (EDD) in December 2013 and in North America at Simon Fraser University (NADD) in April 2014.
- Three [RDF vocabularies](#) were put out for public review and comment: the DCX-RDF Discovery vocabulary for publishing metadata about datasets into the Web of Linked Data; Physical Data Description (PHDD), a vocabulary for describing existing data in rectangular format; and XKOS, an RDF vocabulary for describing statistical classifications, which is an extension of the popular SKOS vocabulary.

DDI Website Being Revamped

The DDI website is being redesigned: current content and navigation are being analyzed and reviewed with a view to making the site more usable. The site will also get a new graphic look. The DDI Web Team welcomes participation in these activities, which will conclude by summer 2015.

Web Team members include Web developers Michael Iannaccone (ICPSR), Olof Olsson (Swedish National Data Service, SND), and Stephanie Roth (SND). Kelly Chatain, Associate Archivist from the University of Michigan, Survey Research Operations, is also assisting in the effort as is Jingjing Wu, Web Services Librarian at the University of Mississippi Libraries.

The screenshot shows the DDI website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with tabs for 'Home', 'About', 'Contact', 'Specs', 'Tools', 'Vocabularies', and 'Contribute'. Below the navigation bar, there is a 'Welcome to the Data Documentation Initiative' section with a brief description of the initiative. To the right of the welcome message is a circular diagram illustrating the 'DDI Lifecycle' with stages: 'Conceptualization & Planning', 'Data Collection', 'Data Processing & Analysis', 'Data Archiving', and 'Data Publication & Sharing'. Below the lifecycle diagram is a 'What's New' section listing recent updates and news items.