February 24, 2001
Ann Arbor, Michigan

Present: Micah Altman, Grant Blank, Ernie Boyko, Bill Bradley, Cavan Capps, Peter Granda, Ann Green, Bjorn Henrichsen, Peter Joftis, Tom Piazza, Richard Rockwell, Jostein Ryssevik, Merrill Shanks (Chair), Thorny Staples, Wendy Treadwell

DDI Evaluation

The DDI Committee met in Ann Arbor on February 24, 2001 to discuss the current status of the project during a time of changing sources of support. A team of evaluators convened the previous day to assess the utility and future direction of this developing standard for social science documentation as the final task associated with ICPSR's NSF-funded project: "Electronic Preservation of Data Documentation: Complementary SGML and Image Capture" (SBR-9616813 [DDI]). Evaluators will submit their reports to ICPSR by March 16. These reports will be included in a final assessment of this project, which ICPSR will send to NSF.

At the same time, the Committee received news about additional support to continue its work in 2001 from an initiative supported by Health Canada. Health Canada seeks continued development of the DDI standard in conjunction with the production of a Web-based structure through which all of its staff will access data and information for use in research and policymaking. This interim funding is viewed as a bridge to permit the Committee to continue its work until a new proposal is submitted to NSF.

Aggregate/Tabular Data

DDI is seeking to expand its original focus on survey data to encompass tabular/aggregate data. At present, Committee members are exploring two alternative methods of markup for such data. Developers of the two methods will meet in April in Voorburg, the Netherlands, to reach agreement on a single model to describe aggregate data. They will present their findings to the Committee at its next full meeting on June 29 in the Washington, DC, area. The Committee is planning to meet informally at the IASSIST meeting in May prior to its full meeting in June, and the aggregate recommendation may be reviewed at that meeting also.

NSF Proposal

At this meeting, the Committee also formulated plans for its future work and drafted recommendations for a planned proposal submission to NSF in August. The Committee defined the following as key areas for further development of DDI:

- Build from its base of fully describing survey data to construct specifications for other, more complex data types, e.g.,

    ○ Hierarchical data

    ○ Data generated from CAI systems

    ○ Web surveys

    ○ Multiple country surveys

- Extensibility to other applications

- Interoperability between different sources of data collections

- Harmonization with other metadata standards

Richard Rockwell will begin to write a draft of the proposal for the Committee to review at its June meeting. The deadline for submission is August 15, 2001.