

Steering Committee Meeting

Saturday, February 8, 2003
Washington, DC

This was a meeting to formally establish the DDI Alliance. Individuals in attendance represented the Alliance host institutions and associations, as specified in the organization's Charter:

- Ann Green, Yale University, representing the International Association of Social Science Information Service and Technology (IASSIST)
- Myron Gutmann, representing the Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR)
- Bjorn Henrichsen, Norwegian Social Science Data Archive, representing the Council of European Social Science Data Archives (CESSDA)
- Peter Joftis, ICPSR, DDI Alliance Associate Director
- Ekkehard Mochmann, Zentralarchiv fuer Empirische Sozialforschung (ZA), representing the International Federation of Data Organizations (IFDO)
- Richard Rockwell, representing the Roper Center for Public Opinion Research
- Mary Vardigan, ICPSR, DDI Alliance Director

Bjorn Henrichsen was elected as the Chair of the Alliance Steering Committee. It was noted that two representatives from the Expert Committee (yet to be formed) -- the Chair and one other individual -- will ultimately join the Steering Committee. When that happens, the election of the Steering Committee Chair will reappear on the committee's agenda.

Organizational Documents

The Alliance Charter, written in the summer of 2002, was ratified by the DDI Committee in October 2002. The committee reviewed this document

and determined that the Alliance actually needs two separate documents: the Charter and Bylaws. The Bylaws will include all of the content of the Charter and additional language defining the relationship of the DDI to ICPSR at the University of Michigan.

The Steering Committee also reviewed the DDI Alliance membership form. The revised documents will be circulated via e-mail. Myron and Bjorn will exchange draft letters to the University of Michigan regarding the affiliation of the DDI with the University.

Strategic Plan

The Steering Committee agreed that the best way to move forward and to transition the DDI Committee to the new Alliance structure was to formulate a Mission Statement and a Strategic Plan setting goals and priorities for the Alliance. This will provide the new Expert Committee with background and guidance and will also be valuable when applying for outside funding. A draft of the plan should be ready in April when some of the Steering Committee members will meet in Prague for the CESSDA meeting.

Publicity

Outreach and publicity are critical to the long-term success of the DDI Alliance. The Committee discussed a draft of a promotional piece about the DDI and suggested that it be revised to be suitable for a more general audience and limited to one page. The DDI Web site should also be reorganized and redesigned to serve the Alliance members and to promote the effort. The Strategic Plan itself will be an important component of the publicity about the Alliance.

Another effective way to bring the DDI to the attention of the social science research community is to encourage the publication of articles related to the DDI in peer-reviewed journals. Steering Committee members can also help to publicize the Alliance by speaking at various conferences and meetings. A "Virtual Speakers Bureau" with standardized materials like PowerPoint slides that members can all take advantage of is a good way to facilitate this type of activity.

Structure of the Expert Committee

The Committee spent some time discussing how the Expert Committee, which will be the technical group developing the standard, should be structured to be most effective. While the Expert Committee will have some overlap with the original DDI Committee in terms of its

composition, there will be several new representatives. The Chair of the Committee will play an important role in ensuring continuity.

Upcoming Meetings

The Steering Committee will sponsor an "open house" during the upcoming IASSIST meeting in Ottawa. This event will serve as an informal first meeting of the new DDI Alliance. Members of the original DDI Committee, Steering Committee members, new DDI Alliance members, and other interested parties will gather to talk about the DDI initiative, its Strategic Plan, and its future.

The first official meeting of the DDI Expert Committee will be held in conjunction with the ICPSR Official Representatives meeting in Ann Arbor in October 2003.

The Steering Committee itself will meet again in early 2004.