Contribution ID: **43**   Type: **Regular Presentation**

Developing and testing harmonisation workflows for comparative survey data using DDI –a WorldFAIR case study

Tuesday, 3 December 2024 15:55 (20 minutes)

DDI Lifecycle and DDI-CDI provide significant capabilities for the integration and harmonisation of content across datasets. As part of the recently completed WorldFAIR project lead by CODATA, a team from the Australian Data Archive (ADA) and Sikt lead a work package to examine ways for improvement of FAIR practices in the management of harmonised content in cross-national social surveys.

This work was completed in three stages –a review of comparative survey data management practices at Sikt and ADA; development of a human and machine-actionable workflow for harmonisation of social surveys (the Cross-Cultural Survey Harmonisation workflow –CCSH) that leverages DDI and other standards; and a proof-of-concept test of the CCSH workflows leveraging services available at ADA and Sikt through their respective Colectica registries.

Overall, the pilot demonstrated that the CCSH workflow forms a viable foundation for standardising and progressively automating the process of survey data harmonisation. However the pilot also showed that there is still a significant degree of human manual input required –and thus has more work to do to be truly FAIR. We thus provide recommendations for data managers and the Alliance as to how more integration and automation might be achieved in future.

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Session Classification: Interoperability 1