

Data Citation and Sharing in Australian Social Science – How, When and Why?

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ABSTRACT

Data archives in the social sciences have long recommended data sharing and citation as a means for enabling academic research. Social science data archives started in the US and UK in the 1960s, and early bibliographic citation recommendations were provided by archives such as ICPSR in the 1980s. However, while the use of secondary data in social science has been broadly accepted, the willingness to include data citations among data users has been far less common. For this reason, many data archives and repositories have implemented or are currently exploring new mechanisms for enabling data citation and data sharing, particularly through the use of DOIs for permanent identification.

The Australian Data Archive (ADA), supported by funding from ANDS, is conducting a pilot study to explore data citation and reuse patterns among the Australian social science research community, to better understand current practice and determine useful points of influence that may improve citation behaviour. This project involves three elements:

- a review of the current literature on data citation and data sharing practices in Australian and international social science
- a survey of current practice among users of 5 major Australian social science data sets
- a pilot study of the use of DOIs with ADA datasets

This paper will present the current results of this project, particularly focussing on the results of the survey of data citation and sharing practices among data users in Australian social science, providing comparisons to two recent studies completed in the USA [1,2,3]. It will then consider changes ADA have implemented regarding data citation in light of these results, and implications for data archives and repositories more generally.

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Steve McEachern is Deputy Director of the Australian Data Archive at the Australian National University, where he is responsible for the daily operations and technical and strategic development of the data archive. He has high-level expertise in survey methodology and data archiving, and has been actively involved in development and application of survey research and data archiving methods and technologies in his work at the Australian National University, and previously at the University of Ballarat and Deakin University.

Steve has research interests in data management and archiving, community and social attitude surveys, organisational surveys, new data collection methods including web and mobile phone survey techniques, and reproducible research methods. He holds a PhD in industrial relations from Deakin University, as well as a Graduate Diploma in Management Information Systems from Deakin University, and a Bachelor of Commerce with Honours from Monash University.

Steve has been involved in various professional associations in survey research and data archiving over the last 10 years, including membership of the Expert Committee of the Data Documentation Initiative (www.ddalliance.org), the Australian Consortium for Social and Political Research Inc. (ACSPRI), and the International Federation of Data Organisations (www.ifdo.org).

Janet McDougall is Senior Data Archivist at the Australian Data Archive, where she has been worked since 2009. Janet has over 20 years experience working in computing and data management in Australian universities. Prior to joining ADA, she worked in various eResearch and computing support roles for the Australian National University, as well as similar roles at James Cook University and the Institute for Sustainable Futures at the University of Technology, Sydney. Along with her archivist role, Janet is also completing her Masters in Social Research at ANU, focusing on the data sharing practices of Australian researchers.