QDDS III: A tool for documenting survey questionnaires for researchers and data archives

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Outline

• Needs and challenges in survey documentation
• Alternative systems
• Description and structure
• Short example
• Search for structural attributes
• Future work
• Tool for the Analysis and Documentation of Electronic Questionnaires (TADEQ) (Bethlehem & Hundepool 2002)
• Microdata Management Toolkit – Nesstar (Heus, 2006)
• Q-Bank (Maitland, Miller & Ridolfo 2009)
• Survey Documentation Management System (Mohler, Pennell & Hubbard 2008)
Designing and developing new instruments is a complex and lengthy process.

Once the instrument is finalized, the rationale behind details in phrasing and formatting is no longer evident.

A manual change log, on the other hand, containing full documentation of changes and the underlying reasons results in an unwieldy, hardly manageable document.

The insight which prompted modification of a question, (category of) answer, format or sequence is almost inevitably lost.
• QDDS III is a freeware supporting the development and documentation of questionnaires
• Documents are based on the Data Documentation Initiative (DDI) standard plus extensions
• Software is implemented as a desktop application
• Current status: QDDS is available in German and English
• Software and existing questionnaires can be found at http://www.qdds.org
• Search for structural attributes
- Menu based
- Tree view (hierarchical structure of the questionnaire), split screen, icons
- Object oriented (questionnaire, blocks of questions, questions)

- Example: German Socio-Economic Panel Study (SOEP) 2007 Questionnaire Metadata
6. **XH06** What kind of a house is it in which you live?

- Farm house
- Free standing one or two family house
- One or two family house as row or double house
- Building with 3 to 4 flats
- Building with 5 to 8 flats
- Building with 9 or more flats (but no more than 8 floors/stories)
- High-rise (9 or more floors/stories)
Question 6 in QDDS
Answer options

question 6
Documentation system

Documentation of changes
History of changes
Change Index

On every object:
- Questionnaire
- Block of questions
- Question
Documentation of changes: Question 1
Change Index: Question 1
• The main new feature of QDDS III is the ability to document, store and retrieve questionnaires and survey metadata for large survey data archives
• It complies with DDI 3 Standards (July 2009)
• Surveys implemented to date:
  - European Social Survey (Round 1 to 4)- 17 Questionnaires
  - German General Social Survey (ALLBUS 1980 - 2008)- 21 Questionnaires
  - The German Socio-Economic Panel Study (1984 - 2007 Household; Person: German version)- 79 Questionnaires
• Research on question order effects: rival hypotheses and explanations (Bishop & Smith 2001)
• Response order effects (Bishop & Smith 2001; Holbrook, Krosnick, Moore & Tourangeau 2007)
• Difficulty of comprehending the question and response options is prominent research finding
• Effects of different question structures
• Length of questions
• Explicit “Don`t know“? (Sturgis 2009)
Example
1. Seit wann leben Sie in Konstanz?

Mehr als 20 Jahre. ☐
11 bis 20 Jahre. ☐
6 bis 10 Jahre. ☐
1 bis 5 Jahre. ☐
Weniger als 1 Jahr. ☐
Weiß nicht. ☐

2. Wie zufrieden sind Sie - alles in allem - mit der öffentlichen Sicherheit und der Bekämpfung der Kriminalität in Konstanz?

Bitte antworten Sie auf einer Skala von 0 bis 10 - wobei 0 bedeutet, dass Sie ganz und gar unzufrieden sind, und 10 bedeutet, dass Sie ganz und gar zufrieden sind. Mit Werten dazwischen können Sie Ihre Meinung abstufen.

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