

Metadata Technology Collaborating with NORC, ICPSR, and partners on improving researchers access to GSS and ANES surveys

Metadata Technology North America to provide technical support for the capture of new metadata and development of web portal for the General Social Survey (GSS) and American National Election Studies (ANES)

Researchers will have access to improved metadata and new tools to search through and analyze the General Social Survey (GSS) and the American National Election Studies (ANES) under a new joint initiative launched by Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR), the independent research organization NORC at the University of Chicago, and several partners.

Supported by a collaborative research grant from the National Science Foundation (NSF), ICPSR, together with the National Election Studies program in the Center for Political Studies at the University of Michigan's Institute for Social Research and NORC will carry out the two-year "Metadata Portal for the Social Sciences" project. Technical support will be provided by Metadata Technology North America (MTNA) and Integrated Data Management Services (IDMS).

The first phase of the project will involve bringing the metadata for the existing GSS and ANES datasets up to the Data Documentation Initiative (DDI) standard using XML. For a sample of the surveys, the project will also capture enhanced metadata on questionnaire flow and variable transformations.

The second part of the project will create a metadata portal on the Web to demonstrate some of the prototype tools that can be built with the new structured metadata -- for example, survey catalogs and documentation libraries, question and classification banks, dynamic codebooks customized to user specifications, and tools for harmonization and comparison. These innovations will be broadly applicable to all survey data.

Thirdly, the project will develop new metadata-driven workflows and best practices to capture metadata early in the data production process so that it can be reused across the research lifecycle.

"We are thrilled to be able to work toward improving the GSS and ANES metadata to create tools that both experts and novices can use to better understand these foundational studies of American society," said ICPSR Principal Investigator George Alter. "We hope these advances can serve as models for future research as well."

Tom W. Smith, GSS Principal Investigator, said: "NORC is pleased to link its capacity with that of ICPSR to provide the social science community with new and innovative products to facilitate the use of the GSS and ANES."

MTNA is looking forward to collaborate with these prestigious organizations and continue to contribute to the improvement of research infrastructure.

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The [Data Documentation Initiative \(DDI\)](#) is an XML specification for the documentation and management of microdata, particularly in socio-economic sciences and the health sector. It is maintained by the [DDI Alliance](#).

The [General Social Survey \(GSS\)](#) is a sociological survey used to collect data on demographic characteristics and attitudes of residents of the United States. It contains a standard 'core' of demographic, behavioral, and attitudinal questions, plus topics of special interest on household in the United States. The GSS takes the pulse of America, and is a unique and valuable resource. It has tracked the opinions of Americans over the last four decades.

The [American National Election Studies \(ANES\)](#) is the leading academically-run national survey of voters in the United States, conducted before and after every presidential election. To serve the research needs of social scientists, teachers, students, policy makers and journalists, the ANES produces high quality data from its own surveys on voting, public opinion, and political participation.

The [Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research \(ICPSR\)](#) provides leadership and training in data access, curation, and methods of analysis for a diverse and expanding social science research community. An integral part of the infrastructure of social science research, ICPSR maintains and provides access to a vast archive of social science data for research and instruction (8000+ studies, 60,000+ datasets, and 500,000+ files of data and documentation), and offers training in quantitative methods to facilitate effective data use.

[NORC at the University of Chicago](#), established in 1941, is one of the largest social research organizations in the United States. NORC conducts numerous research projects involving opinion survey and other data collection and technology strategies. NORC's projects are focused in a number of topical areas: society and culture; economics and population; education and child development; health studies; substance abuse; mental health; criminal justice; statistics and methodology; and technology. Within each area, NORC designs and implements surveys and other data collection strategies, conducts advanced statistical and other analysis, provides technical assistance and applies advanced technologies.

[Metadata Technology North America Inc.](#) is a privately owned eGovernment data management and information technology solution provider. The Company's mission is to facilitate production, open access, and improve the quality and use of statistical and scientific data. It specializes in products and services leveraging XML technology, metadata standards, and related best practices. Its key personnel include globally recognized experts in the area of the Statistical Data and Metadata Exchange (SDMX) standard, the Data Documentation Initiative (DDI), and the management of socio-economic data, health data, and official statistics.

[Integrated Data Management Services Inc.](#) provides data and metadata processing, quality assurance, and packaging service services to support access, protection, preservation, discovery, dissemination, and analysis of statistical and scientific datasets. IDMS was established to deliver services complementing MTNA's information technology offerings.

The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the Company and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of other agencies and individuals.

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