The Data Liberation Initiative remains, after 14 years, a very active and valuable partnership between Statistics Canada and Canadian postsecondary academic institutions. Working together, the DLI collection continues to grow and improve. These joint efforts not only include the continued creation of Public Use Microdata Files, but also newer projects such as the tagging of the collection’s metadata using recognized international standards. Setting the foundation for greater access to data, this initiative has led to the development of a more searchable collection that can be accessed through a variety of tools. Many thanks to all of the Data Liberation Initiative contacts in postsecondary institutions for continuing to make this partnership a success.

Rosemary Bender, Assistant Chief Statistician, Social, Health and Labour Statistics Field
The Data Liberation Initiative (DLI) is a cost-effective program for improving access to data resources at Canadian postsecondary institutions. Colleges and universities pay an annual subscription fee to participate in the DLI and gain unlimited access to numerous Statistics Canada data and GIS products for their faculty and students. More than just a subscription to data resources, membership in the DLI includes access to services, training, infrastructure and partnerships to ensure the effectiveness of member institutions’ data services. The DLI offers dedicated research assistance, support for data services, tools to improve client service and expert training and advice. Through their member institutions, academic researchers have access to the most current data thereby greatly enhancing their capacity to analyze Canadian society and discover new knowledge about the country and share the results.

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HIGHLIGHTS

Services

- Supports online access to a comprehensive collection of Statistics Canada data for teaching, academic and institutional research and planning
- Operates the DLI listserv: a dedicated online service for responding to questions and concerns
- Publishes the DLI Update: a newsletter for those providing support for DLI products and services on their local campuses
- Coordinates DLI services with Research Data Centres
- Offers membership in a network of data service providers across Canada
- Provides and maintains the Statistics Canada Best Practices Document: Tagging Files Based on Data Documentation Initiative, Version 1.3. This manual is in accordance with the ODESI Best Practices Document Based on DDI 2.x (version 2)
- Produces an annual report highlighting the previous year’s accomplishments

Training

- Supports annual regional workshops that provide the latest information about DLI products and services and that teach practical data skills with enhanced theoretical knowledge
- Supports quadrennial Canada-wide training sessions that bring together a national community of peer data service providers
- Provides web-based access to all DLI training presentations through the DLI Training Repository
- Offers one-day “boot camps” providing an orientation to data services and concepts for all new DLI contacts on an intermittent basis
- Provides customized introductory training sessions for faculty and staff of new DLI member institutions

Infrastructure

- Supports file transfer access over the Internet to the DLI collection of Statistics Canada data
- Offers secure file transfer access to the DLI data collection and other
select Canadian data through a mirror site housed at the University of Alberta

- Provides access to online public use microdata documentation and data through a NESSTAR server, using DDI compliant metadata that is searchable at the variable level across surveys

**Partnerships**

- Acts as a forum for the postsecondary community to convey needs and interests to Statistics Canada via the DLI External Advisory Committee
- Provides Statistics Canada with an avenue to interact with end-users in the development of new products and the refinement of existing products
- Serves as a channel for promoting the production of DDI metadata to Statistics Canada data producers
- Champions the cause for a Canadian National Data Archive

"The Data Liberation Initiative (DLI) is an exceptional example of open data at work. As a researcher focused on social, environmental, and economic change in the Arctic, I recognize the need to link the best data available from a variety of sources. I have used the Aboriginal Peoples Survey and other DLI data sets in my research. Moreover, I regularly point to the initiative as a seminal open data program. The DLI collection, community, and training materials provide an invaluable set of resources for integrative science while demonstrating the value of open data in meeting contemporary research challenges. Thanks to the DLI community for your leadership and remarkable achievements."

Peter L. Pulsifer, PhD
Research Associate, Cooperative Institute for Research in Environmental Sciences, University of Colorado (Formerly postdoctoral fellow with the Geomatics and Cartographic Research Centre, Department of Geography, Carleton University)
YEAR IN REVIEW: 2009-2010

Membership
The vast majority of universities across Canada are members of the DLI, including the 29 Canadian Association of Research Libraries (CARL) university member institutions and 48 other institutions.

The DLI increased its membership again this year with the addition of Georgian College and NAIT (Northern Alberta Institute of Technology). The total membership is now 77.

![DLI Membership Graph]

Services
The DLI offers specialized research services to member institutions as well as access to an active network of data librarians across Canada.

The dlilist
The DLI listserv (dlilist) is a dedicated, online help desk for members seeking responses to statistics and/or data-related questions as well as a forum to discuss data issues and concerns. The dlilist is extremely active, receiving almost 1700 posts last year. The high number and the growing complexity of questions appearing on the discussion list reflect the importance of this service to the academic research community.

The DLI listserv also provides local DLI contacts with access to a network of knowledgeable, practicing data professionals across Canada.
Note: The figures displayed above do not include the requests received by the DLI unit by email and telephone, off the dlilist. We estimate that as many requests are received through these channels as through the dlilist.

DLI Reference Services

The DLI unit provides members with reference services for questions about Statistics Canada products and services. Many of these questions flow directly to the DLI Reference Services Coordinator while other inquiries are sent to the DLI listserv.
Research Data Centres (RDCs)

The link between the DLI and the RDCs continues to strengthen every year. Currently, a representative from each program sits on the board of the other program, facilitating communication between the two initiatives. The two programs work together in advancing the DDI standard for data documentation within Statistics Canada. A shared brochure promoting both services was updated in 2009-2010.

The DLI Collection

The DLI collection contains all of Statistics Canada’s public use microdata files (PUMFs), as well as standard tables, detailed Census data files, databases and geographic (GIS) files. These products are downloaded by DLI contacts and disseminated to students, faculty and staff within the member institutions for academic research, teaching and institutional planning.

The DLI collection is continually growing as new data files are released and as we conduct outreach to Statistics Canada divisions who do not regularly supply data to the DLI. In 2009-2010, new products such as a public use microdata file for the Survey on the Vitality of Official-Language Minorities (SVOLM) and aggregate data files on small and medium-sized enterprises in Canada and for the Postsecondary Student Information System (PSIS) were added to the DLI collection. Data for additional cycles of a number of surveys that were already part of the DLI collection were also added to the collection this year. These include surveys such as the Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics (SLID), the General Social Survey (GSS), the Canadian Tobacco Use Monitoring Survey (CTUMS) and the Labour Force Survey (LFS). As a result, the collection is now

“...I have been involved with the Data Liberation Initiative (DLI) since its birth, as a DLI representative helping faculty and students use social science data, and as a long-serving member of the DLI Executive Advisory Committee. The DLI project, including the staff at Statistics Canada, and the various academic staff who work with data, have been critical in the development of an open approach to access to critical data about our country and its people. I look forward to the next phase of DLI activity, which will be critical to ensuring that this access continues, but more importantly, that our ongoing approach to open and accessible data is a model for the world.”

Mark Leggott, University Librarian, Robertson Library, University of Prince Edward Island
estimated to contain 53,000 files.

Training

Through DLI membership, librarians and staff supporting the DLI on their campuses have the opportunity to attend specialised data-related training sessions and workshops.

Training is a continuing priority for the DLI. As data use increases on local campuses, so does the need for the knowledge and skills to support researchers. Every year, four DLI training sessions are held regionally across the country. Workshops are always well attended with many institutions opting to send more than the one participant (DLI subsidizes one participant from each member institution annually). Participants can then use the knowledge and skills acquired at these workshops to train faculty, students and staff at their own institutions.

Training events during 2009-2010 took place at the University of Victoria (Victoria, BC), Concordia University (Montréal, QC), University of Toronto (Toronto, ON), and Acadia University (Wolfville, NS). Copies of the presentations given during these training sessions are archived and made available online through the DLI Training Repository.

DLI “boot camps” are also held every few years. These special, subsidized DLI training sessions are designed to equip new DLI contacts with the basic skills and knowledge required to perform their new DLI duties.

A National Training Day is also held once every four years, to coincide with the IASSIST conference being held in Canada. Holding the National Training Day one day prior to the beginning of IASSIST encourages DLI contacts to attend that conference, which is an important event for the data services community.

The following table depicts participation in DLI training events. In 2009-2010, a
total of 121 DLI contacts and their colleagues participated in DLI regional training sessions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Training Event</th>
<th>Participants from Postsecondary Institutions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2004/05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atlantic Training</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quebec Training</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ontario Training</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACCOLEDS training³</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Regional Training</strong></td>
<td><strong>117</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Training Day</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boot Camp</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>117</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹ Due to the National Training Day, there were no regional training events held in the Atlantic or Quebec regions in 2007/08.
² The first day of the 2008/09 Atlantic Training included the boot camp in the Atlantic Region.
³ ACCOLEDS covers the Western provinces (British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba).
⁴ The National Training Day was held in Montreal.

To address the ongoing need for qualified trainers at DLI training sessions and to ensure that knowledge and expertise are transferred to the next generation of DLI trainers, a “Train-the-Trainers” event was held in February 2010 at the Université de Montréal. Fifteen DLI contacts from across the country attended this workshop.

In addition to the formalized training sessions described above, DLI staff visit new member institutions to provide an introduction to DLI services through customized training sessions. These sessions are always well attended by DLI contacts, library staff, institutional administrators and faculty members. The enthusiasm and interest expressed by faculty at these sessions is an encouraging indicator of the value of DLI data to an institution’s research capacity. In 2009-2010, on-site training sessions were provided to Humber College (Toronto, ON), the University of Ottawa (Ottawa, ON), and Laurentian University (Sudbury, ON). DLI contacts, faculty and staff from both Algoma University (Sault Ste. Marie, ON) and Nipissing University (North Bay, ON) participated in the Laurentian University training session by teleconference.
Infrastructure

The DLI offers member institutions a reliable online infrastructure to access the DLI collection.

The DLI FTP Site and Website

Through Internet access to the DLI FTP site and website, DLI contacts can download all of the Statistics Canada data files and documentation that are in the DLI collection for their institutions’ researchers, students and staff. DLI files are also redistributed through several secondary repositories hosted and maintained in DLI institutions.

In 2009, there were more than 40,000 downloads from the DLI FTP site, which is the primary repository for the DLI collection. A variety of factors can influence annual FTP download counts. For example, the release of 2006 Census data products in 2007 and 2008 contributed to a higher than average number of downloads during those years. Other factors include the extent to which other download sites such as the DLI website and academic secondary repositories are used, and the introduction of new download options such as the DLI Nessstar tool and the DLI mirror site at the University of Alberta.

Note: The statistics in these graphs do not include downloads of data files from the DLI website, the Statistics Canada Nesstar site, the mirror site at the University of Alberta and secondary academic repositories.
The DLI continues to improve its Internet-based data discovery and retrieval tools. During 2008-2009, the DLI began to review its website to ensure its compliance with the Treasury Board of Canada’s Common Look and Feel 2.0 (CLF 2.0) requirements. The site was further modified and improved in 2009-2010.

Data Documentation Initiative (DDI)

DDI is an international XML-based standard for content, presentation, delivery, and preservation of metadata for microdata. One of the primary tools currently in use in the creation of DDI metadata is the NESSTAR Data Publisher. A second tool, the NESSTAR server, is driven by DDI metadata and provides a web interface that enables users to search at the variable level across surveys and subsequently extract data files.

The DLI continues to tag its public use microdata file (PUMF) collection in DDI compliant format in collaboration with Scholars Portal in Ontario as well as with institutions such as Carleton University, Guelph University, Laurentian University and Queen’s University. Our goal is to load the complete DLI PUMF collection into Nesstar to allow users to easily search through the collection to identify surveys and variables of interest to them.

The DLI is also participating in internal Statistics Canada projects where production processes for Statistics Canada databases, PUMFs and documentation for social surveys are being standardized. The DDI format is being incorporated in these processes.

The DLI also continues to provide and maintain the Statistics Canada Best Practices Document: Tagging Files Based on Data Documentation Initiative, Version 1.3. This manual outlines best practices in tagging Statistics Canada data files with DDI compliant metadata. It was created by the University of Guelph and Carleton University in collaboration with the DLI, Statistics Canada’s Special Surveys Division, the University of Alberta and Queen’s University and is in line with the ODESI Best Practices Document Based on DDI 2.x (version 2) maintained by ODESI in Ontario.

Partnerships

The DLI provides an opportunity for the academic community to communicate its needs and interests to Statistics Canada by means of the DLI External Advisory Committee (EAC) and the dlilist. Through these channels the academic community can provide input into the development of new products and the refinement of existing Statistics Canada products, such as the 2006 Census and the General Social Survey public use microdata files, to better serve their needs. These communications serve both parties since Statistics Canada actively seeks and values the input of the DLI community as an important client group. In fact, feedback received by the DLI community has led directly to improvements in
both Statistics Canada’s data products and documentation, thereby representing an excellent return on Statistics Canada’s $175,000 annual investment in the DLI program.

Ongoing communication with academic researchers through the DLI has also led to the recognition, both internally and externally to Statistics Canada, of the importance of public use microdata files to the research community. Statistics Canada’s PUMF task force relies on this communication to help ensure that any survey PUMFs produced meet the needs of researchers to the greatest extent possible while still satisfying Statistics Canada’s confidentiality requirements.

The DLI recognizes that a commitment from Statistics Canada’s survey-producing Divisions is crucial to the development of quality data products and documentation. To that end, the DLI External Advisory Committee periodically bestows the Exemplary Access Award to a deserving division. This Award honours those divisions that have made concerted efforts to provide ready access to high quality data and documentation to researchers in Canada. The most recent recipient of this award was Health Statistics Division.

Partnership is at the core of the DLI program, and this model has been so successful that the DLI has become an internationally recognized “brand”. In fact, other statistical agencies and the international research community have expressed an interest in copying the DLI model to make their own data more accessible to researchers around the world. A history of the DLI is being written to be presented to members of the International Household Survey Network, a network of International Development agencies


**Governance**

**External Advisory Committee**

The External Advisory Committee (EAC) provides general guidance and direction to the DLI program. This committee is comprised of data professionals, data librarians and researchers from participating member institutions, providing a voice for colleges and universities of various sizes and from across the country. Also included on this committee are members of the DLI Section and representatives from subject matter divisions within Statistics Canada. The EAC meets twice a year and offers insight and guidance to the DLI program on both short and long-term objectives and oversees the training component of the program.

The Committee's membership is undergoing change as terms of tenure have come to an end. Peter Webster (Saint Mary's University) has replaced Jennifer Adams (Dalhousie University), Gaston Quirion (Université Laval) has replaced Maryna Beaulieu (Université de Montréal), Nancy Lemay (University of Ottawa) has replaced Barbara Zhamirowski (Trent University), Robert McNutt (Executive Director CRDCN) has replaced Dr. Raymond Currie (Outgoing Executive Director CRDCN) and, Sylvie Lafortune (Laurentian University) has replaced Wendy Watkins (Carleton University). Heather Dryburgh (Statistics Canada) has replaced Eric St. John (Statistics Canada), and Pamela Best (Statistics Canada) has replaced Ted Wannell (Statistics Canada). Wendy Watkins (Carleton University) has joined Emie Boyko as a Senior Advisor.

**External Advisory Committee Members (As of August 2010)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic Members</th>
<th>Non-academic Members</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chuck Humphrey</strong> (chair)</td>
<td><strong>Pamela Best</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Alberta, Edmonton, AB</td>
<td>Statistics Canada, Ottawa, ON</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Richard Boily</strong></td>
<td><strong>Nancy Darovich</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Université du Québec à Rimouski, Rimouski, QC</td>
<td>Statistics Canada, Ottawa, ON</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Suzanne Drapeau</strong></td>
<td><strong>Heather Dryburgh</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nova Scotia Community College, Halifax, NS</td>
<td>Statistics Canada, Ottawa, ON</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Margaret Haines</strong></td>
<td><strong>Bemie Gloyn</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Carleton University, Ottawa, ON</td>
<td>Statistics Canada, Ottawa, ON</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Sylvie Lafortune</strong></td>
<td><strong>Michel B. Séguin</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Laurentian University, Sudbury, ON</td>
<td>Statistics Canada, Ottawa, ON</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Nancy Lemay</strong></td>
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<td>University of Ottawa, Ottawa, ON</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Walter Flvesan</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, BC</td>
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</table>
Education Committee

The Education Committee is responsible for the ongoing development of a data services curriculum and for planning national and regional DLI training activities. The Committee met in June 2009 to discuss the future direction of training for the DLI and to plan the February 2010 Train-the-Trainers workshop.

There have been a few changes in Committee membership in 2009-2010. Elizabeth Hill (University of Western Ontario) has replaced Nicole Doyle (University of Ontario Institute of Technology), Heather Dryburgh (Statistic Canada) has replaced Bernie Gloyn (Statistics Canada). Wendy Watkins (Carleton University) has temporarily replaced Chuck Humphrey (University of Alberta) as Chair of the Committee following the Fall EAC meeting.

Education Committee Members (As of August 2010)

Academic Members

Chuck Humphrey (Chair)
University of Alberta, Edmonton, AB

Wendy Watkins (Chair - Acting)
Carleton University, Ottawa, ON

Maryna Beaulieu
Université de Montréal, Montréal, QC

Jean Blackburn
Vancouver Island University, Nanaimo, BC

Richard Boily
Université du Québec à Rimouski, Rimouski, QC

Non-academic Members

Heather Dryburgh
Statistics Canada, Ottawa, ON

Marie-Claire Lauzon
Statistics Canada, Ottawa, ON

Michel B. Séguin
Statistics Canada, Ottawa, ON
Gail Curry  
University of Northern British Columbia, Prince George, BC

Elizabeth Hill  
University of Western Ontario, London, ON

Siobhan Hanratty  
University of New Brunswick, Fredericton, NB

Sandra Keys  
University of Waterloo, Waterloo, ON

Ann Smith  
Acadia University, Wolfville, NS
**Participating Institutions (As of September 2010)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>DLI Contact</th>
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<td><strong>Newfoundland</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Memorial University of Newfoundland</td>
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<td>Xuemei Li</td>
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<td>Carolyn DeLorey</td>
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<td>Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières</td>
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<td><strong>Ontario</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Algoma University</td>
<td>Ken Hemden</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Brock University  Kevin Manuel
Carleton University  Wendy Watkins
Durham College  Helen Labine
Fanshawe College  Pam Goettl
Georgian College  Joanne Fowlie
Humber College Institute of Technology and Advanced Learning  Alexandra Ross
Lakehead University  Linda Mitchell
Laurentian University  Sylvie Lafortune
McMaster University  Vivek Jadon
Niagara College  Ralph Laird
Nipissing University  Tom Power
Queen's University  Jeff Moon
Royal Military College of Canada  Susanne Burt
Ryerson University  Suzette Giles
University of Guelph  Michelle Edwards
University of Ontario Institute of Technology  Nicole Doyle
University of Ottawa  Susan Mowers
University of Toronto  Berenica Vejvoda
Trent University  Barbara Znamirowski
University of Waterloo  Sandra Keys
University of Western Ontario  Vince Gray
University of Windsor  Kristi Thompson
Wilfrid Laurier University  Hélène LeBlanc
York University  Walter Giesbrecht

Manitoba
Brandon University  Chris Hurst
Collège Universitaire de Saint-Boniface  Daniel Beaulieu
Red River College  Norman Beattie
University of Manitoba  Gary Strike
University of Winnipeg  Ian Fraser

Saskatchewan
University of Regina  Marilyn Andrews
University of Saskatchewan  Sunny Kaniyathu

Alberta
Athabasca University  Doug Kariel
Concordia University College of Alberta  Erica Hebert
Grant MacEwan University  Brian Jackson
Mount Royal University  
Southern Alberta Institute of Technology (SAIT)  
North Alberta Institute of Technology (NAIT)  
University of Alberta  
University of Calgary  
University of Lethbridge  

British Columbia  
Kwantlen Polytechnic University  
Vancouver Island University  
Okanagan College  
Royal Roads University  
Simon Fraser University  
Thompson Rivers University  
University of the Fraser Valley  
University of British Columbia  
University of Northern British Columbia  
University of Victoria  

Data Liberation Initiative Section (As of August 2010)  

Michel B. Séguin  
Chief  
Jackie Godfrey  
Infrastructure Analyst  
Linda Harding-Devries  
Data Documentation Initiative (DDI) Project Officer  

Marie-Claire Lauzon  
Reference Services Coordinator  
Renée Rocan  
Project Officer