

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

European Survey Research  
Association

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## Projektteam

- Rainer Schnell; University of Duisburg-Essen, Germany
- Anja Zwingenberger; University of Duisburg-Essen, Germany
- Max Stempfhuber; GESIS – Leibniz Institute for the Social Sciences, Germany
- Oliver Hopt; GESIS – Leibniz Institute for the Social Sciences, Germany

## Outline

- Needs and challenges in survey documentation
- Alternative systems
- Description and structure
- Short example
- Search for structural attributes
- Future work

## Alternative Systems

- 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)

Current lack of  
documentation

- 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

## Tool description

- 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

## Tool structure

- 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

SOEP 2007 main questionnaire

The screenshot shows the QDDS 0.7.3.4 interface. The main window displays a tree view of a questionnaire titled "Living in Germany - Survey 2007 on the social situation of households". The tree includes sections like "Expenses for house or flat" (questions 2-20), "Does your household have ...?" (questions 56-69), and "Interviewer's remarks" (A, B, C). A "View:" panel at the bottom left of the tree shows options for "deleted elements", "question type", "changes", and "additional information", all of which are checked.

The right-hand panel, titled "Questionnaire Meta Data", contains the following fields and options:

- Title: Living in Germany - Survey 2007 on the social situation of households
- Author: Anja Zwingenberger (with an "add author" button)
- Keywords: Household
- Source: (empty field)
- Comment: (empty field)
- Mode: paper (dropdown menu)
- Template file: Standard (with a "select template" button)
- Style:  display question numbers
- Survey specific features:
  - serial number
  - interviewer number
  - date of interview
  - response date
  - begin of interview
  - end of interview
- Interviewer Instruction: (empty field)
- Texts for non-substantial answers:
  - don't know: I don't know
  - refusal: No Comment
  - not applicable: No Answer
  - question not asked: Question not asked

Questionnaire

Block of questions

Question

Example: SOEP 2007  
question 6

**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

QDDS 0.7.3.4 - C:\Dokumente und Einstellungen\anja\Eigene Dateien\QDDS\Test\examples\SOEP\09\_02\_21 SOEP Household en.qdds - version 4 - anja ...

File Edit Questionnaire Block Question Help

Living in Germany - Survey 2007 on the social ...

- Expenses for house or flat
  - 2
  - 3
  - 4
  - 5
  - 6**
  - 7
  - 8
  - 8a
  - 9
  - 10
  - 11
  - 12
  - 13
  - 14
  - 15
  - 16
  - 17
  - 18
  - 19
  - 20
- Only for homeowners
  - 28
  - 29
  - 30
  - 31
  - 32
  - 33
  - 34
  - 35
  - 36
  - 36a
- Applicable for all
  - 37
  - 38

View:

- deleted elements
- question type
- changes
- additional information

Question Data | Intro/Extr | Answer defaults | Documentation of Changes | History | Change Index | Notes

Type of question: question with answer defaults

Construct:

Relevance: middle

Question category:

Description: 6

Question: What kind of a house is it in which you live?

Value range: Min: Max: Label:

Respondent Instructions:

Instructions for Interviewer:

Incentive: show select

Incoming filter:

internal question id: q6q

Answer options question 6

The screenshot shows the QDDS software interface. On the left, a list of questions is displayed, with question 6 highlighted in blue. The right panel shows the configuration for question 6, including answer options, alignment, and filter format.

**Question List (Left Panel):**

- Living in Germany - Survey 2007 on the social ...
  - Expenses for house or flat
    - 2
    - 3
    - 4
    - 5
    - 6**
    - 7
    - 8
    - 8a
    - 9
    - 10
    - 11
    - 12
    - 13
    - 14
    - 15
    - 16
    - 17
    - 18
    - 19
    - 20
  - Only for homeowners
    - 28
    - 29
    - 30
    - 31
    - 32
    - 33
    - 34
    - 35
    - 36
    - 36a
  - Applicable for all
    - 37
    - 38

**Configuration Panel (Right Panel):**

Question Data | Intro/Extra | **Answer defaults** | Documentation of Changes | History | Change Index | Notes

new default | paragraph | headline | import defaults set | export defaults set

Answers:

- 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)

Alignment: vertical

Use of non-substantial answers:

- don't know
- question not asked
- not applicable
- refusal

Layout style: plain

Filter format: arrow with question number

View:

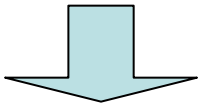
- deleted elements
- question type
- changes
- additional information

Documentation system

Documentation of changes

History of changes

Change Index



On every object:

- Questionnaire
- Block of questions
- Question

The screenshot shows the QDDS 0.7.3.4 interface. The title bar reads 'QDDS 0.7.3.4 - untitled.qdds - version 0 - anja - 4.3.2009'. The menu bar includes 'File', 'Edit', 'Questionnaire', 'Block', 'Question', and 'Help'. The main window has a tabbed interface with tabs for 'Questionnaire Meta Data', 'Intro/Extro', 'Documentation of Changes', 'History', 'Change Index', 'Project Meta Data', and 'Notes'. The 'Documentation of Changes' tab is active, showing a form with the following fields:

- Title: New Questionnaire
- Author: [text input] [add author button]
- Keywords: [text input]
- Source: [text input]
- Comment: [text input]
- Mode: paper (dropdown menu)
- Template file: Standard [select template button]
- Style:  display question numbers
- Survey specific features:
  - serial number [text input]
  - interviewer number [text input]
  - date of interview [text input]
  - response date [text input]
  - begin of interview [text input]
  - end of interview [text input]
- Interviewer Instruction: [text input]
- Texts for non-substantial answers:
  - don't know: I don't know
  - refusal: No Comment
  - not applicable: No Answer
  - question not asked: Question not asked

At the bottom left, there is a 'View:' section with four checked checkboxes: 'deleted elements', 'question type', 'changes', and 'additional information'.

Documentation of changes: Question 1

QDDS 0.7.3.4 - 09\_02\_21 SOEP Household en.qdds - version 1 - anja - 4.3.2009

File Edit Questionnaire Block Question Help

Question Data Intro/Extro Answer defaults Documentation of Changes History Change Index Notes

**Change category:**

*Question*

- wording
- question newly inserted
- question deleted
- position
- type
- emphasize parts of question

*Filter*

- wording
- filter deleted
- new filter
- layout
- target

*Answer defaults*

- wording
- default: added
- default: deleted
- changed order
- use of non-substantial answers
- placement
- layout
- emphasize parts of answers
- multiple answers (not) possible

*Misc.*

- missing answer option
- overlapping change

**Cause for change:**

- misunderstanding of question
- misunderstanding of answer option
- respondent paused
- skip pattern error
- respondent showed confusion
- request for repetition
- respondent asked for explanation

Category/Cause	Description
question deleted	not relevant
misunderstanding of question	pretest nr. 2 15.01.09 zwi

View:

- deleted elements
- question type
- changes
- additional information

History: Question 1

QDDS 0.7.3.4 - 09\_02\_21 SOEP Household en.qdds - version 1 - anja - 4.3.2009

File Edit Questionnaire Block Question Help

Question Data Intro/Extro Answer defaults Documentation of Changes History Change Index Notes

Question	Answer	Filter	Misc.
<b>In version 0 from 21.2.2009</b>			
1			
Did you live in this flat the last time we interviewed you about a year ago?	x		
New element			
<b>In version 1 from 23.2.2009</b>			
1			
Did you live in this flat the last time we interviewed you about a year ago?	x		
question deleted: not relevant misunderstanding of question: pretest nr. 2 15.01.09 zwi			

Report...

View:  
 deleted elements  
 question type  
 changes  
 additional information

Change Index:  
Question 1

QDDS 0.7.3.4 - 09\_02\_21 SOEP Household en.qdds - version 1 - anja - 4.3.2009

File Edit Questionnaire Block Question Help

Question Data Intro/Extr... Answer defaults Documentation of Changes History Change Index Notes

Overview of changes of questionnaire from version 21.2.2009: Version 0

	Question	Answer	Filter	Misc.
<b>A</b>				
New element	x			
<b>B</b>				
New element	x			
<b>C</b>				
New element	x			
<b>In version 1 from 23.2.2009</b>				
<b>1</b>				
question deleted: not relevant				
misunderstanding of question: pretest nr. 2 15.01.09 zwi	x			
<b>In version 2 from 27.2.2009</b>				
<b>Test Question</b>				
question newly inserted: pretest	x			
<b>In version 3 from 2.3.2009</b>				
<b>Only for tenants</b>				
block deleted: not relevant				
<b>21</b>				
Element deleted				
<b>22</b>				
Element deleted				
<b>23</b>				
Element deleted				
<b>24</b>				

Report...

View:  
 deleted elements  
 question type  
 changes  
 additional information

## Search databases

- 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

Search for  
structural attributes

- 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)

Search mask

Prototype

Open Question

Question with answer defaults

Question with answer defaults steering filter

Question with answer defaults (multiple answer)

**Content**

overall:

any word

description:

any word

survey:

**Structure**

type of question:

number of answer defaults:

"don't know" visible:

number of words in question:

number of words in answers:

**Environment**

type of previous question:

number of answer defaults:

type of following question:

number of answer defaults:

start search

clear

Example

**Content**

overall:

description:

survey:

any word

any word

**Structure**

type of question:

number of answer defaults:

"don't know" visible:

number of words in question:

number of words in answers:

**Environment**

type of previous question:

number of answer defaults:

type of following question:

number of answer defaults:

- <1 > hits: 6
- 1 F07  
type: Open Question  
survey/panel: ESS Round 1 Main Questionnaire  
version: 0
  - 2 F07  
type: Open Question  
survey/panel: ESS Round 2 Main Questionnaire  
version: 0
  - 3 F7

Future

- LaTeX Style

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.

- |                          |                          |                          |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| ganz und gar             |                          | ganz und gar             |
| unzufrieden              |                          | zufrieden                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 0                        | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9        | 10                       |

- Multilingual surveys

## References

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- Holbrook, A. L., Krosnick, J. A., Moore, D. & Tourangeau, R. (2007). Response Order Effects in Dichotomous Categorical Questions Presented Orally: The Impact of Question and Respondent Attributes. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 71 (3), pp. 325-348.

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