paneldata.org and DDI on Rails

paneldata.org is the successor of SOEPinfo, the metadata system of the German Socio-Economic Panel (SOEP). Development of the new system is currently underway based on the open-source project initiated within the SOEP, DDI on Rails. While the first version of SOEPinfo was optimized specifically for the SOEP data, DDI on Rails and paneldata.org are conceptualized generically in order to be usable with other studies.

paneldata.org

Around 17 years after SOEPinfo was launched, a first test version of its successor, paneldata.org, went online. The newly developed paneldata.org is the result of the open source project DDI on Rails, which was undertaken in the SOEP for this purpose.

The test version not only provides documentation on the classic SOEP data but also allows easier analysis of the new, harmonized “SOEPlong” data. The SOEP pretests, the new SOEP Innovation Sample, and BASE II have also been integrated into the system. Further related studies such as PIAAC-L and Families in Germany (Familien in Deutschland, FiD) will follow. Pairfam is the first external study which is document on paneldata.org

DDI on Rails

DDI on Rails is designed to accompany researchers throughout the course of their research on a particular dataset, from conceptualization of the research project to publication.

It also offers researchers the possibility to explore the data, to create their own personal compilations of datasets, and to publish their results.

The name combines the two most important technologies on which DDI on Rails is based—the data documentation standard DDI (Data Documentation Initiative) and the web application framework Ruby on Rails.

Important features:

Study-Independent Design
The data model for DDI on Rails is based on the DDI (Data Documentation Initiative) standard and is designed to be used with other studies as well.

Special Panel Features
DDI on Rails is independent of specific survey designs but contains special functions for the use of longitudinal data.

Comparative Presentation
The three-level structure of the data model allows different studies as well as different versions of the same study to be viewed in comparison.

Ease of Use
A particular focus in the development of DDI on Rails was on making the software user-friendly for both the data user and the data provider.

Integration of Literature
The references to publications based on the data, which up to now have mainly been kept in separate systems, are integrated into the user interface.

Open Source
The software is conceptualized in an open way and will be published as open source software as soon as the first version has been tested and approved.