



# **INTRODUCTION TO THE AUSTRALIAN DATA ARCHIVE**

User Guide No.1

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## Overview of ADA

The Australian Data Archive (ADA) provides a national service for the collection and preservation of digital research data and to make these data available for secondary analysis by academic researchers and other users, managed by the [Australian National University \(ANU\)](#). ADA was established at the ANU in 1981 (under the original title of the Social Science Data Archive, with a brief to provide a national service for the collection and preservation of computer readable data relating to social, political and economic affairs and to make these data available for further analysis. The National Computational Infrastructure (NCI) provides the online data services and supporting infrastructure for the archive.

A team of professional data archivists, advised by a panel of leading social scientists, provides both stewardship and outreach services to the Australian social science community. The archive:

- acquires, documents, preserves and disseminates data online to a broad range of social science researchers in the university, government, and other sectors
- provides the only comprehensive social science data collection in Australia, with a catalogue of over 5000 data sets from 1500 different projects
- holds data from Australian surveys, opinion polls and censuses and includes data from other countries within the Asia Pacific region
- is continually expanding and diversifying its collection
- provides specialist services within specific subject areas, including Indigenous studies, electoral behaviour, criminology and some humanities disciplines, and within specific data types, including quantitative, qualitative, time series and panel data, and historical statistics
- locates and manages access to overseas social science data sets required by Australian based researchers
- adopts, develops and applies standards in line with international best practice
- belongs to international organisations (such as the [International Federation of Data Organizations](#), the Data Documentation Initiative (DDI Alliance) and the [International Association of Social Science Information Service and Technology](#)) and plays a major role in cross-national collaborative projects
- plays an important role on behalf of the Australian Research Council (ARC) through the management and dissemination of ARC funded data collections arising from Discovery and Linkage grants

ADA data and other resources include:

- Unit record files: microdata about individuals and households
- Data cubes: aggregate data from statistical tables, amenable to online manipulation
- Image files: digitised imaged documents, photographs and other visual materials
- Audio visual files: audio and video files
- Text files: interview transcripts, written materials, researcher notebooks
- Other documents: user guides, online content
- URL links: international archives, additional resources and other materials
- User guides: guides to ADA content, descriptions of major collections and best practice guidelines

## ADA sub-archives

The Archive collections have been arranged to enable fast access for users. Our catalogue of holdings is separated into a series of sub-archives reflecting the nature of the data and/or major thematic divisions. These are:

- Social Science – predominantly survey or polling based quantitative social science data
- Historical – an archive of Australian census data tables from 1834 to the present day
- Indigenous – A thematic archive bringing together research data about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders
- Longitudinal –major longitudinal cohort and panel surveys of the Australian population
- Quallitative – a new collection which provides specialist data archiving and access services to qualitative researchers
- Crime & Justice – major collections of data in crime, law and justice, including criminal justice administrative data
- International – a central point of access for links to international data sources around the world

The sub-archives can be browsed individually or using the search engine to locate all data, files and other resources.

## Depositing Data

The Australian Data Archive urges all researchers and research groups to take the opportunity of having their data professionally archived. There are two main reasons for depositing your research data with the Australian Data Archive: to ensure that your data is preserved for the future, and to enable it to be shared with others for secondary analysis.

The ADA data deposit pages provide advice to researchers on:

- Why you should deposit your data: the benefits of data archiving and sharing
- How to deposit your data with ADA
- Determining conditions for access to your data

We have provided a Deposit Form and Licence Form to assist us in archiving your data. These forms will also assist you in getting your deposit together.

Steps to follow to deposit your data with ADA include

1. Collect your data files
2. Collect your documentation
3. Fill out the ADA license and deposit form
4. Deposit your data with ADA

ADA does have a set of preferred data formats for deposit, but we can handle most data formats. If the information provided does not address your questions, please don't hesitate to contact the archive.

## Data Access

Accessing data in ADA may involve any of the following stages:

- Finding studies and variables
- Viewing study and variable information
- Analysing data
- Downloading data

### 1. Finding Data

There are two methods for finding data in the Australian Data Archive:

- Browsing the ADA Data Catalogue
- Searching for data using the ADA search box

Searching or browsing from within one of the ADA subarchives will automatically limit the results to data from within that subarchive. You can also save your searches to return to later.

### 2. Viewing study and variable information

Once you have located data you are interested in, you can find out more about the data by exploring the Study Page. Here you will find information on who conducted the study, data collection and methodology, access conditions, variables in the study, and related information (such as questionnaires, reports and other information). From here you can also access the Nesstar online analysis and request to download the data from the study.

### 3. Online analysis

From the Study Page, you can access the Nesstar online analysis system, to run analysis of the data you are interested in online. To analyse data, simply click on the link to "Analyse or Download this data in Nesstar" at the top of the study page. This will open the Nesstar system for you. If you would like to conduct detailed analysis of the data (using the Nesstar tabulation and analysis tools) you will need to register with ADA, and login using your ADA username and password.

More details on using the Nesstar online analysis and download system are available in the ADA Nesstar User Guide.

### 4. Download the data

From an ADA Study Page, you can also access the Nesstar data download system, to export the data files for the study to your own computer. To download data, click on the link to "Analyse or Download this data in Nesstar" at the top of the study page. From here you can then choose the data format you would prefer, and then click on the "Download" button.

If you have already been approved for access to the data from the study you are requesting, you will be able to download the data from this page.

If you have not already been approved, you will need to put in a ADA Data Download request (you will be prompted to do so at this point). If you would like to request multiple studies as part of this request, simply add these to the Data Download request by choosing the additional studies you are interested in.



## Contact us

To contact ADA, please see our details below. The preferred form of contact for ADA is via email.

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