



INTRODUCTION TO THE AUSTRALIAN DATA ARCHIVE

User Guide No.1

AUSTRALIAN DATA ARCHIVE
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Overview of ADA

The Australian Data Archive (ADA) is a consortium of leading national Australian universities, 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.

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 around 2300 data sets
- 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](#) 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

As well as the central management at the ANU, archive nodes have been progressively established across the country. These currently include The University of Queensland, the University of Western Australia, the University of Technology, Sydney and the University of Melbourne. These nodes provide a national coverage of specialist services and thematic archives with particular foci. The ANU Supercomputer Facility provides the online data services and supporting infrastructure, and develops this cyberinfrastructure for the needs of the consortium.

Sub-Archive Structure

The Archive has 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
- Qualitative – 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.

Using ADA Resources

ADA 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
- Tools: Nesstar, GIS, Panemalia
- URL links: international archives, additional resources and other materials
- User guides: guides to ADA content, descriptions of major collections and best practice guidelines

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 the 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.

This will take you to the Nesstar Download 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.

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 you're not sure about whether your data is in an appropriate format, please contact us or refer to our User Guide "Depositing Data with the Australian Data Archive".

If the information provided does not address your questions, please don't hesitate to contact the archive.

Contact us:

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

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