Introduction

The Australian Data Archive (ADA) is a consortium of leading national Australian universities, managed by the Australian National University (ANU) and with nodes at the University of Melbourne, University of Queensland, University of Technology Sydney and University of Western Australia. ADA provides 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 core of this service is the Australian Data Archive website.

An overview of the Archive

The Australian Data Archive is organised around a sub-archive model. There is a single archive providing all of the data holdings, which allows you as a user to browse and search the full ADA collection, or browse and search each subarchive individually.

Data Access

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

1. Finding studies and variables
2. Viewing study and variable information
3. Analysing data
4. Downloading data

This guide provides a guide for you through each of these stages.

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 engine

Searching or browsing from within one of the ADA subarchives will automatically limit the results to data from within that subarchive.
Searching ADA

To search the Australian Data Archive, you start by entering your search term into the ADA search box, located at the top right of the site. (Figure 1). Your search will be conducted across the studies and variables within the ADA catalogue.

If you would like to run your search on a particular ADA subarchives, first enter that subarchive from the subarchive menu (eg. the ADA Indigenous subarchive, http://www.ada.edu.au/indigenous/home), and then conduct your search. Your search results will automatically be limited to data from within that subarchive.

Enter your search term will then provide you with your search results. Figure 2 shows the results of a search for the term “employment” in the full ADA archive.

The Search Results display options you can view include:

- Displaying the search results of Studies and of Variables
- Displaying the results in Title View or Extended View
- Filtering your results by various options, including the type of data, the author, the data series and many other options
- Filtering your results by sub-archive
- Explore the details of a particular study, by clicking on the hyperlink for the study in the search results list (see “Study information” below for more information on Study Pages)
Filtering of results occurs via the left hand menu. Click on a sub-archive icon to see the possible filters for your search. You can apply filters across ADA, or within a particular sub-archive.

To add additional filters, simply select the filter you would like to apply. To remove the filter, select the (-) icon next to your list of filters, displayed below the search results (Figure 3).

Finally, you can save your search by selecting the “Save this Search” option. Note that you must have registered with ADA and be logged in to save your searches.
Browsing the ADA data catalogue

The second option for finding data within ADA is through the ADA catalogue. There is a full ADA catalogue, available from the “Data Access” menu (Figure 4). Alternatively you can open the catalogue for any particular subarchive by selecting the “Catalogue” menu available from each subarchive (Figure 5).

To explore a catalogue, you can (Figure 6):

- Select a folder to see it’s contents
- Expand the folder by clicking (+)
- Collapse the folder by clicking (-)
- Switch between subarchives by clicking on them

Once you are in a catalogue, you will then have the same view of studies as in Search Results:

- Title View and Extended View
- Listings of studies by study and author
- Access to the study pages for specific studies

Note however that a “Variables” listing is not available in the Catalogue.

The Catalogue system will also remember your current browsing, so that next time you return to the Catalogue it will reopen just where you left it.
Once you have found data that you are interested in, you will want to then go and view more information about it. The key resource for this is the ADA Study Page.

To access a study page, you should select it from the Search or Browse results by clicking the hyperlink (Figure 7). You will also find links to new studies available on an ADA or a sub-archive Home page.

Clicking on the study title then takes you to the Study Page. Figure 7 shows you the Study Page for the study “Environmental sustainability in residential housing 2009” (ADA Study 30022).
The Study Page is set up to provide you with information about the data. This information is available through the tabs at the top of the study, and includes:

- Study: information including the investigators, abstract, sample, data collection methods, and access requirements.
- Variables: a list of variables available in a quantitative dataset
- Related Materials: additional documentation, links and other related studies (eg. others in the series) that may interest you

The ADA Study page is also your gateway to access the Nesstar system, to analyse quantitative data online, or to download data to your own computer. Note: you will need to log in to your ADA user account in order to access the Nesstar system.
Online analysis

The ADA Nesstar system provides three types of functionality: additional study description information, online data analysis, and data download.

Documentation: Exploring data

The information about the study (from the ADA study page) is also available in Nesstar. Click on the Dataset icon to explore the study. For quantitative analysis, you can also view basic statistics and charts for individual variables in this section, by exploring the Variables tab (Figure 8).

Figure 9 Exploring variables in Nesstar "Description" mode

Conducting a crosstabulation

The Nesstar online analysis system allows you to conduct three basic types of analysis online – cross-tabulations, correlations and linear regressions – as well as create charts and maps, without having to download the data yourself. Access to the online analysis system is available to registered ADA users on the basis of the study’s access conditions:

• General access studies: immediate access
• Restricted access studies: access by request
• Special access: access subject to conditions of deposit

Basic instructions on each of the analysis methods is available below, but for further details see the Nesstar User Guide, available from the Help button in Nesstar, or from the Nesstar website: http://nesstar.com/help/4.0/webview/index.html. This example uses the Australian Survey of Social Attitudes, 2007 (ADA Study 01127).

Steps in creating a cross-tabulation

1. Login to your ADA user account, if you have not already done so.
2. Select the Tabulation button in the right frame to start a blank table. (Note: Tabulations are only available to registered users and you will be prompted to log in at this point if they have not already done so).
3. Expand the “Variable Description” tabs to find the variable you are interested in tabulating.

4. Add the variables you would like to cross-tabulate by clicking on the variable. In the pop-up box that appears, select the Add to row (or column) option.

Figure 10 Nesstar Tabulation - Part 1

Weighting the data

In general, frequencies and tables should be weighted. Weights are used to make the data representative of the sample from which the data were drawn and to correct for under- or over-representation of certain categories of respondents. Users should consult the study documentation for further information on whether, and how, to correctly weight the data.

1. Continuing the above example, in this case we have crosstabulated v66 Urgent Environmental Concern – Climate Change” and “v558 R: Gender”.

2. To apply a weight, choose the weight icon on the toolbar, move the weight variable (in this case “v656 Weight variable” across to the “Weighting variables selected” box and click on OK. (Figure 11)

3. The resulting table (and any other analyses) will now be weighted according to the weight variable(s) you have selected (Figure 12).
You can also use the Nesstar data download system, to export the data files for the study to your
own computer. In order to download data however, you need to have been approved for download
access for the study you are interested in. This can be done by submitting a Request for Data
Access from your personal User page. (Note: you need to be a registered user and logged in to
make an access request). If you would like to request multiple studies at a time, simply add these to
the Data Download request by selecting the additional studies you are interested in.

To complete an access request, click on the appropriate request access button (General or
Restricted) and complete the request form (Figure 13). This form then goes to the ADA User
Services team for approval. Once your download access has been approved, you will receive an
email notification from ADA, and a link to the study will be added to your User Page.
Figure 13 The ADA General Access online request form

To download data, follow the link on ADA to the study page, and click on "Analyse or Download this data in Nesstar" at the top of the study page. This will take you to the Nesstar system. From here you can then select the Download Data icon , choose the data format you would prefer, and then click on the "Download" button to download your data (Figure 14).

Figure 14 Downloading data from Nesstar
Contact us:
If the information provided does not address your questions, please don't hesitate to contact the archive, using any of the methods below. The preferred form of contact for ADA is via email.

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