DDI Search: The missing link between researcher and repository

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Abstract

Once research institutions manage to document studies at question and variable level, an appropriate solution is required to make the data findable (as in FAIR) at a fine granular level.
DDI Search is a set of microservices and a standalone user interface, that provide responsive search and browse functionality and personalization such as creating question collections for re-use.

In conjunction with the GESIS FlatDB, it is a strong, tested, open source and DDI compliant technology stack for Social Sciences research institutes to increase findability, accessibility, interoperability and re-usability at question and variable level.

User tests with the CESSDA EQB community were the basis for the ui development. With an open-source licensing policy, institutions are safe from the
risk of vendor lock-ins often unavoidable with commercial solutions like NESSTAR or Colectica. Repositories can choose smooth, step-by-step implementation paths, unlike with monolithic architectures such as DataVerse.
We describe the technical components and data pipeline from institutional repositories to the search index, the functionalities of the search user interface and give directions for research institutes and data repositories how to employ the DDI Search for their purpose.

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