

Lana Burke

LIS 545 - Data Curation

Term Project - #2 (Repository Profile)

Word count (not including headers): 818

Repository: [ICPSR](#)

Examine the repository's policies & procedures

- Why is this repository a good fit for your data set?

The DELIAH project examines humor and politics across multiple European countries, which made it challenging to find a repository that aligned with all aspects of the project. The Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR) is a strong fit because it accepts international projects and, as its name suggests, also holds projects on social science and political research.

- Is the repository open for data submissions from anybody, or does it have a defined collection scope?

[Any researcher can deposit data into ICPSR](#), with options to either self-publish or to have the data professionally reviewed and curated by ICPSR. “ICPSR intentionally casts a broad net in order to add a wide range of data that would be of interest to the diverse fields representing the social and behavioral sciences,” according to the [collection development policy](#), but also defines out-of-scope data as:

- Non-social and behavioral research data
- Data that requires a purchase to access
- Limited-access data - “ICPSR generally does not accept data requiring limitations on use, with the exception of data with access conditions intended to protect the privacy and identity of study subjects.”
- Data that is available elsewhere
- Copyrighted data
- Data that is beyond ICPSR’s technological capacity

If the repository is open for submissions,

- What data will the repository accept, e.g. are there any stated limits to what can be deposited? Comment on any limits related to data types (e.g. observational, simulation, etc), domain (biology, social science, etc), or file formats.

ICPSR specifically notes its collection development policy that it will not accept “data that cannot be connected with or used to expand upon the scientific investigation of the social and behavioral dimensions of human lives (both antecedents and consequences)” and that “much data in the physical sciences are out of scope for ICPSR.”

Also, within the collection development policy, it states, “There may be instances where ICPSR rejects data due to technological limitations. For example, some data may require a specific proprietary software to review the data that is not currently available at ICPSR.”

ICPSR does not list specific file formats or data types that it categorically refuses. Instead, its collection development policy includes a “Data Formats Accepted” section that emphasizes preferred formats—primarily those that are widely usable and accessible. For example, ICPSR states that it “prefers data in a readily useable [sic] format, accessible in a variety of computing and technological settings.”

- What guidance does the repository provide to a potential data submitter as to what should be in the “Submission Information Package” (SIP)*?

ICPSR provides extensive guidance through its [Depositor Checklist](#) and its [Guide to Social Science Data Preparation and Archiving](#). The checklist offers a high-level overview of recommended submission components, while the guide is much more detailed and is likely to answer most questions a researcher would have when preparing a Submission Information Package.

- Does the repository provide any human assistance or consulting to the submitter?

ICPSR does provide human support to submitting researchers, if desired. Researchers can choose to deposit via self-publishing, or they can opt to have their data professionally reviewed and curated by ICPSR staff at no charge through ICPSR’s curation services.

- Does the repository require metadata to be submitted in any specific structure, or according to any specific standard?

It is noted in the Guide to Social Science Data Preparation and Archiving that ICPSR uses Data Documentation Initiative (DDI) for its metadata, [“For all but ICPSR’s most basic level of curation, dataset documentation involves creating variable-level DDI XML markup, which improves discoverability and enables precise searching.”](#)

Examine the repository's data access mechanisms

- Is a login required to download data? If so, what is the process for creating a login?

Many ICPSR projects are openly accessible and do not require a login for download. However, some projects are available only to users affiliated with ICPSR member institutions. In addition, certain projects include restricted-access files. When a user attempts to download a restricted-access file, a pop-up explains that access requires completing a Restricted Data Use Agreement and submitting an application.

The [project with restricted-access files](#) that I reviewed specified that the requester generally must:

- Hold an appointment at a research institution
- Meet any stated degree requirements (in some cases, a doctoral degree is required)

The application materials must include:

- project description
- IRB approval
- approved security plan
- roster of all research and IT staff who can access or view the data or the computer where the data are hosted
- confidentiality pledges for all people listed on the roster

Some restricted datasets may also require CVs for the researchers involved.

- Is more than one access mechanism provided? E.g. direct file download, database query, automated script, etc)

Files can be downloaded directly, often in multiple formats such as PDF, R, and SPSS, or “Preview” can be selected to open files in the browser. Depending on the project, additional buttons labeled “Explore Data” and “Analyze Online (SDA)” may appear. The “Explore Data” button opens tabular data in the browser, while Analyze Online (SDA) is intended to launch an

[interactive, web-based analysis interface](#) typically used for survey datasets. However, in the studies reviewed for this profile, selecting the SDA option triggered a pop-up stating, “*This study offers no online analysis.*”

- Does the repository display metadata using any specific metadata standard?

[“ICPSR’s core study-level metadata are based on the Data Documentation Initiative \(DDI\), a widely adopted metadata standard for the social and behavioral sciences, which ICPSR helped establish and now leads.”](#)

Subject Terms listed on study pages follow the ICPSR Subject Terms Thesaurus and the Library of Congress Subject Terms, and Geographic Terms follow ICPSR Geographic Names Thesaurus and the Getty Thesaurus of Geographic Names.

- What is included in this repository’s “Dissemination Information Package” (DIP)*?

[According to ICPSR](#), for a fully-curated study they provide:

- A study homepage
- A Digital Object Identifier (DOI)
- Usage information
- Impact measurement (monitors citations)
- Online analysis when applicable
- Restricted access management

In addition to the above, ICPSR’s dissemination package commonly includes downloadable study files in multiple formats and a DDI-based metadata record/documentation to support discovery and reuse.

Reference list

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