Term Project: The Experience of Academic Librarians and Archivists with Invisible Illnesses and/or Disabilities Dataset and Metadata Profile

Grace Adler

University of Washington

LIS 545 B

Term Project: Repository Profile

URL to data set: Hidden Barriers: [The Experience of Academic Librarians and Archivists with Invisible Illnesses and/or Disabilities Data Set](https://figshare.com/articles/dataset/Hidden_Barriers_The_Experience_of_Academic_Librarians_and_Archivists_with_Invisible_Illnesses_and_or_Disabilities_Dataset/17161328?file=31767911)

URL to repository: [ICPSR](https://www.icpsr.umich.edu/web/pages/index.html)

**Repository Choice**

I chose ICPSR (Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research). Although the study itself focused on professionals in the MLIS discipline, it deals directly with discrimination in the workplace and how disability affects individuals (Quirin Manwiller & Peter, 2021). This feels aligned with ICPSR’s focus on the social and behavioral sciences, and the data set could even qualify for specialized data curation in one of their twenty-one special collections, like the Archive of Data on Disability to Enable Policy (ADDEP), Health and Medical Care Archive (HMCA), Data Sharing for Demographic Research (DSDR), or the Resource Center for Minority Data (RCMD) (Data Collections at ICPSR, n.d.). They even include “Discrimination” as a suggested search on their homepage, so the data set is well within the scope of ICPSR’s research scope (ICPSR, n.d.).

The Hidden Barriers data set was created and analyzed by researchers with various university affiliations, such as West Chester University and the University of Wyoming, and all but one of the listed universities is a member of the ICPSR (List of Member Institutions and Subscribers, n.d.). This means that, in addition to the extensive deposit guides, general data education, and support ICPSR provides to non-members, the researchers are allowed to submit to the membership archive without a fee (Start Sharing Data, 2018). The researchers could request funds from their member institutions more easily if they need data curation beyond what ICPSR typically offers (the cost for which varies depending on the data size and need), and ICPSR will share their data with members and non-members at no additional cost to them (Start Sharing Data, 2018).

**Repository Limitations and Restrictions**

ICPSR does not have limits on data type or file formats, though they do have recommendations for optimal reuse and storage (Depositing Data with ICPSR, n.d.). They do not explicitly forbid data sets outside the social and political sciences, but the financial information below might make it suboptimal for research outside the scope of its sponsored collections and membership institutions (Depositing Data with ICPSR, n.d.).

ICPSR states that it is “usually” free of charge, like for submissions that fit into the scope of a “sponsored archive (i.e., National Archive of Criminal Justice Data),” but non-members hoping to submit to the member-specific archive would need to either seek sponsorship or pay “$550 per study” (Depositing Data with ICPSR, n.d.). This financial detail is important to note because the level of curation that the data receives is explicitly tied to whether you are a member, if your data set fits into the scope of a sponsored collection, and so on. A non-member data set on a subject completely irrelevant to ICPSR’s specialized social and political science fields might be able to be submitted, but it is less likely to get sponsored curation and has fewer Open Access options (What Are the Differences between ICPSR’s Deposit Options, n.d.).

ICPSR explicitly accepts data submissions from “member and non-member institutions” and has guidelines to deposit both public and restricted-use submissions (Start Sharing Data, 2018). They even include a [helpful flowchart](https://www.icpsr.umich.edu/files/datamanagement/deposit-services-d5.pdf) to help potential submitters understand what they accept, which includes unique inclusions like “citizen scientists” and complex projects that require in-depth work to be ready for a Submission Information Package (SIP).

G**uidance for the Submission Information Package (SIP)**

ICPSR has an abundance of submission guidance.

They request, but do not require, that quantitative data is submitted as “SAS, SPSS, Stata,” or ASCII files with variables that are accompanied by a set of “exhaustive, mutually-exclusive codes” (Start Sharing Data, 2018). They request, but do not require, that qualitative data is “well-documented,” organized by nested file folders, and in the following file formats: .txt, .rtf, .pdf, .doc, or .nvp (“Guide for Sharing Qualitative Data at ICPSR,” 2023).

Other main requirements are that the SIP includes all relevant data files and documentation files, that it has a study-level description, and that all personally-identifiable information about human subjects meets industry standards for informed consent (Start Sharing Data, 2018).

ICPSR also provides a sixty two page guide with helpful topics to potential submitters including recommended elements, example data management plans, metadata best practices, respondent confidentiality, and so on (Guide to Social Science Data Preparation and Archiving, n.d.). Their recommended, but not required, elements include: a data description, review of existing data sets, expected formats the data will be in during the submission/distribution/preservation stages, structured metadata, and so on (Guide to Social Science Data Preparation and Archiving, n.d.).

**Human Assistance and Submission Consulting**

A help email is offered ([ICPSR-help@umich.edu](mailto:ICPSR-help@umich.edu)) but it is not submission specific. There is also a listed phone number (734-647-2200) but it is also not submission specific. They also mention that members could have a “local Representative who can help” depending on their partner institution (Help and User Guide, n.d.). Finally, there is a “[User Support Request Form](https://cms.icpsr.umich.edu/form/user-support-request-form?utm_source=website&utm_medium=button&utm_campaign=USRF&utm_id=USRF)” but it is not submission specific. From this combination of resources, help pages, and contact points, it seems like most direct human assistance is done through older digital communications like email and telephone, rather than over a video call, live chat, or in-person. The important exception being, of course, if you are a member and happen to have a local representative who is knowledgeable about preparing a SIP.

**Metadata Submission Requirements and Standards**

They do not require a specific structure, but recommend the metadata is in structured XML and list the following as “important metadata elements”: principal investigator(s), title, funding sources, data collector, project description, units of analysis (what or who is being studied), variables, related publications, technical file information, data collection instruments, index, coding information, and “Readme.txt” files (Guide to Social Science Data Preparation and Archiving, n.d.).

**Login Requirements**

After experimentation, a login is required to download complete data files from Open ICPSR. Both a login and membership are required to access member-only data sets. Without a login, one might be able to download a limited number of files, like metadata or Readme.txt, but the raw data itself will likely be missing. This was tested with both Open ICPSR data and member funded data, but there is a lot of variation between what individual data sets provide. Even with membership, there are some studies with restricted data ([example](https://www.icpsr.umich.edu/web/ICPSR/studies/38275)) but ICPSR provides guidance on how to bypass the restriction with general tips like submitting your project summary, academic affiliations, confidentiality pledges from relevant staff, and so on (Accessing Restricted Data at ICPSR, n.d.).

**Access Mechanisms**

ICPSR provides direct file download so users can analyze them on their own computers, but some data sets can be analyzed through their site itself (Access and Dissemination, n.d.). You do have to log in to access in-site analysis, and it is provided through Survey Documentation Analysis (SDA) (Analyze Data Online with SDA, n.d.). When previewing a data file that can be analyzed online, you can browse and search variables. Some studies allow you to “explore the data” by adding or removing potential variables, generating tables based on selected variables, and so on (Explore Data, n.d.).

**Specific Metadata Standard**

The metadata is available in multiple formats depending on the specific data set. From some exploratory searching, some offer just Dublin Core and DDI 2.5, while others include up to five exportable metadata standards for the same information. For its core projects, ICPSR states its metadata is “based on the Data Documentation Initiative (DDI)...which ICPSR helped establish and now leads” (Metadata, n.d.).

**Dissemination Information Package (DIP)**

The content of what actually disseminates to users from ICPSR depends on both what the user chooses, and how many files were in the original SIP from the researchers. The DIP could include just the data set by itself, a codebook, exportable metadata, various preexisting analysis, and/or other accompanying materials (Access and Dissemination, n.d.). ICPSR also assigns a Digital Object Identifier (DOI) and recommended citation to each study to allow for easier navigation to find the DIP from external sites (Additional ICPSR Services, n.d.).

References

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