

# **Streamlining the “Producer/Archive” Interface: Mechanisms to Reduce Delays in Ingest and Release of Social Science Data.**

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## **Abstract**

Sharing research data has become an important concern around the world. Nevertheless, the situation with depositing and sharing social science data is far from ideal. In this paper, we identify some of the barriers to depositing social science data and discuss some mechanisms to improve the acquisition, processing, and release of data. We use deposit and processing records from one social science data archive for 184 data sets acquired over a six and one-half year period (December 1999 to April 2006) to analyze the time lag between the completion of a research project and release of data to the public. There are two types of delays before data and documentation are released and accessible to the public. The deposit delay is the elapsed time between the completion of a grant-funded project and the receipt of data by the data archive. The processing delay is the elapsed time between the archive’s receipt of the data and the public release. On average, the total delay is three years between completion of a grant and release of data to the public.

In this paper, we identify causes for the deposit delay and the processing delay. We also propose several process improvements and incentive mechanisms that could be tested to reduce deposit and processing delays and expedite the release of social science data. These mechanisms may also be useful for data archives in other disciplines.