

MDS Validator Documentation

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Location of MDS Validator

<https://webval.validator.com.au/>

Introduction

The MDS Validator is an extensible, web-based application for determining the validity of large data sets. It ensures that large data sets passed between submitters and receivers are valid and consistent, according to a set of rules. These rules ensure that data is

1. Formatted correctly, as per a specification;
2. Internally consistent (that is, the data appears to be logical and coherent).

The value of the MDS Validator is that very large data sets - such as health records - can be efficiently and effectively examined for validity prior to acceptance. The types of organisations that would accept the validated data include government departments, statutory bodies or other organisations with a need to gather large data sets from a range of organisations (submitters), for purposes including data and statistical collection as well as reporting and administration. The validator reduces errors, lowers costs, and improves the accuracy and effectiveness of these processes.

MDS Validator has been developed for the Department of Health, in support of data sets sponsored by the Department. Its current users include the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) and the Australian Mental Health Outcomes and Classification Network (AMHOCN).

Features

MDS Validator is a custom-designed validator that allows submitters and receivers to validate large data sets prior to their acceptance.

It provides a number of important features:

Validations

MDS Validator provides two types of validation: structural validation and consistency validation.

Structural validation

Examines submitted files to ensure that submitted data is structured correctly and satisfies its specification. Structural validations report on all records that are malformed, miscoded,

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duplicated, as well as those that are missing associated parent or child records. For example, structural validations ensure:

- that records have the correct number of fields, as well as valid data within those fields.
- that records specify valid hierarchical entities. For example, an organisation with a region specifies a valid corresponding region record.
- that organisations have valid identifiers.

Consistency validation

Examines submitted files to ensure that data appears to be reasonable and consistent. This includes comparison to data submitted in previous reporting periods. Consistency validations report on data that is invalid or appears to contain anomalies. Many of these validations have emerged over time in response to errors in past-year data. For example:

- a male client should not have a female-only diagnosis.
- services should serve a reasonable number of clients.
- contact durations should be of reasonable length.

Pre-acceptance validity reporting

MDS Validator facilitates data validation before acceptance in two ways:

Submitter reviewing

Before offering their data to a receiver, data submitters are provided with detailed reports on the validity of their submissions - allowing them to review and re-submit their data as required.

Receiver/Acceptor reviewing

Once submitters have offered their data for acceptance, receivers can review the data's validation reports. MDS Validator provides a collaborative platform for receivers to work with submitters to ensure that data meets the standards required by the receiver. Issues are tracked and discussions between submitters and receivers are retained.

High-level validation summaries ensure that submitters and receivers can engage in sophisticated analysis and discussion, while MDS Validator deals with low-level tasks.

Security

MDS Validator's secure systems and protocols satisfy the Protected classification under the [Australian Government's Protective Security Policy Framework](#).

Communication between MDS Validator and its users is encrypted and all data is stored in a secure hosting facility.

Support for normalised data

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MDS Validator supports normalised data and understands hierarchies within data sets.

Support for multiple minimum data sets

MDS Validator supports a number of standard minimum data sets, including Community Mental Health Care (CMHC), Mental Health Establishment (MHE), Mental Health Care National Outcomes and Casemix Collection (MHNOCC), and Residential Mental Health Care (RMHC).

Benefits

MDS Validator delivers a number of benefits.

Accuracy

MDS Validator improves the accuracy of accepted data using a comprehensive set of validations. Receivers can ensure that all data received is correctly formatted and coherent. MDS Validator also compares new submissions to previous submissions of the same type.

Speed and efficiency

Delivered via the web as a Software-as-a-Service application, MDS Validator enables data sets to be exchanged quickly and securely, eliminating the need for physical postage and formats such as CD-ROM.

Data sets can be rapidly assessed, reviewed and re-submitted – reducing the time required before data can be accepted and used.

Workflow

MDS Validator provides a workspace with a simple workflow for submitters and receivers to collaborate and respond to data validity issues.

Corporate knowledge retention

New validations are retained by the MDS Validator, so that validation becomes more and more comprehensive over time. Throughout the review process, MDS Validator also tracks issues and retains a record of discussions between submitters and receivers.

Portability

MDS Validator uses only non-proprietary systems and open standards to ensure data and system portability.

For more information on using the MDS Validator please visit [Major System Operations](#).

Security and Data Visibility

The MDS Validator has been developed and is hosted under contractual arrangements set up by DoH. Data uploaded to the MDS Validator application is transmitted over an encrypted connection to dedicated servers owned and managed by Strategic Data Pty Ltd. Strategic Data's servers are housed within a purpose specific secure data centre in Melbourne.

A logged in "Submitter" (i.e. the responsible jurisdictional staff member) may upload data to the MDS Validator. Initially the uploaded file is only accessible to the Submitter and to Strategic Data help-desk staff for the purpose of providing support to the Submitter.

The Submitter can review the online data quality reports and classify any error reports that have been recorded by the system. At any point during this stage of submission it is possible to delete the uploaded file and completely remove it from the Strategic Data system.

While a file is under review (i.e. it has not been submitted) the Submitter may share access to the file with other users from their jurisdiction, the Commonwealth, or the AIHW in order to discuss issues that may arise from the validation process. At this stage the Submitter has control over who may view the uploaded file and can add or remove users at their discretion.

Once the Submitter is satisfied with the quality of the data they may choose to submit it for formal review. Upon submission the uploaded data is made accessible to the Australian Government and the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare in order that they may review the data prior to accepting it.

The "Submitter" cannot delete a pending or accepted submission since it has now been "sent". This is analogous to the process of mailing a submission. It cannot be taken back once it is in the mail. It is possible to remove a submission at this point (e.g. if a mistake has been made) but the Submitter should contact the Reviewer to arrange this. The MDS Validator indicates who the Reviewer is and provides an e-mail address to facilitate such communication.

A rejected submission reverts to the control of the Submitter and may once again be deleted by that person.

MDS Validator Change Log

Available at [MDS Validator Change Log](#)