

Outbreak questionnaires and data entry using the new EpiData modules

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Introduction

This document contain a brief introduction to two EpiData software modules.

The **EpiData Project Manager**. With this software questionnaire template files can be combined and modified. Questions can be added and adapted and finally saved as a project file, containing all relevant questions and interview/respondent guidance texts to be used during information collection.

The **EpiData EntryClient**. This can only be used for data entry. This would typically be used by the interviewers or for data entry of paper questionnaires. By separating the EntryClient from the Project Manager the database format is secured against changes invoked by the front line Entry/Interview personnel.

To get acquainted with the software a user must do the following:

A. Install

Download and install the software in the appropriate version for the particular operating system in the local computer. The user should have administrative rights for the computer or have an IT-department to do the installation. The software can be installed by unzipping the delivered packages, make sure to maintain folder structures, or else documentation might not be available as expected.

All of the three software components are compiled for as well the Linux, Windows and Machintosh operating systems and can be downloaded from <http://www.epidata.dk> without any payment.

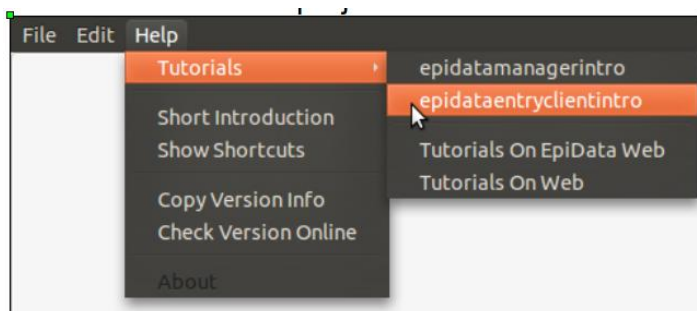
Since the software continue to be developed new versions will be created and reported bugs or problems fixed - make sure to check regularly for new versions. It is also a good idea to keep informed by signing on to the discussion list, which is e-mail based. This is also explained on the front page of <http://www.epidata.dk>.

Versions for general use will be found on the download page and development versions on the testing page. The user can see these from the front of the webpage.

It should be noted however that some graphic components are not fully developed for Machintosh, such that preference should be given to either Linux or Windows. Apart from the general poor performance of Windows Vista no particular versions are preferred with Linux and Windows.

B. Get to know basics

Familiarity yourself with the introduction documents found and referenced in the help menu's of the software used. These have reference to as well local and internet based documentation. Internet based documentation can either be placed on EpiData websites or a local website defined by the user in the setup.



This is a flexible way to develop local guides, save these in pdf format and place on logical drives (e.g. L:) and/or local or national websites. This is explained in the introduction documents under setup. Updated editions of EpiData specific pdf documents are found on the EpiData.dk web site. If you delete the local copies and have an internet connection the software will look for the EpiData.dk site to get the updated version.

C. Acquire toolbox questionnaire template files

A series of such files are provided with the Toolbox. Such templates will contain questions for a given section in a questionnaire, for instance cheese, poultry, vegetables or disease symptoms. As mentioned,

such files need to be further modified when an outbreak occurs. Alternatively a series of files can be developed and maintained in a given country so that the files reflect the needs of the local setting.

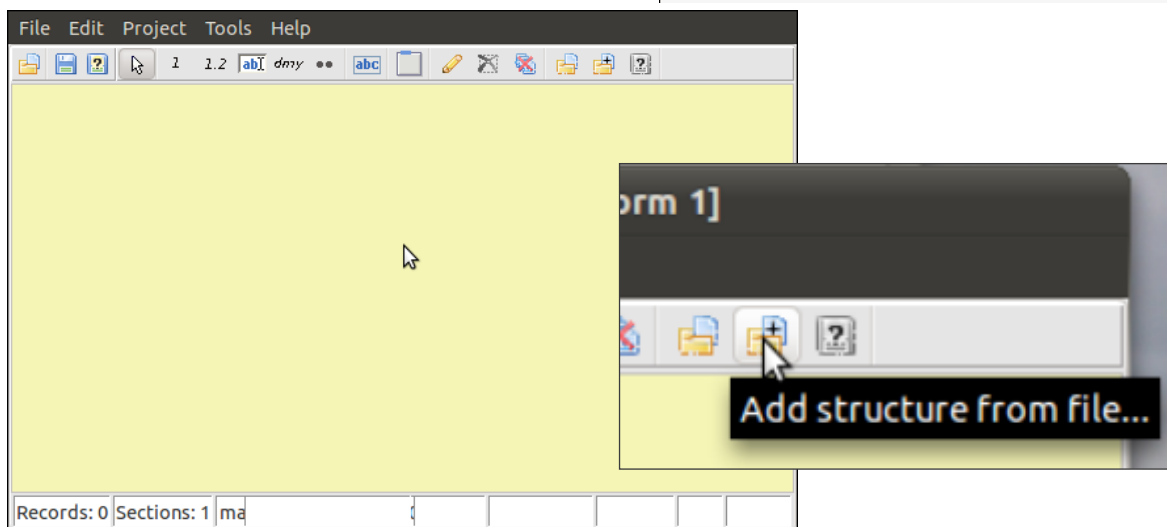
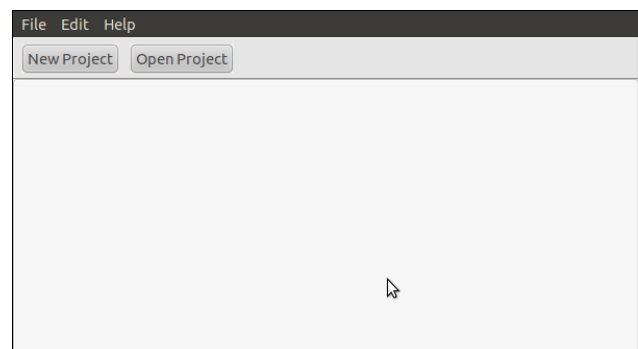
D. Acquire the matrix guide and copy into where you have installed the software.

As indicated above you need the toolbox matrix subsection guide delivered as a pdf file. After installation make sure you have the right paths indicated for guides and tutorials. When you place that file in the appropriate folder - the guide will be available in the help menu under "tutorials".

E. Experiment with the EpiData Project Manager

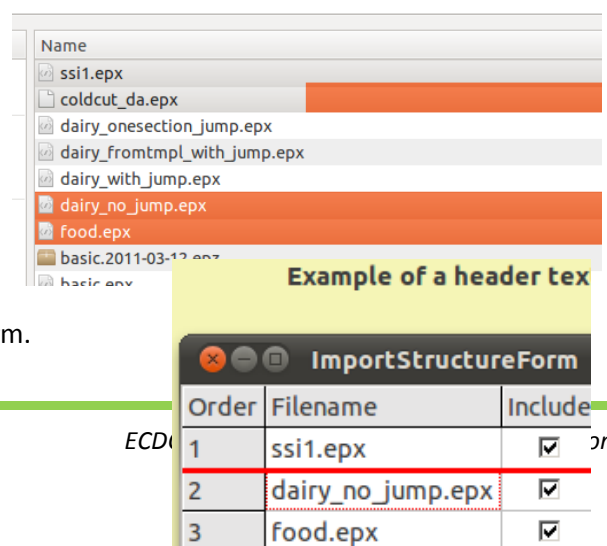
After executing the EpiData Manager and pressing ok you will see a grey opening screen with two main buttons at the top - press "new project" and see the "empty" yellow form.

Notice the "add structure from file " button



Usage of the buttons along the toolbar is self-explanatory and/or further explained in the "Introduction document for manager".

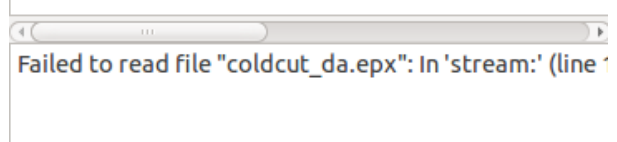
But one button you will use often based on the toolbox contents is "Add structure from file", since this is where you open the subsection files, which combined will be used to form the final questionnaire. Press and select the files you wish to add to the dataform.



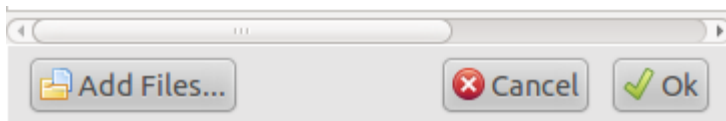
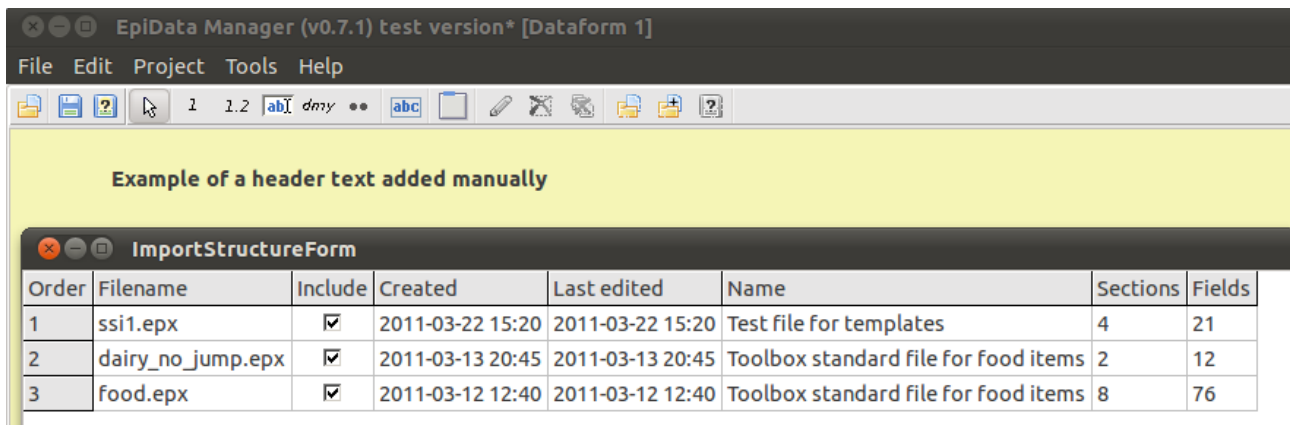
After pointing at a number of files (select several by ctrl+click) you will get a sorted grid with alle the names, such ss seen here:

Hold onto the left sides and reorder sequence by moving one of the file names up or down.

Notice that if an error occurs during the adding of a given file, an error window will be shown at the bottom:



Failed to read file "coldcut_da.epx": In 'stream:' (line 1

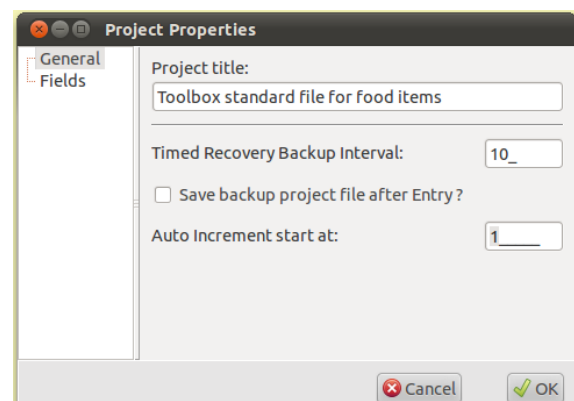


Y

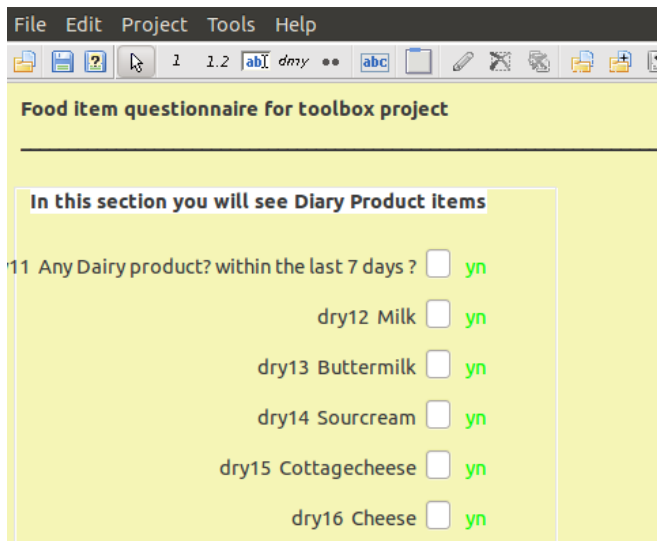
You can add more files at any time or press “Ok” to start adding the files. I

That is all !! - You have the first file based on the toolbox and can do refinements or add fields. This is all explained in the introduction document for the Manager (see help menu).

F: Experiment with options



After showing the basic form you can try options (Alt+p) and change to e.g. not showing field names or add an extra question as shown on the right. Notice also the options of using timed backup and backup after closing the file, this will create a zipped copy given the name of the current project and the date of when the file was saved.



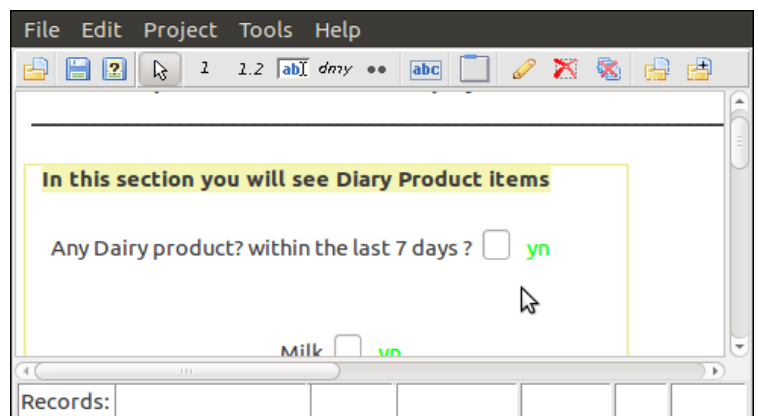
The screenshot shows the design phase of a questionnaire in a software interface. The title bar includes 'File', 'Edit', 'Project', 'Tools', and 'Help'. The menu bar shows '1', '1.2', 'abI dny', and 'abc'. The main area is titled 'Food item questionnaire for toolbox project'. Below this, a section header reads 'In this section you will see Diary Product items'. The form contains several questions with checkboxes and 'yn' labels: '11 Any Dairy product? within the last 7 days ? yn', 'dry12 Milk yn', 'dry13 Buttermilk yn', 'dry14 Sourcream yn', 'dry15 Cottagecheese yn', and 'dry16 Cheese yn'.

Save your project and you are ready for the next phase : Entering Data.

G: Entering Data:

This is straight forward. Open the Epidata Entry Client, point to the project file just saved and enter your data. After you have seen the introduction system and tried a few times this will pose no

questions.



The screenshot shows the data entry phase of the same questionnaire. The title bar and menu bar are identical to the design phase. The main area is titled 'In this section you will see Diary Product items'. The form now displays the first question: 'Any Dairy product? within the last 7 days ? yn'. A mouse cursor is pointing at the 'yn' label. Below the question, the word 'Milk' is visible, followed by a checkbox and the label 'yn'. At the bottom of the window, there is a 'Records:' section with a table of empty cells.

EpiDataCmd tool processor

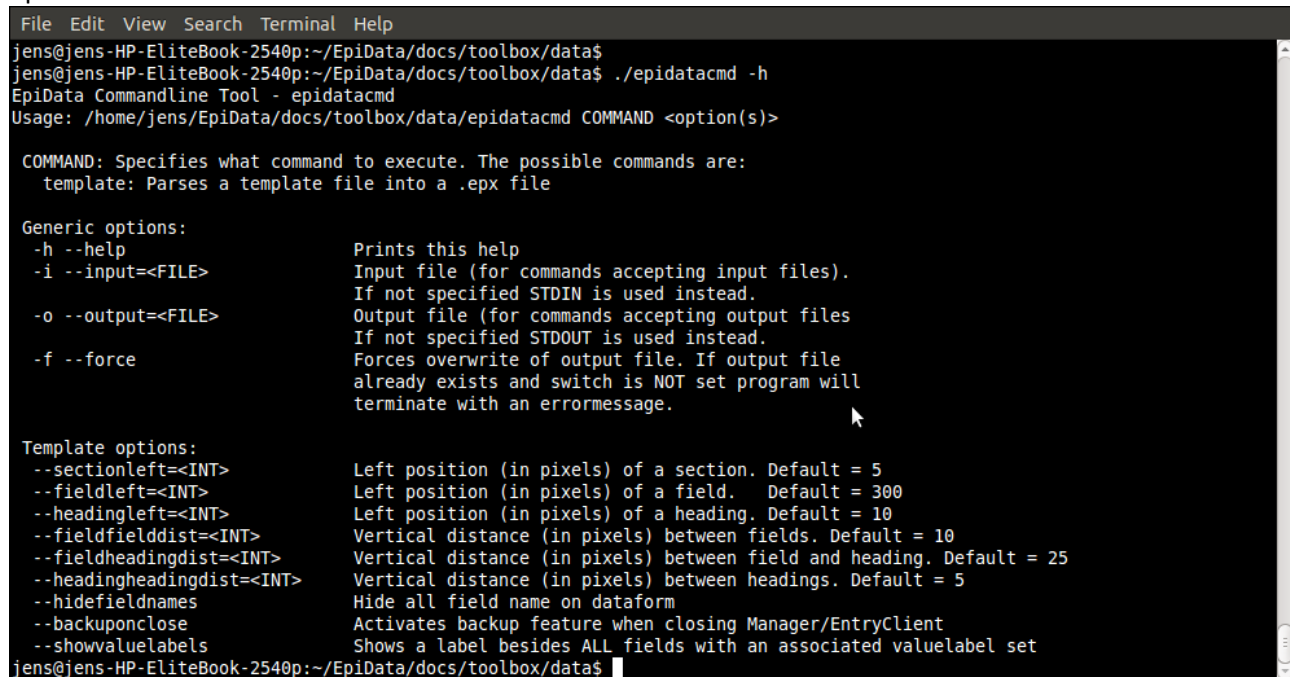
Only for the expert Data Manager experienced in IT.

The tool would typically be used by a regional or **national** responsible person in charge of maintaining a library of building blocks for investigations. The tool works in a combination of batch mode processing (command line/terminal use) and formation of templates by the use of any text editor capable of using the UTF-8 text representation.

The documentation for the template structure is found on the wiki system, at
Template definition

(<http://www.epidata.org/dokuwiki/doku.php/documentation:templateformat>)

You run the system in a terminal window, invoke the command with -h as an option and will then see the options as shown here:



```
File Edit View Search Terminal Help
jens@jens-HP-EliteBook-2540p:~/EpiData/docs/toolbox/data$
jens@jens-HP-EliteBook-2540p:~/EpiData/docs/toolbox/data$ ./epidatcmd -h
EpiData CommandLine Tool - epidatcmd
Usage: /home/jens/EpiData/docs/toolbox/data/epidatcmd COMMAND <option(s)>

COMMAND: Specifies what command to execute. The possible commands are:
  template: Parses a template file into a .epx file

Generic options:
-h --help          Prints this help
-i --input=<FILE>   Input file (for commands accepting input files).
                  If not specified STDIN is used instead.
-o --output=<FILE>  Output file (for commands accepting output files)
                  If not specified STDOUT is used instead.
-f --force         Forces overwrite of output file. If output file
                  already exists and switch is NOT set program will
                  terminate with an error message.

Template options:
--sectionleft=<INT> Left position (in pixels) of a section. Default = 5
--fieldleft=<INT>   Left position (in pixels) of a field. Default = 300
--headingleft=<INT> Left position (in pixels) of a heading. Default = 10
--fieldfielddist=<INT> Vertical distance (in pixels) between fields. Default = 10
--fieldheadingdist=<INT> Vertical distance (in pixels) between field and heading. Default = 25
--headingheadingdist=<INT> Vertical distance (in pixels) between headings. Default = 5
--hidefieldnames   Hide all field name on dataform
--backuponclose    Activates backup feature when closing Manager/EntryClient
--showvaluelabels  Shows a label besides ALL fields with an associated valuelabel set
jens@jens-HP-EliteBook-2540p:~/EpiData/docs/toolbox/data$
```

One example of this is:

In linux: `./epidatcmd template -i dairy.tmpl -o dairy.epx -f`

In windows: `epidatcmd template -i dairy.tmpl -o dairy.epx -f`

With the interpretation, that based on the **dairy.tmpl** file the system creates **dairy.epx** and if existing overwrites the output file (-f)

If you wrap such lines in a shell or cmd file, then a whole collection of epx files can be created by just hitting a “button”.