



LTER Intranet

Serving the LTER Community

LTER Information Managers Report to the Coordinating Committee Prepared by IMExec 20 April 2004

Summary of activities since LTER CC meeting at KBS, May 2003

1. Meetings. Annual meetings of the Information Managers and IMExec Committees were held in Seattle (Sep 03) and San Diego (Feb 04), respectively. LTER Information Managers were actively involved in many of the workshops at the All-Scientists Meeting in Seattle (Sep 03), as well as in the EML Implementation Workshop at Sevilleta (Jun 03), the Web Services Workshop at SDSC (Feb 04), and the NISAC Meeting at NCSA (Mar 04). Steady progress toward IM Committee goals was facilitated by IMExec conference calls over the past year.

2. EML Implementation. Conversion of existing site metadata to EML (Ecological Metadata Language) was facilitated for many sites by site visits by David Blankman (LNO) and development of conversion tools by the Network Office. A survey of progress across the LTER Network was undertaken by IMExec in Jan 04. Of the 21 sites that responded, 14 sites had not yet implemented EML (seven of these were waiting for tools from LNO), while the remaining 7 sites had implemented EML in varying degrees, ranging from discovery-level EML for selected datasets to complete EML for all datasets. Barriers to EML implementation that emerged from the survey included lack of resources, lack of adequate software tools, and lack of accessible documentation. Please see http://gce-lter.marsci.uga.edu/lter_im/2004/references.htm for a summary of the survey results.

3. EML Best Practices Document. Though highly structured, EML provides great flexibility in terms of which elements to include and how to provide content. A best practices document with specific recommendations for inclusion and content would help sites beginning to implement EML as well as enhance metadata consistency across the LTER Network. A first draft of such a document (still incomplete) was created at the EML Implementation Workshop (<http://intranet.lternet.edu/eml/emlimplementation.htm>). A working group has been appointed by IMExec to complete the draft in time for review at the annual IM Meeting in Jul 04.

4. Tiered Trajectory. At the KBS meeting in May 03, the LTER CC approved a motion that (1) the network adopt a strategy of a tiered trajectory toward improved IM functionality for synthesis, where the trajectory would increasingly incorporate common, structured metadata; (2) a general goal would be improving each site's position in the trajectory; and (3) the NISAC Committee would develop metrics for assessment of progress at site and network levels. The original concept of the tiered trajectory was first proposed by NISAC at the KBS meeting. Details of the trajectory were discussed by Information Managers at the EML Implementation Workshop (see URL above) and the Annual IM Meeting (http://intranet.lternet.edu/committees/information_management), and a detailed draft was produced based on these discussions. This draft was reviewed and accepted by the NISAC Committee. A summary framework for the tiered trajectory will be presented to the SBC CC meeting in April, and the final tiered trajectory document will be prepared before the August CC meeting.

5. Network Databases. At the KBS meeting in May 03, the LTER CC also approved a motion that individual sites commit to populate and update existing basic network databases (ClimDB, HydroDB, SiteDB). All 24 LTER sites now participate in ClimDB, though at varying levels of completeness in terms of dates, variables, and numbers of stations. Fourteen LTER sites currently participate in HydroDB; ten of these utilize the USGS harvesting service developed by Wade Sheldon (GCE) (http://gce-lter.marsci.uga.edu/lter/research/tools/usgs_harvester.htm). The combined ClimDB/HydroDB web pages are now located at <http://www.fsl.orst.edu/climhy>. A new and enhanced version of SiteDB is under preparation by the LNO and will be available shortly.

6. BDI Proposal. Four LTER sites (AND, CAP, LNO, NTL) submitted a proposal to the BDI (Biological Databases and Informatics) program at NSF for the Jul 03 deadline. The proposal sought funding to develop infrastructure for rapid design and creation of synthetic databases, through creation of a query engine that

would process requests and implement quality control, and that could be deployed at all LTER sites using public-domain software designed to integrate with the site's existing EML listings and data storage system. Though not funded, the proposal received favorable reviews and may be resubmitted for the Jul 04 deadline.

7. Information Management Inreach. The IM Committee has two ongoing projects to make useful information on information management and committee activities readily available. We are developing a site mentoring website that will help new sites or new information managers become oriented to LTER information management. The IM Committee web page is being redesigned.

[INTRANET](#) www.lternet.edu www.ilternet.edu schoolyard.lternet.edu

- Copyright 2003 Long Term Ecological Research Network -

This material is based upon work supported by the [National Science Foundation](#) under Cooperative Agreement [#DEB-0236154](#). Any opinions, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in the material are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the National Science Foundation.

Please [contact us](#) with questions, comments, or for technical assistance regarding this web site.