

**Information Managers Committee 2010 Annual Report to the Executive Board**  
May 2010

**1. Meetings and communications**

- a. IMC Annual Meeting: The Information Management Committee (IMC) held its meeting preceding ASM2009 in Estes Park, and the meeting was attended by over 50 site information managers (IMs) and guests, both domestic and international. Several IMs led working groups during the ASM, and two IM-focused post-ASM workshops were funded.
- b. IMExec Annual Meeting: The IM Executive Committee (IMExec) held its annual meeting in Albuquerque in February. IMExec a) discussed IM progress within LTER and current opportunities at NSF via VTC with Todd Crowl and Peter McCartney (NSF), b) received a NISAC report from co-chair Sheldon (GCE), 3) received an LNO report from Bob Waide, and included invited guests Christine Laney (EcoTrends), Deanna Pennington (CI-TEAM program proposal), Karen Baker (PAL-CCE), Kristin Vanderbilt (SEV), and several LNO staff.
- c. Monthly VTCs: IMExec continues to hold its monthly video teleconferences (VTCs), with higher frequency as necessary. In addition, the entire IMC holds informal, interactive discussions on relevant topics through monthly VTCs. Key topics have included improving EML, the LNO operational plan, the IM Drupal website, cross-site projects with IM supplements and IM working group updates. Notes from these 'virtual water coolers' are online (<http://intranet.lternet.edu/im/news/virtualupdates>).
- d. Webpage: The IMC maintains a webpage at LNO (<http://intranet.lternet.edu/im/>). The interactive webpage allows all sites to post relevant IM news, provides centralized access to meeting notes and reports, and greatly enhances site awareness of network-wide IM activities.
- e. Databits: The IMC continues to produce its online publication with articles, reports, and editorial comments provided from the broader IMC community. Databits is produced twice per year with rotating editors. Editors in 2009-2010 are Jason Downing (BNZ), Dan Bahauddin (CDR) and M. Gastil-Buhl (MCR).
- f. Network-level: The IMC actively provided comments to LNO on the operational plan, and Corinna Gries (NTL) and Sheldon (GCE) compiled IMC and NISAC comments and attended the LNO OP review meeting in Albuquerque (Jan 2010). Additionally, IMC members Boose (HFR), Sheldon (GCE), Henshaw (AND), and Brunt (LNO) participated with SC members to write an LTER legacy data prospectus in response to an NSF request to consider and propose enhancement of site LTER data sets and IM as part of NEON activities. Also, several IMs actively participated in the MIRADA workshop addressing IM needs for this cross-site project.
- g. EIMC 2011: Gries (NTL) and Matt Jones (NCEAS) are organizing the second Environmental Information Management Conference to be held in September 2011. The program committee of 28 members has been established (including several IMC members) and will establish a conference theme. The first conference (2008) on Sensor Networks was initiated by LTER IMs and NCEAS and drew nearly 200 participants including other agency and university groups.

**2. IMC product-oriented working group progress during 2009-2010**

- a. Governance: As an organization, the IMC would like to structure itself to efficiently channel input to the network as required by NIS development, while still maintaining its site-centric point-of-view. The IMC is considering initiating a set of by-laws, and has tasked a sub-committee with organizing discussions at our next annual meeting. Nicole Kaplan (SGS), Karen Baker (CCE/PAL), and Eda Melendez-Colom (LUQ) lead this working group.

- b. GIS: The LTERMaps project made considerable progress throughout the year and held its post-ASM workshop in late March. Next steps include porting the application to the Network Office and producing an API so that sites may insert station maps and study locations locally. This project provides another example of how IM-originated software can be incorporated into a network model. Theresa Valentine (AND) leads this working group
- c. Unit Dictionary: A demonstration of the Unit Dictionary's management tools was conducted for the IMC in April 2010 showcasing the past year's work. Post-ASM funds will allow this group to begin installation of this NIS component, and to familiarize early adopters with the management tools. Baker (PAL/CCE), Lynn Yarmey (PAL/CCE), and Mason Kortz (PAL/CCE) currently lead this working group.
- d. Controlled Vocabulary: A list of candidate keywords has been developed for a common and searchable controlled vocabulary for LTER data. This group has received approval from the EB to proceed with the working group recommendations and begin to use. The controlled vocabulary and unit dictionary projects provide models for developing standardized IM practices for the network. John Porter (VCR) leads this effort.

### 3. IMC Events in 2010: NIS Production Workshops, Training, and Meetings

- a. EML Best Practices and Metrics (Jun 2010, LNO): This new IM working group was established in 2009 and plans to improve site EML for interoperability of LTER data. Quality metrics and NIS-level quality assessment tools are necessary if datasets are to be successfully used in cross-site synthesis. This activity will begin with an update of the white paper "EML Best Practices for LTER Sites" and the composition of metrics to evaluate site datasets. This work is led by O'Brien (SBC) and dovetails with tools to be written by LNO personnel.
- b. Network Database Redesign/Web Services (Oct 2010, LNO): Existing NIS databases will be redesigned to exchange personnel, bibliographic, site description, and other data with sites via web services. This group will channel specific input about needs of individual sites to the NIS developers so that Network databases can be more readily used at the site level and are more easily maintained. Mason Kortz (CCE/PAL) is leading this IM working group.
- c. Training Workshops - Installing and Configuring the Drupal content management system (summer 2010, TBD): This event will focus on site specific needs for web content and metadata management. This workshop will build on the recent work of LNO and IMC members, who are developing a common data model and framework for managing EML metadata using Drupal. Inigo San Gil and Marsh White (LNO) are leading this development and will host this training for personnel of early adopting sites.
- d. IMC Annual Meeting: The 2010 annual meeting is planned for September at the Kellogg Biological Station. Topics to be covered include: IMC governance; EML practices, metrics and congruency checker; NIS database use by sites; LTERMaps; entity-attribute standardization; and the development of a common relational data model. The meeting will be co-chaired by Henshaw (AND) and O'Brien (SBC).

### 4. Current IMC Leadership

- a. IMC Co-chairs: Margaret O'Brien (SBC) and Don Henshaw (AND)
- b. IMExec membership: Sven Bohm (KBS), Emery Boose (HFR), Corinna Gries (CAP), Suzanne Remillard (AND), and Hap Garritt (PIE)
- c. IMC Executive Board representative: Corinna Gries (CAP)
- d. IMC NISAC Members: Wade Sheldon (GCE, co-chair), Karen Baker (PAL), Kristin Vanderbilt (SEV), and John Porter (VCR)