Dear OBPG Subscription Users,

This message is relevant for users that have active non-extracted data

subscriptions.  None of the changes outlined will affect the extracted and

mapped subscriptions.

The OBPG is beginning to move away from FTP for data distribution

in favor of HTTP.  This is driven by a number of issues that some

of you might have encountered with the OBPG FTP server such as slow

response and timeouts.  Much of that has to do with the

infrastructure behind the FTP server, but some of it is caused by

FTP's antiquatedness, especially when dealing with firewalls.  To

that end, we will be introducing a change in how the OBPG

data subscriptions are staged.

The current scheme stages files, which are actually symbolic links,

in your subscription directories.  Users use some sort of FTP client

to poll the site for new files and download new files.  For this

scheme to work, the actual data files must be present on the FTP

server in some way.  It usually works okay, but occasionally we

encounter a problem that causes all of the physical space to be

used, which prevents new data from being staged until space is

available again.

The new scheme will instead create zero-length marker files that

have the same name as the file that would have been staged in the

old scheme.  There are several advantages of this scheme:

  a. Since the marker files have no size, we should never have a space

     issue on the subscriptions partition again.

  b. We no longer have to make copies of a significant amount of data,

     since the files will not have to reside on the FTP server.

  c. The subscription system will be able to stage the data faster

     since it takes virtually no time to create a zero-length file.

The name of the marker files can be plugged into an HTTP-getfile

service call (discussed below) that will download the file.  This

will require a small change to your download procedures.  We envision

two main scenarios:

Scenario 1:  You poll the subscription directory for new files, and

download any files that have appeared since the last poll.

In this case, the process that would have downloaded the new files

via FTP would instead use a command-line HTTP client such as wget or

curl to initiate an HTTP transfer.  The polling mechanism need not

change.

Scenario 2:  You periodically sync your local directory with the

subscription directory, and the FTP client determines which files

you need and downloads them automatically.

In this case, you will need a process that examines the downloaded

files for those that are zero length.  For each zero-length file,

you will need to invoke the HTTP transfer.

The HTTP-getfile service call looks like this:

Using wget:

   wget <http://oceandata.sci.gsfc.nasa.gov/cgi/getfile/$file>

Using curl:

   curl --output $file <http://oceandata.sci.gsfc.nasa.gov/cgi/getfile/$file>

You replace $file with the name of the file you want to download, i.e. the

name of the zero-length file.  Note there are two instances of $file in

the curl command.

wget and curl each have a number of options for dealing with timeouts

and retrying transfers that you can use.

We are planning to implement this new scheme on Mon, Mar 22.  We

have a few subscriptions that have already transitioned to the zero-

length marker files.  If you would like to experiment with them, they

can be accessed in these directories on [oceans.gsfc.nasa.gov](http://oceans.gsfc.nasa.gov/):

    subscriptions/812

    subscriptions/813

    subscriptions/826

    subscriptions/827

    subscriptions/833

We would like this transition to be as smooth as possible for

everyone.  If you have any questions or concerns about this,

please let us know.  You can post questions in the Ocean Color

Forum: <http://oceancolor.gsfc.nasa.gov/forum/oceancolor/forum_show.pl>

Regards,

NASA Ocean Biology Processing Group

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To notify the OBPG of a problem: Send an e-mail to

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