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Participants
Members: Don Henshaw, Margaret O'Brien (co-chairs), Sven Bohm, Emery Boose, Hap Garritt, Corinna Gries, Suzanne Remillard
Ex officio: James Brunt (LNO)

Topics
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1. Meetings

Winter IM-Exec meeting at LNO on 23-24 Feb 2010. Arrivals on 22 Feb. Departures on 24 or 25 Feb.

Sven will set up Doodle to schedule IM-Exec VTCs for Jan, Feb, and Mar. Invite Todd to join Jan VTC.

2010 IMC meeting. Still missing two sites on Doodle, no dates work for everyone. Need to schedule soon. Sven will verify that week of Sep 20 works for KBS.

2. LNO Operational Plan

IMC comments are posted on Drupal website. The process went well and comments were good. Organized from general to specific using original numbering. LNO response: comments were on the mark in terms of length and detail. Bob Waide will take some items to the EB.

The main point is that individual sites and their contributions need to be acknowledged in the plan. NSF needs to recognize both site contributions and site needs.

The EB is sensitive to these issues. But will there be any funds to the sites? IMs contribute a lot of time to network activities. NSF is looking for additional funds, possibly from NEON. What we really need is another person at each site. Supplements for IM may continue if funds are used well.

Can we get IMs to collaborate on common problems? It might be possible to use the next supplement to facilitate this. Margaret is trying to get a sense of how sites get things done now.

Perhaps we can learn from the scientists, many of whom have shifted gears from site to network science. We need to be creative and positive to move ahead. We can make time for things that are important. We also can and should receive credit for network activities in site reviews.

3. 2011 IMC Meeting

Scheduled to be a larger meeting. Should we align with another group? Should the meeting be initiated by LTER or should there be a community advisory board?

The 2008 meeting was a topical conference. Corinna invited the usual participants (NCEAS, etc) and others who wanted to join the steering committee. Matt Jones was especially interested and helpful. The meeting generated wide interest and drew some participants away from the international ecoinformatics meeting in Cancoon. The international group does not meet in 2011. We might consider a joint meeting in 2014.

For the 2011 meeting we could contact the 2008 co-organizers to gage their level of interest. Other possible participants include USGS, ARS, and NEON. Try to broaden participation. Create a steering committee. We could help shape the theme for the meeting.

In the 2008 meeting, Corinna was the lead person from our group and Margaret handled much of the logistics. The steering committee was about half LTER. Evaluations were generally good. LTER covered meeting costs for LTER IMs. Non-LTER participants paid a registration fee and covered their own travel and meeting costs.

It would help to have at least a year to plan the meeting. Use same format as last time. Invite others to increase strategic partnerships (e.g. sensor networking). NEON will be another good contact.

Next steps. Corinna will contact Matt, etc to gage interest. Need to identify a place, ideally where one of us is located (Madison?). Need to identify a date (September?). Need to identify a theme. A lot of work but worthwhile.

4. Supplements

How can we facilitate collaborations? In the past we have created a matrix of hardware, software, etc at each site. All of us should think about what we could do at our sites for $25k. Alternatively we could circulate a few targeted questions (see Margaret's recent email). For example, identify problems with data loading: what is the problem, can it be fixed, if not why. Chances are these will be common needs.

Margaret will resend survey to IM-Exec for evaluation. Revised survey: (1) do you need all funds for EML 2.1, (2) or something else, (3) or are you interested in a workshop? Travel would be about $1000.

5. EML Metrics

Distinguish (1) site policy on whether a dataset should be downloaded and (2) technical question of whether a dataset can be downloaded. Not all sites want to contribute data to Metacat.

The EML metrics tool will not require loading data into Metacat or a similar system. The purpose

is to check the quality of site EML. Do the attribute definitions match the data tables?

Various problems were uncovered by EcoTrends. E.g. mismatch of data and metadata, problems with content of data tables. These tools will be most valuable for sites that create EML by hand (more prone to mistakes).

Note that the ways in which sites manage information do not necessarily lead to a tight matching of data and metadata. A reporting tool could be helpful in identifying problems, metadata completeness, etc.

What are we looking for in a reporting tool? EML is a perfect driver for quality assurance checking. This process will likely lead to improvements in current EML best practices. Just knowing if we can load the data will be quite informative.

The next VTC (early Jan) should focus on metrics since the supplement announcement is likely to be soon. Get everyone thinking along these lines in time for proposal submissions.

Send out a query to IMC. If funding were available, what will sites need to do? Upgrade to EML 2.1, etc? How many sites could do something else? This process will help uncover site differences. Develop a common metadata model? Also ask about interest in a workshop to address common goals (e.g. update best practices). How many sites would be willing to use their share for travel and workshop?

Workshop ideas include EML best practices, attributes, units, controlled vocabulary standardization.

EML metrics. IM-Exec could identify specs for tools. A working tool would help with reporting to NSF. Work is underway on the Data Manager Library. Scheduled for mid-2010 in LNO operational plan. Goal is to have tool in place by September to gage current state of EML.

The tool could be applied to the EML in Metacat. First question will be whether data are directly accessible. Data Access Servers is up and running now. Early adopters (including Wade and Jim) are using it. Mark can provide more details. Some changes to the DAS are needed but there is no reason to delay participation. Reporting details still to be worked out.

Some sites have built their own extensive tracking systems and would want to incorporate DAS information into their own systems. It is possible to split access: Metacat URL could point to DAS while local URL could point to local login system.

Inigo has worked on a common metadata model. Drupal approach to metadata management. If the solution is too generic it invites a wide variety of implementations. Focus on metadata that can generate EML (not EML itself).

The best practices document needs to address a common data model. Sites demos via VTC? Good way to find out what sites are doing (perhaps better than a survey).

EML metrics would a good fit as a production workshop. It might also leverage training money.

Meeting Notes [2]

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