Summary of Plans for the LTER Cyberinfrastructure Assessment and Needs Survey Update: Results from the LTER IMC Virtual Water Cooler Sessions of December 1st and 2nd, 2008. John Vande Castle, LTER Network Office.

Discussions from LTER Information Management members including John Porter, Barbara Benson, David Balsinger, Susan Remillard, Jason Downing, Don Henshaw, Mark Servilla, Nicole, Kaplan, Johnathan Walsh, Emery Boose, Sven Bohm, Wade Sheldon, Margaret O'brien, Theresa Valentine and Ken Ransey.

The LTER Cyberinfrastructure Assessment surveys from 2005 and 2007 documented a substantial capability from infrastructure investment across the LTER Network. They also document a rapid trajectory of advances from technology changes. The purpose of this most recent discussion was to receive input from the LTER information management community on ways to improve the assessment of cyberinfrastructure across the LTER Network.

The consensus of discussion suggested that a new assessment of LTER cyberinfrastructure and needs during 2009 would be very important, keep this information current and provide a good time-line for documenting changes across the LTER Network. The group felt the survey should have input from the LTER Network Information System Advisory Committee and include information related to the LTER Cyberinfrastructure Strategic Plan, Implementation Plan, and other needs related to the Integrative Science for Society and the Environment: A Strategic Research Initiative document. The discussion also suggested the survey should be completed and analyzed prior to the 2009 LTER All Scientists Meeting, for use in discussions there. This would mean a draft of the LTER Cyberinfrastructure Assessment and Needs Survey should be completed prior to the February meeting of the LTER Network Information System Advisory Committee meeting for discussions during that meeting, and revision with input from the LTER information management community during the spring of 2009. There should be sufficient time for the LTER information management community to fill out the survey and it would need to be completed for analysis before the fall of 2009.

There was a lot of discussion about what the revised survey should contain. The following is a bulleted list of some of the items that were considered important during the discussions:

- The survey should contain or result in a vision of where LTER wants to be in 5 years.
- The assessment should include the **priorities** at both the Site and Network level.
- The assessment of EML should include assessment of data access, related to the recent initiative to clarify and improve access to LTER site data. Also include documentation of access from both the human to computer, as well as computer to computer, and work-flow level.
- There is a need to identify what combination of tools, in other words, what suite of tools are most often employed by sites in their information management
- There should be a specific assessment related to results from supplements and compelling to help get additional funding. An open-ended question of what the sites would implement immediately from a small or large supplement if it were available. Also compare the impact of supplements to recurring long-term support, to address the support of long-term funding.
- LTER Information management personnel assessments should include core roles, and document where they spend most of their time. Also include what could be done if more information management personnel were available. Document the trends in information management itself, training, tasks etc.
- A good assessment of GIS/RS data and needs should be included, as well as how LNO can help in this area.

- Questions should be refined based on needs of sites and groups of sites to support science on the horizon.
- Ascertain impediments to Network operations, what barriers exist at the site and Network Level.
- The assessment should include questions related to core data sets and new science.
- There should be more use of "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree" analysis in the survey.
- Address any potential disconnect between researchers and information management, including need to include the IM component from the start of all new science projects.
- The assessment of data management itself should be clarified to include what specific components are included – from field data acquisition to the data management itself.
- The title of the survey could be improved for emphasis, including both assessment, needs and what is needed to achieve capabilities.