

Fall 99



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LTER DataBits
Information Management Newsletter of
The Long Term Ecological Research Network
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◆ **News Bits – Fall 99**

LTER Site Information System Elements Survey

- *Karen S. Baker, Palmer LTER*

The LTER information managers decided at their recent summer meeting to gather information about existing site information system designs in preparation for upcoming KDI activities. Within the short timeframe available at the meeting, a survey was designed and the majority of representatives completed the two page form. These forms have been transcribed and will be available online in November for correction and update. Under discussion are the organization of input forms and structure of the database.

Palmer and McMurdo Education Outreach

- *Karen S. Baker, Palmer LTER*

The Palmer and McMurdo LTER sites are participants in the Teachers Experiencing Antarctica and Arctic (TEA) program supported by NSF. The TEA program, a joint collaboration between Office of Polar Programs and the Division of Elementary, Secondary and Informal Education makes it possible for teachers to travel to the field with polar research teams. Program goals include providing teachers with a research experience as a part of their continued professional development and taking polar experience back to their classrooms. The McMurdo LTER works with teacher Barb Schulz who deployed several years ago and returns to the field again this November. Teachers Besse Dawson and Mimi Wallace associated with the Palmer LTER have field participation January 1998 and January 2000, respectively. Such collaborations depend in many ways upon technology and are a unique opportunity to foster technology transfer. Thus, support from and coordination with information management can be an important aspect of education outreach efforts. To facilitate communications, each LTER site has a designated education contact (<http://www.lternet.edu/oppts/education/contacts.html>).

Good Read: Federated Database Vocabulary

- Karen S. Baker, Palmer LTER

As we come to terms with networked data systems within the LTER, there is a need for a broadened stock of words to capture and describe the changing conceptual vistas of information management. Sheth and Larson (ACM Computing Surveys 22:183-236) help the community into the 1990's by presenting a pertinent vocabulary with which to address "Federated Database Systems for Managing Distributed, Heterogeneous, and Autonomous Databases". A range of topics are discussed from semantic heterogeneity to types of federation and architecture schemas for cooperation among independent sites/systems.

Noted: Ecologist Outreach at Spokane ESA Meeting

- Karen S. Baker, Palmer LTER

The Spokane-Review Newspaper (7August99) carried the story about the ESA annual conference being held for the first time in Spokane this year. It was reported that last year an ESA member was queried "So you're here for that conference, those environmentalists?" and the ESA member had responded with "No! We're scientists!" This interchange alludes to a scientific objectivity expected of ecologists. In fact, the ESA literature defines "ecology is the study of the relationships between living organisms - including human - and their physical environment". It is interesting to note that after this exchange, specifically as an outreach for the Spokane meeting, the society invited nonscientists from the host city to participate as well as discounted education meeting costs for educators. This can be noted as a proactive response to a communications need.