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Good Read Review: Data Curation in E-Science

- *Ted Gragson (CWT)*

KARASTI, Helena, Karen S. BAKER, & Eija HALKOLA. 2006. Enriching the Notion of Data Curation in E-Science: Data Managing and Information Infrastructuring in the Long Term Ecological Research (LTER) Network. Computer Supported Cooperative Work 15(4): 321-358.

This article provides an ethnographic analysis of ecological data stewardship in the LTER - arguably one of the most informative long-run experiment in consistently collecting, managing and providing data to an ever-evolving scientific community of practice. While the origin of the LTER over 25 years ago was visionary, trial-and-error has helped ensure the vision did not devolve into ideology. A contemporary vision, e-Science or Cyberinfrastructure, is touted as the platform on which scientific research and education in our emerging knowledge economy is to be built. The vision is one of data generation and sharing by way of technologies neither previously available nor imagined by scientists and their students. This article focuses on the practices of long-term ecological data stewardship to draw attention to the connection between means and ends; this informs the more technological, sometimes ideological, discussion about data grids, computing power, middleware, and automation characteristic of e-Science. As such, this article offers practical information that will help bring closer to reality the vision of e-Science and the growing necessity of collaborative partnerships among diverse sciences to both understand environmental change and inform future decision-making.