

Spring 2007



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LTER DataBits
Information Management Newsletter of
The Long Term Ecological Research Network
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Good Read: Information Ecology: Open System Environment for Data, Memories and Knowing

- Sabine Grabner (MCR)

Baker, K.S. and G. Bowker. 2007. Information Ecology: Open System Environment for Data, Memories and Knowing. Journal of Intelligent Information Systems. BDEI Special Series. Online:
<http://www.springerlink.com/content/1865762173811847/fulltext.pdf>

Literally citing the abstract of this paper, it gives insight in to the 'traditionally unreported invisible work' of knowledge management in the field of ecology. The expression that comes to my mind when recommending this article to the LTER IM community is 'preaching to the converted'. However, we keep improving our skills by exchanging our knowledge about knowledge, and this paper actually has quite an abstract take on it. That is why I recommend this paper by K. Baker and G. Bowker that summarizes their one year study on the heterogeneity of information and its management within the LTER community. Even more importantly, I hope this paper will find its way into the hands of LTER scientists to increase their temporal horizon from the lifetime of their own work to the lifetime of the ecosystem. This paper provides a comprehensive introduction to the vision, concepts, acceptance, applications, constraints, issues, and costs of contemporary knowledge management based on a real-world study. Understanding the concepts of knowledge management will help to understand why we (the Information Managers) spend so much of our time nagging scientists for things like metadata and protocols.

I liked the quote in the summary: 'An information environment isn't something you finish, it's something you start'. It is almost like saying an Information Manager is a new species with good chances of survival at times of increasing species extinction in our fast-forward world.