

Spring, 2007



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**LTER DataBits**  
 Information Management Newsletter of  
 The Long Term Ecological Research Network  
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## What is the rationale for publishing DataBits twice a year?

*- Karen Baker (PAL && CCE) and John Campbell (HBR)*

DataBits is an electronically distributed newsletter; hardcopies are often distributed at the LTER CC Meeting - a bit of reading for those quiet moments. Though there are historical ties to community meetings that have influenced the timing of DataBits publication, there is a contemporary update to this rationale. The IM Committee traditionally meets once each year in the summer. Until 2006, the LTER governance structure called for two science Coordinating Committee (CC) meetings a year: one in the Spring attended by two members from each site and one in the Fall attended by one site representative. DataBits, initially developed in 1990 (Porter, personal communication), was redesigned with a rotating editorship and a two issues per year publication cycle in 1999 ([Baker and Brunt, DataBits Spring 1999](#)). This timing allowed it to be distributed at each CC meeting. Thus the newsletter provided both an informal publication venue for the LTER Information Management (IM) committee participants and associates as well as a communication mechanism bridging the information management and site science communities.

The LTER by-laws were updated in 2006 ([Zimmerman, Network News, Fall 2006 p5](#)) in order to enhance governance of the larger community of sites. At this time, the CC was transformed and renamed the Science Council with one general in-person all sites meeting planned for Spring. Despite this change, publication of DataBits will continue twice a year: first in the Spring (coordinating with the Spring SC meeting) and once in the Fall (serving to keep the pace of communication at half-yearly and to serve as a forum for summarizing the annual IM meeting). A biannual publication cycle ensures continued timely communication of newsworthy IM topics among LTER information managers, scientists, and the broader ecological community.