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REPORT OF THE CHAIR OF THE IODE GROUP OF EXPERTS ON MARINE INFORMATION MANAGEMENT (GE-MIM)

(Submitted by Pauline Simpson and Murari Tapaswi)

The Sixth Session of the IODE Group of Experts on Marine Information Management (GE-MIM) took place 31 May-03 Jun 1999 in Silver Spring, Maryland, USA. After a successful intersessional period of three years, there were some major accomplishments to be acknowledged :

- the excellent **IOC World Wide Website,** which will continue under MIM to be constantly maintained using state of the art technology tools, the inclusion of dataset and information databases , directories and the **IOC Electronic Library** providing a catalogue and full text of IOC publications.
- The attainment of 10,000 entries on the **Global Directory of Marine and Freshwater Professionals (GLODIR)** with activity directed at regional input (see IODE XVI, Doc 19)
- The continued success of the East African **regional information network**, RECOSCIX-WIO and imminent start of RECOSCIX-CEA for West Africa.
- The provision of Ariel software to enable fast provision of information using **electronic document delivery.**
- The **support** to LIS colleagues in Developing Countries to attend **training courses**, **workshops and professional conferences** organised by IAMSLIC and EURASLIC
- The growing **interaction between the data and information communities** under the aegis of IODE particularly on metadata and field definition, to progress the **MEDI** as a standard for dataset inventories. (see IODE Doc. ?)

Mr Murari Tapaswi, Librarian, National Institute of Oceanography India was elected Chair of IOC-GEMIM, 1999 -. The GE-MIM is a small group of 5, which nevertheless defined for the 1999-2002 period, an extensive programme under four action lines, many of them now demonstrating the close interrelationship between the data and information communities:

Capacity Building : development of information centres/regional information networks building on the RECOSCIX model. New initiatives, for a regional information network in West Africa -RECOSCIX-CEA and ODINAFRICA a project funded by Government of Flanders, SAREC of Sida and IOC/UNESCO as an extension of RECOSCIX-WIO to build a Data and Information Network for Africa.

Capacity Building : development of training tools and products. The building of a combined IODE Resource Kit CDROMs to include MIM components to provide integrated data and information management training at the workshop level and as a desktop tool .

Capacity Building : support for skills training and education and the development of a mentoring network with and within developing countries to cascade knowledge management skills. The Group recommended that information management lectures should be part of data management training courses and should emphasis the interdependency of data, information

and research. They recommended that the lectures covered the necessity for familiarity with marine information tools such as ASFA. Bibliographic Software, and MEDI . That although the Information Manager provides information services by organising and making available marine information, increasingly their role is becoming that of a Trainer to their Users to exploit the multitude of marine information resources on the Internet. Many would be required to provide Information Skills Training, and a link should also be made to their role in the publishing and promoting of scientists research

IODE Resource Kit (Document IOC/IODE-XVI/20) is a project in which GE-MIM is working with the IODE community, contributing content for the Information Management modules. At present a number of outlines have been presented and work is starting on providing content detail for each module. Modules can be selected for use at workshops, depending on audience, time available, experience etc . One outline is based on an exercise of establishing a marine information centre: Establishing an Information Centre; Assessment of the information environment; Establishing a plan; Building and documenting a collection; Developing connections; Defining and Launching services; Marketing the information centre; Working with Information Technology; Exploiting Electronic Resources; Information Skills Training; Managing internal information; Science Management Audit; Document Production; Communication and Value.

Products and Services : development of existing and new products/services : directories, GLODIR, IDALIC, MIM Publications and IOC Publications Database with full text, delivered on the Internet. The Group also identified the need for IOC to take the lead in providing a quality, definitive information gateway to electronic ocean information resources. Many ocean gateways are being designed and it was important for IOC to bring these resources together under one OceanPortal. (Document IOC/IODE-XVI/24)

A particular thrust the Group wished to pursue was capacity building in the Information Technology environment . Although it is fairly dangerous to define a hardware and software profile in such a fast moving IT world, nevertheless the Group identified the following minimum hardware profile for marine information centres:

1. At least 2 personal computers (Pentium III, 64 MB RAM)
2. Flatbed scanner with SCSI interface card or Digital Photocopier
3. Access to a photocopier including colour
4. Modem and Internet access
5. Laser Printer including colour
6. Access to telephone and fax
7. Integrated Library Management system
8. Electronic Document Transmission software eg Ariel
9. Office application suite

A particularly perceived need was to introduce or upgrade the present library management software in use. Many libraries are utilising CDS/ISIS which is freeware, but at present is not an integrated system and the conversion to WINISIS is only just being introduced. It is not a particularly library friendly software and requires a great deal of programming to achieve minimal functionality. It was felt that its slow development mode was holding back many small marine science libraries.

The Group agreed that as a matter of urgency, it was essential that an off the shelf Integrated Library Management System (ILMS) be identified that would provide for marine science libraries and information centres in developing countries, a quantum leap into 21st century library technology. A system that was continually maintained and upgraded, and provided a help desk was essential. The software should work on a Windows platform possibly with a web interface, adhere to MARC/CCF standards and at least be able to perform collection management, OPAC, circulation and serials control . Additional modules for interlibrary loan and acquisition would be ideal.

Contraints on cost made the evaluation exercise difficult. The Group have identified an advanced ILMS that has been developed by the National Documentation Centre in Greece called ABEKT, which is used by over 750 libraries in Greece, Cyprus and foreign countries. Its' basic configuration is free with costs for additional modules. The Group has the agreement of NDCG to provide the software to IOC marine science libraries in developing countries and discussion is progressing on training, translation, and implementation issues. It is hoped the ABEKT software will be demonstrated during IODE XVI.

Cooperation with other organizations

The close cooperation with the international marine science library and information organisations IAMSLIC and EURASLIC continued, with GE-MIM facilitating the coordinating role of the IAMSLIC Africa representative. Several joint projects are planned including: Training opportunities. GE-MIM through the IOC Website already hosts the international directories of both organisations.

Conclusions

GE-MIM are one year into their intersessional period and already can report progress on three main actions: IOC Website, Integrated Library Management System and contributions to the IODE Resource Kit.

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