

DMWG Charter Page

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Best Practices for Data Management Team Charter

Background

The U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) produces a large number of valuable data sets every year. Thousands of scientists in every Mission Area develop, analyze, and publish papers on data collected by the Survey. But the life cycle of a data set does not end with a given scientist or project or publication; the ability to integrate multiple data sets for analysis and reuse may vastly expand the value of a single data set from the original purpose for which it was collected. *Data integration* is a key component in answering complicated science questions. But before data integration can be undertaken, data must meet certain standards that define the data life cycle.

In some parts of the USGS, there is an underlying assumption that the majority of data are readily available and poised for integration. However, this is simply not the case. It may be difficult to find data within the Survey, much less to access and understand it.

In many offices and programs, scientists and managers are unaware of guidelines and standards to help ensure that relevant and critical documentation is maintained before, during, and after data are collected. Scientists spend needless time and money reproducing data sets that have already been collected because they are unable to locate preexisting data sets. Historical analyses may be hampered because relevant data sets are missing necessary contextual information. In addition, the USGS lacks clear policy requirements that oblige scientists to make data sets broadly available. The promotion process for research grade scientists emphasizes publishing, yet overlooks the critical notion that the data themselves are of enormous value and should be preserved, described, and made available.

Purpose

Good data management is a prerequisite for data integration, and the Community for Data Integration Best Practices for Data Management Team will identify mechanisms for incorporating data management into USGS science activities and develop ways to educate scientists of the value of this endeavor.

The Team seeks to elevate the practice of data management so that it is seen as a critical component of the pursuit of science in the USGS, working toward formal incorporation of data management into the Survey Manual and as part of the Research Grade Evaluation (RGE) and Equipment Development Grade Evaluation (EDGE) process. Once recommended data management practices become incorporated into the workflow of each scientist, the USGS will realize considerable cost savings solely based on the ability to reuse data and develop new science collaborations both within the USGS and with other partners.

Approach

The Team will develop and make available tools to promote the practice of consistent data management throughout the USGS, helping to make data more accessible and data integration possible. The attached Appendix provides the Team's goals and objectives.

7/1/16: The Appendix content has been moved to the DMWG Archive: [DMWG Charter Page Appendix content](#).

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