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Papers from the 2007 Virtual Observatories in Geosciences (VOiG) Now Available

Selected papers from VOiG 2007 have been published in the April, 2008 issue of Earth Science Informatics (<http://www.springerlink.com/content/1865-0473>). The eight articles are: “The Earth Systems and Earth Science Informatics,” by Hassan A. Babaie; “Virtual Observatories in Geosciences,” by Peter Fox; “Virtual Observatories for Space and Solar Physics Research” by Christopher C. Harvey and others; “VESO: Virtual Earth-Sun Observatory,” by G. Cifuentes-Nava and others; “The Architecture of a Multi-tiered Virtual Observatory,” by Todd King and others; “A Brave New (Virtual) World: Distributed Searches, Relevance Scoring and Facets,” by Todd King and others; “Navigating Through SPASE to Heliospheric and Magnetospheric Data,” by Jan Merka and others; and “Developing a SPASE Query Language,” by T.W. Narock and T. King.

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How to Cite a Data Set

eGY notes that one barrier to open and timely data sharing is the lack of recognition for the intellectual effort necessary to collect, compile, and provide access to data. The International Polar Year (IPY) began to address this issue in the IPY Data Policy by encouraging formal citation of data. The IPY Data and Information Service has published guidelines for citing data sets in research publications at: <http://ipydis.org/data/citations.html>.

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eGY General Meeting Report Now Available Online

The 2008 eGY General Meeting was held at the Mesa Laboratories of the National Center for Atmospheric Research (NCAR) in Boulder, Colorado, March 5-6, 2008. The meeting report is now available at:

http://egy.org/files/2008-report/2008_meeting_report.html

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eGY at COSPAR

The Committee on Space Research (COSPAR) will hold their 37th Scientific Assembly in Montreal, Canada, 13-20 July 2008. COSPAR was founded after the USSR launched its first Earth satellite in 1957 by the International Council of Scientific Unions (ICSU), now the International Council for Science. COSPAR’s objectives are to promote on an international level scientific research in space, with emphasis on the exchange of results, information and opinions, and to provide a forum, open to all scientists, for the discussion of problems that may affect scientific space research. These objectives are achieved through the organization of Scientific Assemblies, publications and other means.

eGY will host a special half day session entitled: “eGY - Towards a Global Earth and Space Science Informatics Commons” on Tuesday morning, July 15. Please join us if you are at the meeting. Invited speakers include Dan Baker, Alex Szalay, Eric Donovan, Frank Hill, and Akinori Saito.

Half Day Session:

Subtitle: “eGY - Towards a Global Earth and Space Science Informatics Commons”

Date: Tuesday, 15 July 2008, 09:30 - 11:00

Room: 515 C

Chair: William Peterson

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The Earth and Space Science Informatics Summit

The Earth and Space Science Informatics Summit in Rome, March 13-14 2008, was held in response to concerns about the need to establish communication and cooperation among the many geoinformatics and space science informatics entities and initiatives that are growing up rapidly worldwide. Participants at the Summit represented the interests of more than 40 different bodies, agencies, initiatives, and programs. This was an Electronic Geophysical Year activity organized by IUGG, IUGS (CGI and OneGeology), and the Earth and Space Science Informatics groups in AGU and EGU. The Summit was hosted by the International Geographical Union at the magnificent Villa Celimontana (Home of Geography) in the gardens adjacent to the Coliseum in the heart of Rome.

Earth and Space Science informatics (geoinformatics in common parlance) is the fastest growing sector of AGU. There is a revival of schools of informatics; new and innovative funding programs are appearing; people are writing use-cases; standards are advancing and are being adopted; community vocabularies and conventions, and ontologies are spreading; working in informatics is gaining respect and becoming popular; and many agencies are responding. Data-based science requires processing power, storage, network bandwidth, and analysis tools; generally advances in FLOPS and storage have outpaced increases in bandwidth and access to analysis tools. Because the need to share data, information, and services is so ubiquitous in the sciences and elsewhere, we have an obligation to seek unified approaches to common issues in order to reduce replication of effort and a proliferation of different practices and standards.

The meeting identified many user-driven needs for geoinformatics that are not being met as well as several activities that are candidates for cooperation and a common approach. A full report of the meeting will appear soon on the eGY web site.

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Geoinformatics: Display, Browsing, and Research

On May 5-6, 60 geoinformatics researchers and representatives of Google Earth and Google Maps met at the Laboratory for Atmospheric and Space Physics (LASP) in Boulder, Colorado, to discuss how to use Google Earth and Maps in support of their research. The meeting highlighted and explored the significant differences between the display-oriented Google products and significant and open ended requirements of the research community to probe deep into geographic-related data bases.

The main outcomes of the meeting were: A presentation by Google on the latest release of Google Earth, KML's adoption as an OGC Standard, demonstration of Google Sky followed by presentations by NCAR, NOAA and CI-ESIN on their data exploration tools and their possible integration with Google Earth. Participants also benefited from attending breakout sessions on such topics as beginning and intermediate KML and SketchUp. The meeting also provided an opportunity for this community to give the Google Earth team inputs on potential advancements to the product such as allowing for polar coordinates and bathymetric data and developing collaborative map and data editing capabilities.

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NASA Applied Information Systems Research

NASA's Applied Information Systems Research (AISR) program sees to evolve advances in computer and information science and technology to enhance science productivity of NASA's Science Mission Directorate (SMD). AISR seeks innovative ideas for applying advanced information and related technologies in support of research programs in Planetary Science, Heliophysics, Astrophysics, and Earth Science. Information about this program, including how to apply for grants, can be found on the NASA research opportunity homepage [here](#) (select “Solicitations” then “Open Solicitations” then “NNH08ZDA001N”).

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eGY-Africa at the IST-8

Alem Mebrahtu and Victor Chukwuma represented eGY Africa at the IST-8 Conference, May 7-9 in Windhoek, Namibia. The IST-Africa (Regional Impact of Information Society Technologies in Africa) initiative is supported by the European Commission. Its charter is to place Africa on a firmer industrial footing and strengthen the conti-

<http://www.egy.org/>

ment's human resources, with training that leads to sustainable livelihoods. The IST-8 conference focused on Applied ICT research topics addressing major societal and economic challenges.

Drs. Mebrahtu and Chukwuma met with African and EU IT leaders, at the conference to identify synergies with other African organizations and programs to strengthen the evolving eGY-Africa plan. These included the Economic Commission for Africa ([ECA](#)), the African Union Commission ([AUC](#)), the Ubuntu Alliance ([website](#)) and the Association of African Universities ([AAU](#)). A full report of their activities at the meeting will appear on the eGY web page when it is available.

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