

SLIDE NOTES for 0711 eGY+Africa_Barton.ppt

SLIDE 1

eGY – an opportunity to improve access to Earth and Space Science Data

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The Electronic Geophysical Year, 2007-2008 (eGY, www.egy.org) provides a cooperative international framework for developing the sharing of data and information about our planet and geospace. eGY adopts and extends the ideals of the International Geophysical Year fifty years ago, when the foundations of a global geoscience “information commons” were created. The need for information and understanding about the Earth has become yet more acute, our ability to collect data has mushroomed, and modern information and communications technologies are at our disposal. Several Earth and space science initiatives for collecting, preserving, and providing open access to data are already underway in response to these drivers. For example, the Global Earth Observing System of Systems (GEOSS). Scientists and decision makers from rich and poor countries alike can benefit from open access to data and information, but only within the limitations of their cyber-infrastructure. eGY is an opportunity to take steps to improve the cyber-infrastructure available to scientists and educators in Africa.

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Details about eGY are on the eGY website: www.egy.org.

The website includes eGY Power Point presentations that can be downloaded.

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eGY is consistent with efforts by the UN, ICSU, and others to create an Information Society for the common good.

“Knowledge is the common wealth of humanity” - Adama Samassékou. President WSIS PrepCom, Geneva 2004

SLIDE 4

The fundamental themes of eGY are listed in black on the left. Such themes have been invoked by many bodies (nothing original in them, but all important).

The principles on which these themes are based are embodied in the eGY “Declaration for a Earth & Space Science Information Commons” - a statement of aspirations and principles of data stewardship that participants can sign.

Encouraging and facilitating the development of VIRTUAL OBSERVATORIES is a central function of eGY. VOs (or VxOs) provide open access to distributed data, information, and services (computational, analytical, modelling, and visualisation).

The names VO came from the space community; other communities use other names for systems with VO characteristics: 1. User interface, 2. Data access system, 3. Data management, 4. Assimilation into models (simulations), 5. Visualisation

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These opportunities can be exploited conveniently and effectively through eGY and the framework of international collaboration that eGY provides.

eGY can be used to develop codes of best practice; certification of compliance,

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The image is the advertisement for the eGY Conference “Virtual Observatories in Geosciences”, Denver, Colorado, 12-15 November 2007.

Website: www.egy.org

Showcase demonstrations are a collection of examples of modern, distributed information systems, such as virtual observatories

The eGY Declaration is an aspirational statement of best practices for an Earth & space science information commons

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Take advantage of eGY and the 50-year anniversary of IGY

Visit the eGY website

Subscribe to eGY News and use it to inform and be informed

Subscribe to the three-tiered email list server (organiser, participant, observer) and choose the level of detail of communications that suits you.

Become a signatory to the eGY Declaration for an Earth & Space Science Information Commons.

Contact Bill to discuss your interests

We provide a list of suggested activities for eGY participants.

THANK YOU

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Let us turn our attention to the eGY theme: Reducing the Digital Divide.

The world of science is making more-and-more use of the Internet, including advanced technologies such as Grid. As this dependence grows, so does the gulf separating those with good facilities from those without. Nowhere in the world is this "Digital Divide" more pronounced than in Africa. Even for something as simple as registering for a conference, access to the Internet is virtually a necessity.

The Electronic Geophysical Year provides an opportunity to join other organisations concerned with reducing the digital divide in Africa and focus institutional, national, regional, and international attention on the problem.

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eGY-Africa is a bottom-up effort by African scientists and their collaborators worldwide to try to get better Internet access for scientists and educators in African Universities and similar institutions.

The effort originated as part of the Electronic Geophysical Year, 2007-2009, but will continue beyond the end of eGY in December 2008.

The approach is to mobilise the voice of the scientific community at institutional, national, and international levels in order to influence decision makers.

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Steps proposed are

1. Assemble and share information about the present Internet status, problems, successes and failures, benefits and lost opportunities., and policy statements advocating best practices.
2. Identify where we should direct our efforts, and with whom we should work.
3. Seek to influence decisions about allocation of Internet resources

At all stages, identify other organisations with related objectives and work with them. (Avoid replication of effort.)

SLIDE 11 - none

SLIDE 12 - none

SLIDE 13 - none

SLIDE 14 - none

NOTE added after the presentation in 2007: the Google groups website is no longer used. For eGY-Africa, go to www.egy.org and click on eGY-Africa.