

LTER Information Manager Meeting 2005

Working Group 7 Report (KBaker, BBenson, MJones, FMillerand)
Community Process and Standards Implementation
August 5, 2005 (5:30-6:30pm) Montreal

The Community Process Working Group provided a forum for accumulating experiences with EML and a distillation from these experiences of some principles and critical questions. The event together with a conceptual diagram and surveys provided an opportunity to consider the process of standards' development.

Some lessons learned were defined at 3 levels:

(1) The Design and Development process: a shorter cycle would allow time for testing; the role of early-adopters may be extended so that they may act not only as testers but they also may make an important bridge with the community; funding is needed to support such efforts.

(2) Deployment and Enactment process: the alignment of timing and expectations i.e. the need to align the levels of 'readiness' at each site with regard to implementation level expectations; need for a site representative to act as a liaison with the network.

(3) Maintenance and sustainability of community standards: The IM community has invested in and contributed a lot to EML. This leads to how to bring the IM community into discussions about the future of EML? Who is going to do the support for EML (no more funds at the developers)? Could this be a question for NSF?

The concept of 'enactment' from social informatics research was proposed as a way to augment understanding of a standard implementation process. It highlights the critical step of local implementation that necessarily implies an adaptation of local practices to the standard and the modification of the standard itself. The standardization process is represented in a cycle of 4 major processes: design, development, community level deployment, and local enactment.