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OceanPortal
(Dr. Murray Brown)

Introduction

The IODE has supported the creation of a global index of Internet websites containing ocean data and information, called OceanPortal (OP). It currently holds 5000+ records in eight super-categories/251 specific subject categories. OceanPortal has become a highly regarded international source-of-choice for marine site information, and it is currently the most frequently visited of all IOC websites.

Past Activities

During the intersessional period, the IODE OceanPortal website database was enlarged by approximately 1500 records. This net increase followed two annual housecleaning efforts to check the continued accuracy of website URLs, to update records from individual inspections of sites, and to add categories to all records. This last activity was made possible by the installation of a new version of the metadata software which allows up to three categories per record (as opposed to the original one). Following recommendations from the Group of Experts for Marine Information Management, all of the categories related to marine information were re-organized.

Objectives & Benefits

The OceanPortal website provides a central, categorized assemblage of the entire set of Internet websites the IOC has identified as primary sources of ocean data and information, worldwide. The ensemble of utilities at OceanPortal allows easy access to thousands of pages at premier websites checked for quality by IOC staff. Judging from the available metrics (see Assessment Methods, below) it is the most heavily used website among all IOC resources (including the main IOC webpage), and also the most widely cited. These accomplishments bring OP to a very broad audience, promoting all IOC resources in the process.

Proposed Activities

OP has not reached equilibrium between outside submittals (very low) and annual attrition of websites (10-15%), so active updating of existing records and addition of new records is necessary to maintain current level of service and resource base. It is proposed to continue the practice of an annual “housecleaning” to eliminate non-existent websites, relocate moved websites, to add new websites, and to continue the long-term project of adding new categorical descriptors to all records.

Assessment Methods

There have been 2.4 million unique outgoing record abstracts, since records were begun in July 2001. Using those abstracts, users have selected and used 200,000 website pages. There are approximately 500 pages views per weekday, at the present time.

There are 19,300 citations of OceanPortal in Google (from non-OP web pages) which explains the very high score Google assigns to OP records. It is not uncommon to find OP records about resources to be placed before the actual resource records, during Google searches. This confirms OPs position as the premier ocean data and information index today.

Work Plan, Timing & Budget

OceanPortal Annual Update: Complete quality control of all 5000+ records; addition of approximately 500 new records. Fourth quarter of 2005, or first quarter of 2006.
Proposed funding: 5000 USD

Sources of Funding

Requested Actions from the Committee