

Second WaterWeb Information Summit

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Report from Policy and Culture Working Group

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What are the cultural and policy issues in the context of sharing/exchanging data and technology?

Observations

Not everyone has access to the Internet at the present time, although the situation is changing rapidly.

Language is a major barrier for the "general Public," although less so for technical people.

People put their first priority on direct personal contact via meeting or telephone before the use of written messages.

Barriers

Technophobia - will improve with time.

Government policies about state ownership of data.

Traditional behavior of not sharing information - "information is power."

Centralized governmental authority.

Lack of transparency in decision making.

Lack of support for public participation.

Barriers (continued)

Lack of enforcement of existing laws and regulations.

Lack of understanding of concepts of sustainable development and environment.

Who is the Public?

Community leaders, especially mayors.

Media - TV, radio, newspapers

Distributors of information

Non-governmental organizations

Water user associations

Water managers

Universities and researchers

Other information centers

How to Reach the Public?

Strategy to reach the public:

May need different approaches in different countries.

Target existing networks that deliver information to communities.

Train the trainers.

Target universities.

Target libraries and information centers in country.

Use post officers, religious groups, TV.

What Information Do They Need?

Generic information to support integrated land and water information management.

Water information/data with a geographic context.

Workshops with community leaders.

What Information Do They Need? (continued)

Surveys of information needs?

What do they need?

How do they want to get it?

How do they want it packaged?

Need to communicate with the users and get lots of feed back.

Criteria for Web Ring Sites

Must contain significant water or water-relation information resources - public or commercial.

Provide a geographic context for data or generic information of use to any one.

Reliable quality information.

Current and up to date.

Recommendations

Urge governments to make all information freely available to the public.

Adopt as part of the Water Vision the principle of free access to all information collected with public funds.

Survey universities for information on mechanisms to distribution information to the public.

Incubate the development of new web sites for small groups - e.g., watershed associations as a service of the WaterWeb Consortium.

Promote georeferenced data.

Focus on water users.

Web Ring Recommendations

Establish a formal process and criteria to add new web sites to the water ring.

Appoint committee of 3-5 people to review and approve applications for the next year.

Applications and recommendations to include information on proposed member site and agreement on the part of the site operators to be responsive to queries, copyrights, etc. (Code of NEThics.)

Web Ring Committee should:

Document application and approval process.

Elaborate on criteria for participation and NEThics.

Review and approve applications of sites.

Review existing sites on ring for conformation to standards.

Seek out additional high quality sites.

Explore strategies for include more that 50 sites- special search engine for ring and multiple rings.

Committee appointed by the Consortium advisory committee

Include commercial sites that contain relevant water information.

Solicit funding support for WaterWeb.org from the private sector but do not allow direct advertising -- highlight environmental messages and sponsor page with direct links to homepage.

Consider the establishment of multiple rings on WaterWeb as a means of accommodating growth in ring sites.