

SEDAC Long-Term Archive Board Meeting
Butler Library Room 522
Columbia University
August 30, 2004
10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Minutes

Attendance: Robert Chen, Stephen Davis, Robert Downs, Janet Gertz, Kerstin Lehnert, Art Lerner-Lam, David Millman, Jane Winland

Introductions and Synergies with Digital Preservation Initiatives

Participants introduced themselves, described current initiatives and concerns for the long-term preservation of digital resources, and discussed potentially synergistic grant-supported efforts currently being conducted in collaboration with other universities that address aspects of digital preservation. R. Chen, Manager of the NASA-funded Socioeconomic Data and Applications Center (SEDAC), summarized SEDAC's mission, data and information resources, and services and described the context and requirements for establishing the SEDAC Long-Term Archive (LTA). S. Davis, Director of the Libraries Digital Program of the University Libraries, gave an overview of the University's efforts to create digital archives from analog and primary sources and its related digital preservation activities. Other participants briefly summarized various digital data creation, archiving, cataloging, dissemination, and management activities in both the social and natural sciences and in support of both research and education. This includes extensive science data activities at various centers of the Earth Institute (EI) and social science and geospatial data support provided by the Libraries' Electronic Data Services.

LTA Purpose

The participants agreed upon the need to preserve digital resources as an integral aspect of stewardship for the resources in their care and shared concerns regarding the complexity and longevity of the various types, formats, and structures of digital resources that need to be preserved. The participants recognized the importance of digital preservation and the need for Columbia University to take a lead role in ensuring the long-term preservation of and access to digital resources created, digitized, and hosted by University organizations, by members of the University community, and by the scientific and educational communities at large. It is clear that a broad effort to deal with digital preservation is needed with wide representation from the University community. In the interim, however, the SEDAC LTA could provide a useful learning experience, serve as a prototype for other efforts, and help to strengthen links between the various groups involved. It was also recognized that such a long-term archival capability might serve as the basis for proposals for external support to provide similar services for other digital data and information resources.

Board Formation and Terms of Reference

The participants reviewed aspects of the terms of reference and decided that the SEDAC Long-Term Archive Board is the appropriate name for the Board addressing issues for the long-term preservation of SEDAC data. The participants agreed on the basic structure of the LTA as outlined in the draft SEDAC LTA Implementation Plan. Additional discussions about the terms of reference and approval of datasets will take place at subsequent meetings.

Board Membership

The participants discussed expanding the formal membership of the Board to include two representatives from the Columbia University Libraries and two representatives from the EI, along with three SEDAC representatives. Stephen Davis volunteered to serve as the initial representative from the Columbia University Libraries. Other potential representatives of the Libraries are Walter Bourne, who was unable to attend this meeting, and David Millman, who also expressed willingness to serve. A. Lerner-Lam and K. Lehnert agreed to serve as the EI representatives. SEDAC representatives to the Board are the SEDAC Systems Engineer, Sri Vinayagamoorthy, the SEDAC Archives Manager, R. Downs, and the lead SEDAC Project Scientist, D. Balk, who was not able to attend. Five of the seven Board members were therefore present and agreed to recognize the meeting as the first formal session of the SEDAC LTA Board. R. Downs agreed to draft minutes of the meeting for Board approval. R. Chen indicated that the draft SEDAC LTA Implementation Plan would be revised to reflect the meeting's discussions and submitted to the Board for initial approval at the next Board session.

The meeting adjourned at 12:00 p.m.

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Agenda

- 1) Introductions
- 2) Brief SEDAC overview -- Bob Chen
- 3) Overview of Library digital archiving activities -- Stephen Davis, et al.
- 4) Brief summary of EI data activities -- Art Lerner-Lam, Kerstin Lehnert
- 5) Overview of LTA purpose, proposed structure -- Bob Chen, Bob Downs
- 6) Discussion of LTA Board formation, terms of reference, membership
- 7) Follow-on meeting, planning
- 8) Additional opportunities for collaboration (e.g., proposals)