



Unidata

*Providing data services, tools, & cyberinfrastructure leadership
that advance Earth system science, enhance educational opportunities, & broaden participation*

CommunitE-Letter

Volume 5, Number 7, November/December 2008

Sprucing up the CommunitE-letter

Unidata's electronic newsletter is now in its fourth year of publication. It was founded specifically at the request of the Unidata User's Committee in an Action Item taken during its [March 2004 Meeting](#):

The Users Committee recommends that the UPC develop a monthly e-magazine ("e-zine") as a method of educating and informing the Unidata community of new or recent activities and info-items.

At this time we find ourselves wondering if we've successfully met those objectives, and additionally whether there are changes to be made that would more effectively keep you updated on what's new, what's coming up, what individual sites are doing, and similar sorts of information. Some ideas and questions we've had include:

1. Do you find the RSS feed useful?
2. How about the printable version--is that useful?
3. Would a *Users Corner* featuring cool things that sites are doing (short, bullet format) be interesting or intriguing? These would not necessarily have to involve the use of Unidata products and ideally would include a URL reference to further inform interested e-letter readers.
4. How about a datastream column in which we would feature one or more datastreams per issue that would include information about, perhaps, the number and type of data products in a specific datastream.
5. What other specific changes would you suggest to make the e-letter a more engaging read?

Since Unidata is "Community Driven," we are soliciting your thoughts in this transition. Please send them to [support](#). Nothing is too large or too small to consider. We want candid feedback coming into [support](#) about this, so please fire away.



Successful Review of the Five-year Proposal to Continue Funding of Unidata

Earlier this year, the Unidata Program Center (UPC) submitted a five year proposal “Unidata 2013: A Transformative Community Facility for the Atmospheric and Related Sciences” to the National Science Foundation (NSF) to continue and enhance Unidata’s role as a foundational facility for the atmospheric and related sciences (http://www.unidata.ucar.edu/staff/mohan/Unidata_2013_Final.pdf)

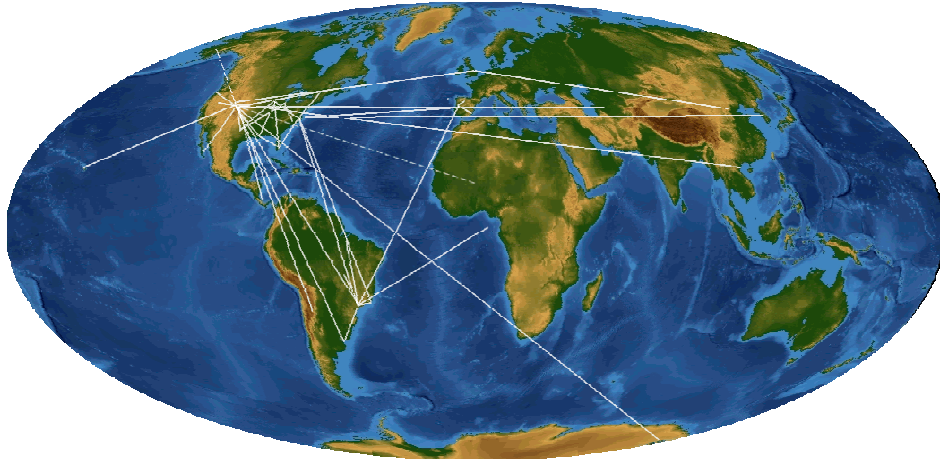
The core-funding proposal offered a bold vision and a realistic plan to extend a successful national facility that enables transformative advances in geoscience education, research, and outreach. The plan for achieving the vision was provided through six overarching themes that were shaped by pertinent scientific and education drivers, consistent with community trends and needs, and aligned with the NSF priorities:

1. Broadening participation and expanding community services
2. Advancing data services
3. Developing and deploying useful tools
4. Enhancing user support services
5. Providing leadership in cyberinfrastructure
6. Promoting diversity by expanding opportunities

The proposal builds on the successes of the present program, its capabilities and core competencies, and its unique niche in providing robust, reliable, and comprehensive data services and tools to geoscience users. While Unidata embarks on this plan to meet the evolving needs of a broad community, the program remains firmly committed to meeting its responsibilities to the core community of researchers, educators, and students in the

atmospheric sciences. The quality of services that the core community has come to expect will be both sustained as well as enhanced by the new activities, partnerships, and the resulting synergies.

Following a successful review of the proposal, the UPC is now engaged in discussions with the NSF on the terms of the five-year award. As always, we will keep the community informed on the progress of our plans and activities as the program begins a new chapter in its successful history.



The 2008 AGU Fall Meeting

As in previous years, Unidata will have a presence at the [AGU Fall Meeting](#). We've compiled a [schedule](#) of Unidata-related presentations and posters, and you'll find both UPC staff and community members are represented in the listing.

To bring yourself up to date on the UOP and Unidata and new or continuing activities, plan to stop by the UCAR Office of Program's booth spaces, numbers 2314 and 2316. Staff from all UOP programs will be in the booth at different times to meet you and answer questions. Informational material will also be available.

Participation in national and international professional meetings provides the UPC staff to touch base with community members as well as bringing attention to new developments in the community. We look forward to visiting with you.



The Environmental Data Connector

ArcGIS users now have the ability to access environmental data served by the THREDDS Data Server--TDS--from within the ArcGIS program. The [Environmental Data Connector](#) (EDC) is the tool that provides that access.

Both Unidata- and NOAA-developed tools were used in developing the EDC:

- The initial set of screens that browse the THREDDS catalogs uses the netCDF-Java library
- The second set of screens that displays the spatial extent, which allows users to choose the spatial area and time is from NcBrowse, a NOAA/PMEL application
- The Java code that accesses data using OPeNDAP protocols and saves as a netCDF file is built on the netCDF-Java library.
- The netCDF file format and the THREDDS data servers are Unidata products.

Although it's not a requirement, NOAA requests that users [register](#) when downloading the product. Registration will document the number of users and thus will help secure funds for future enhancements. In addition, if improvements are made to the EDC, NOAA will notify those who have registered.



The project is a convincing demonstration of the power of open source software and file formats.

The EDC was developed for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Fisheries by Applied Science Associates, Inc. (ASA). A standalone version is available.

GEMPAK Transition

We call your attention to a [letter](#) sent today, 2 December 2008, to the [GEMBUD](#) e-mail list. The purpose of the GEMBUD note is to update the [GEMPAK](#) community on the transition of that package. The letter details all of the steps taken by Unidata to ensure that the process is orderly and least disruptive to GEMPAK users. You may wish to consult the [web page](#) that contains information about many aspects of the GEMPAK migration as well as a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) section that provides answers to many of your questions. If you have any feedback on or input to the GEMPAK transition process, please send your comments to nawipsmigration@unidata.ucar.edu.

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Super Science Saturday

A fun annual event staged by UCAR each fall is its Super Science Saturday. The event is sponsored by "UCAR's Office of Education & Outreach, Friends of UCAR, and KMGH Channel 7. Super Science Saturday is a day of activities designed to promote public science literacy and enrich the science experiences of area students and teachers."



Unidata staff member Jeff Weber, along with staff from across the UCAR family, contributes time and talent to make the event the success that it is each year.

