

Data curation practices amongst World Data Centres

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In 1953 ICSU established the first 'special committee', an inter-union and interdisciplinary committee to organise the International Geophysical Year (IGY) 1957-58. One of the major break throughs during this period was the creation of the World Data Centres (WDCs). Originally the WDCs were intended to only be repositories for geophysical data, and thus have continued to grow, collect, archive and redistribute a much wider range of data on a world wide basis (International Council of Scientific Unions, 1979:iii).

Data curation, according to Lord and McDonald (2003:12) can be defined as the "activity of managing and promoting the use of data from its point of creation, to ensure it is fit for discovery and reuse". Data curation remains a challenge to those working with data and constant innovation and research is necessary for the survival of valuable research data. Continuous research and concern surrounding data curation lead to the development of the well document OAIS ISO standard in 2002. Since then organisations have tried to incorporate these high level guidelines into their data centre design to improve and formalise curation practices.

The purpose of this presentation is to present the findings of a survey conducted amongst WDC with regard to curation practices. The survey was used to identify trends and popular practices regarding data curation and to see whether OIAS practices had been successfully implemented in WDCs. Findings from the research may be useful to the newly established WDS and other interested data centres.