

# The contribution of a Geophysical Data Service: the International Service of Geomagnetic Indices

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Geomagnetic indices are basic data in Solar-Terrestrial physics, and there is accordingly a need for long homogeneous data series. They are also basic data for operational Space Weather activities, and this requires the shortest possible dissemination delay. In practice, it implies for each index producer to make quick-look values available on-line within the shortest possible delay, and to maintain long term homogeneous data series. ISGI Collaborating Institutes are in charge of the derivation and dissemination of IAGA recognized indices.

It is very easy to make data available through electronic networks, and Institutes which are not part of ISGI may easily derive and circulate preliminary values of geomagnetic indices. There have already been examples of non-ISGI institutes which made available on line preliminary values of IAGA geomagnetic indices, without any control of IAGA bodies on the quality of their products. This was very confusing, and could have resulted in a dramatic loss of confidence of users in the quality of geomagnetic indices made available through Internet.

ISGI had then to face up two challenges:

- establish a policy for on-line dissemination of indices;
- ensure a quasi real time on-line dissemination of reliable quick-look values of IAGA geomagnetic indices.

The ISGI label is actually the simplest and the safest way to guaranty the quality of circulated geomagnetic indices, and the ISGI Collaborating Institutes therefore decided to quote their ISGI membership in all their publications and data bases.

ISGI also drove discussions in the frame of IAGA. They resulted in an IAGA resolution urging the producers of estimated indices to make clear by a specific label that they are not official IAGA indices. On the other hand, quick-look values are routinely made available on-line since almost 15 years for almost all IAGA indices.

ISGI activities are used to illustrate the role that WDS should play, and to highlight the need for such reference data services.

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