



The karst information portal: an emerging on-line collaboratorium

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The National Cave and Karst Research Institute, the University of South Florida, and the University of New Mexico have developed a network portal to enhance information access and improved communication within the national and international karst community. The partnership developed an on-line digital portal with free access to a variety of information. This holistic undertaking seeks to bring karst research forward in the digital age. In addition, the project creates global connections by including a user-generated submission process for enhancing the diversity of materials available through the portal. We are currently transforming *A Guide to Speleological Literature of the English Language 1794-1996* into the portal's first searchable on-line product. Also, we are creating an institutional repository database of photomicrographs from cave geomicrobiological studies with metadata and keywords that allow users to access key morphological data in scanning electron micrographs. In the future, thematic areas, such as cave sediments, conduit flow models, sinkholes, geoengineering, and speleothem records of climate change, are among the many topics to be included in the portal. We also seek input from the international karst community as to what materials are most critical to bring on-line at the outset of the project and on the identification of significant repositories of karst digital data and information. The U.S. Congress has charged NCKRI to centralize and standardize speleological information and to promote national and international cooperation. The international community has expressed a desire for greater information coordination and global accessibility. Thus, this project responds to disciplinary needs by integrating individual scientists into a global network through the karst information portal.