

## **Structuring Internet-based Water Resources Information: Supporting Research Synergies and Informing Policy Makers**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Research in hydrology and water resources fields spans many disciplines. Yet historically, most research has been conducted by small teams of people in the same discipline. SAHRA's research program is based on the assumption that major break-throughs require multi-disciplinary teams working together within a basin for extended periods of time. Achieving the synergies that such a model makes possible requires effective sharing of information at several levels, from near-real time data acquisition and posting to digitizing and posting classic research reports and data bases to soliciting feedback at every opportunity. The language of such communication is also critical. Each discipline's jargon is a potential barrier to cross-discipline collaboration. Experienced technical editors and automated glossary functions with definitions written at different levels are necessary components. Language issues become even more critical when trying to effectively communicating results to policy makers. Presenting information in multiple formats (e.g., text, tables, and graphs) is necessary to make sure that critical points are effectively communicated. Another key factor is developing a strategy for determining when to use "push" vs. "pull" approaches, or when the Web site should be passive, waiting for policy makers seeking information, and when email and other mechanisms should be employed to send critical information to those who might make use of it.