

The WorldWideScience Alliance: An International Partnership to Improve Access to Scientific and Technical Information and Research Data

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WorldWideScience Alliance

The WorldWideScience Alliance is a strategic partnership, comprised of national and international libraries and information centers, whose goal is to eliminate barriers to finding and sharing scientific and technical information, including scientific research data, across national boundaries. The Alliance provides the governance structure and sets the direction for WorldWideScience.org (WWS.org), a federated search portal. WWS.org offers users the ability to simultaneously search, in real time, over 100 scientific and technical databases from more than 70 countries. Search results from the various databases, which incorporate information in textual, multimedia, and scientific data formats, are then relevance-ranked, and a consolidated results list is presented to the user. Multilingual translation capabilities are available for ten languages, which makes scholarly material, including scientific data, more accessible worldwide. The ability to search data collections within WWS.org addresses many of the challenges associated with discoverability of research data. For instance, unless users are very familiar with a particular data center, or know that specific datasets exist, it can be very difficult to identify and locate scientific data. WWS.org enables users to receive data results in a separate results tab, and upon selecting a specific result, users will typically be directed to the landing page, which in turn makes the data accessible for viewing or downloading. As an Associate Member of the WorldWideScience Alliance, the ICSU World Data System is among the data collections searched by WWS.org, along with 14 other resources focused on data, and the Alliance is actively seeking new resources and partners. The inclusion of data collections in WWS.org, particularly as part of the broader public access movement among government research funders in many countries, further expands access to research and development results during the full research lifecycle, and ultimately contributes to increased scientific collaboration and progress.