

Report of IVOA Liaison Committee  
September 2009

The IVOA Liaison Committee, consisting of C. Arviset, D. De Young (chair), F. Genova, and F. Pasian met on Tuesday 26 May at 14:00 during the Strasbourg IVOA Interop meeting. Absent were M. Ohishi and N. Walton.

One of the primary objectives of this meeting was to identify any specific organizations that should be contacted by the IVOA at this time and to identify which IVOA individuals should make this contact. A second principal objective was to discuss again the idea of a possible Solar IG, with the hope of arriving at a recommendation to the Exec concerning this topic.

The committee first heard from two invited guests, Jean Abouardham (Obs. de Paris) and Christian Jacquy (CESR/Toulouse), who gave presentations on European activities in planetary astronomy and solar and heliospheric physics. After describing these programs, the committee held a discussion with the guests about possible liaison activities in these areas with the IVOA. No formal commitments were made, but there was general agreement that continuing and expanding communication between the IVOA and these groups was a positive goal. Drs. Abouardham and Jacquy left the meeting after this discussion. The committee then heard reports from other committee members about contacts with, or news of, VO-like activities in other fields. In particular, F. Genova gave a presentation on the activities at HELIO and related efforts, and F. Pasian reported on various contacts and activities that involve the high energy physics community. Fabio concluded that official liaison with the HEP community is premature at this time. Francoise also noted that there is good IVOA liaison by M-L. Dubernet with the EU activities on atomic and molecular databases. In addition Francoise described preliminary contacts with the climate modeling community (METAFORE) which should be followed and developed further. D. De Young provided a brief report on the status of the US Solar VO. N. Walton communicated via email that he has established connections in the cancer and genetics communities, and that he would be willing to make contacts there once the IVOA has decided the specific nature of such contacts.

A general discussion of which, if any, IVOA contacts should be made with these groups then followed. Nic Walton expressed concern, again via email, that it is essential that the IVOA have a very clear idea of just what we want to present and what we want to ask of such groups before contact is made. We need to be sure that we have definite information at hand about our standards and processes if asked about them by another external standards group. There was general agreement with this concern, and it was clear that there is a need for the creation of a "summary IVOA package" that could be used when contacting other groups. The Liaison Committee recommends that the IVOA Exec approve the creation of such a package. In general, it was concluded that at present the IVOA should continue to cultivate new contacts and to continue to exchange information with individuals in

other fields in the form of presentations from other disciplines at IVOA meetings and vice versa.

A final topic of discussion involved the possible creation of a Solar and Solar-Terrestrial Interest Group. This question has been discussed previously without resolution. A principal difficulty is that the definition and activities of current IVOA Interest Groups do not really fit what this group would probably do. Although there can be evolution and diversity in IVOA IGs, as has been discussed, the issue of the relation of such an IG to the TCG has also been raised. In principle this could also be accommodated if enough flexibility were allowed, but there is also the possibility of creating another kind of IVOA group. What could be more appropriate would be some sort of Liaison Group, though such an entity has yet to be defined within the IVOA. In addition, while there are good contacts and liaison between the IVOA members and the Solar and Solar-Terrestrial research communities in Europe, this is not yet the case in the US. Moreover, it was noted that there are many projects in the solar research community and that it does not speak with one voice; this problem will have to be resolved before any Solar IG or Liaison Group can be formed. Hence the view of the Liaison Committee at this time is that the formation of a Solar and STP Liaison Group within the IVOA may be a good idea, it is first necessary to establish better contacts with the Solar and STP communities in the US. D. De Young was asked to begin the process of improving these contacts in the US. Once these contacts are being formed, there should be some serious discussion of a possible new form of IVOA entity such as a Liaison Group.

Dave De Young, chair  
IVOA Liaison Committee