

11. EMERGING STANDARDS

The standards upon which the clearinghouse functionality relies are in a state of change. The present NSDI Clearinghouse legacy search gateway will soon be replaced. The legacy search gateway is built with propriety software that is no longer maintained nor supported by the vendor, Blue Angel Software. The legacy interface will eventually be replaced with GeoNetwork, a user-maintained and open-source solution with similar and enhanced capabilities compared to the legacy interface. The GeoNetwork gateway (beta version of the new search gateway that is in development) will be implemented in six months to a year. Both the legacy interface and the new GeoNetwork interface rely on the proven Z39.50 communication protocol.

The final change concerns the way metadata are described. The old method used FGDC standards. While proven and well known, this standard has difficulty with biological data. A new international metadata standard is emerging, ISO 19115, which was built to be compatible with FGDC and to address the deficiencies in describing biological data. Translators that convert from FGDC to ISO 19115 should be easily available.

These and other probable changes will lead to modifications in PICES Metadata Clearinghouse interface standards and will require changes for existing and future Clearinghouse servers.