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Open Access to the GTS: A JCOMM Observations Coordination Group Pilot Project

Kevin OBrien and the Open Access to GTS partners

University of Washington, Joint Institute for Study of Atmosphere and Ocean, College of the Environment, United States (kob@uw.edu)

The Open Access GTS pilot project was conceived to investigate ways of improving access to the Global Telecommunication System (GTS) for the distribution and access of near real-time oceanographic observation data. The project has been developed and supported by the JCOMM Observations Coordination Group (OCG) and involves several international partners. The goal of the pilot project is to prototype a workflow providing ocean data producers a simpler method of distributing near real-time data through the GTS infrastructure. In addition, since data is only useful if it is made available, providing ocean data consumers a simpler method of accessing the data was also a key motivation.

As technology improves and new observing platforms become a reality, there will be an associated increase in the need to distribute the observed data globally. Much of this data has its highest value in near real-time, especially to local and global forecasters. However, putting this data onto the GTS so that forecasters can access it is often quite a burden, especially to those platform managers that may not have a direct connection to their national weather service. In addition, GTS requirements that data are encoded in the BUFR format makes it technically unfeasible for many to provide data. Since experience with BUFR data is limited, the data format can also be a hindrance to those who want access to the data in near real-time.

Through this pilot project, we have implemented a workflow which simplifies the steps required for injecting data onto the GTS. In this presentation, we will describe the simplified workflow and discuss some of the historical barriers to GTS access. In addition, we will demonstrate how the pilot project has improved access to the near real-time data by providing it through standard, interoperable web services.