



A CALL FOR COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

HISTORY

GeoStratSys started as Geovision in 1995, became PaleoStrat in 2002 through initial funding from the U.S. National Science Foundation and has now changed its name to better reflect the breadth of science this digital information system supports. The majority of its development has been through volunteer efforts, underscoring the goal of GeoStratSys as a community resource. During this development, as community needs have become better defined, GeoStratSys has naturally evolved from a database into a system that addresses the needs of a broad array of data rooted in sedimentary geology, biostratigraphy, geochemistry, geochronology, etc. as applied to stratigraphic successions. We are not done yet, and we need your help.

WHERE ARE WE HEADED?

Meeting Community Needs Through Partnerships

GeoStratSys is envisioned as a powerful, comprehensive working environment for geoscience researchers. Substantive partnerships with SedDB, EarthChem, and SESAR have greatly boosted our effort as will continued association with Paleobiology Database, CoreWall, GEON, and others. We have collaborative projects underway with Germany-based Stratigraphy.Net and the Nanjing Institute of Geology and Paleontology in China. We are founding members of *i*GeoInfo and the European Geoscience Union's new Earth and Space Science Informatics Division. We are working with the geoinformatics community to build a "National Geoinformatics System" in the U.S. and work with community efforts such as GeoSystems (paleoclimate) and EARTHTIME (calibration of the time scale). We are associated with the International Commission on Stratigraphy (ICS), in particular the ICS Permian and Carboniferous subcommissions, and the International Congress on Carboniferous and Permian (ICCP). Most recently, we have teamed up with SedDB, SESAR, CoreWall and the ICDP to form "GeosciNET", an effort to provide a turn-key data system for project science.

New Functionality

With PaleoStrat 2.0 we pioneered and introduced "Smart Excel Workbooks" to facilitate offline data loading and editing. However, we quickly hit the limits of Excel for such purposes, and therefore developed a desktop client application, "GeoStratSys Desktop" that will provide a more robust and extensible platform for the user. We are also working to provide access to visualization, statistical, and numerical tools you can use to analyze your data. We also need to expand efforts to load GeoStratSys with data as a way to demonstrate the systems impact. In summary, GeoStratSys is positioned to bring a vast array of academic research data to a public platform, and will continue to evolve as we work with the community to meet your needs for a sedimentary geology and paleontology information system.

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO HELP?

The community needs your data:

We need volunteers and data. GeoStratSys has not had, nor is it intended to have sufficient staff for loading large volumes of data into the system; that will require a true community effort. Earth Science is presently in the middle of the transition between the analogue and digital worlds. Huge amounts of legacy data sit in file cabinets and as partial data sets in publications. We need you to work with us to enter these data into GeoStratSys - think of these data as your legacy to the science, or better yet, use them as a mechanism for data compilation to start your next science research project.

We need your feedback

We also need your input on ways to make the system better. Web-based systems break and the new desktop application will greatly improve reliability and the quality of the working environment, but we need feedback about what is happening in order to fix the problems and we need suggestions to make it better. GeoStratSys can certainly be improved - but how? What do you need? Contact us with your thoughts and critiques - become part of the solution for building geoinformatics!

We need your tools

If you have a visualization or analytical tool that would be useful to the community - contact us, and we will work with you to make it a powerful addition to a community tool set.

It is a community system

From the beginning, GeoStratSys was designed to be an open, dynamic data system for the community; it was never envisioned as a static database that would offer only internally compiled data. Data are attributed in perpetuity to their author and/or steward and you control when the data become public. Tools will remain associated with their creators. We are continuing to develop procedures that will allow data sets to be permanently associated with a publication (and therefore their author). Also, we are working on allowing public access to compiled data sets, graphs, charts, images, etc. through a "project" that is constructed by, and attributed to a user or group of users.

Help us load data into the system, make it work better and be more useful to you and your colleagues - make it *your* data system!

The GeoStratSys Team

www.geostratsys.org

