Notes from Open Data Initiative Users Meeting on Sept 10, 2015

Attendees: Peter Neilley (Weather Company), Mark Sponsler (Stormsurf), Caleb Shultze (US Army ATEC), John Keyes (NWS Pocatello), Weiwei Li (U of Illinois), Dr. Song Yan (NRL), Steve Warren (NOAA/NGGPS), Scott Hausman (NOAA/NCEI), Brian May (NOAA/NCEI), Glenn Rutledge (NOAA/NCEI), Bill Lapenta (NOAA/NCEP), Fanglin Yang (NOAA/NCEP), Kevin Kelleher (NOAA/ESRL), John Brown (NOAA/ESRL), Ed Szoke (NOAA/ESRL), John Cortinas (NOAA/OWAQ)

HIWPP Project Team Members: Timothy Schneider (NOAA/ESRL), Stan Benjamin (NOAA/ESRL), Tim Whitcomb (NRL), Vijay Tallapragada (NOAA/NCEP), Bonny Strong (NOAA/ESRL), Jebb Stewart (NOAA/ESRL), Robert Lipschutz (NOAA/ESRL), Scott Gregory (NOAA/ESRL)

Presentations:
Tim Schneider and Bonny Strong gave opening remarks about the HIWPP project and the Open Data Initiative.
Brief presentations were given by Stan Benjamin for the FIM model, Tim Whitcomb for the NAVGEM model, and Vijay Tallapragada for GFS/GEFS.
A demo of NEIS was given by Jebb Stewart.

Input from participants:

<u>Peter Neilley of Weather Company:</u>

Extended thank you to the HIWPP project team, noting this has been a huge step forward on how NOAA interacts with the commercial enterprise.

His evaluation is subjective. Weather Co has been hesitant to implement FIM into its operational system due to the unknown future.

It has been extremely helpful to have forecasts at 1-hr intervals out to 14 days. The operational feeds have different forecast intervals depending on how far out the forecast is (e.g. currently GFS is currently hourly out to 12 hours, then 3-hourly out to 16 days). This is a big problem for them to process. Why can't it be hourly for full forecast length? (Bill Lapenta noted that GFS will be hourly out to 120 hours for the next GFS update. Peter asked why it couldn't be for the full forecast length, and Bill Lapenta replied that it was due to limitations in infrastructure.)

Peter would really like to know if there will be early access to the new dycores, MPAS and FV3. They need years in advance to prepare for a new operational model. Tim Schneider noted that is not within the purview of HIWPP, but referred the question to NCEP for consideration. Peter

noted that it “absolutely would be useful” to continue access to research models through NGGPS.

Peter noted that even relatively low quality data is useful to them. He would like NOAA to leave it to users to decide what quality control they want to impose. Bill Lapenta noted that the government must insure that they are not putting out any data that is harmful to the public. Peter noted that even data with uncertain reliability (e.g. having data outages) and models that are a “moving target” due to development are very useful.

Bill Lapenta replied that historically NCEP has been hesitant to make immature data available due to potential negative impacts. He believes this is starting to change and that with better communication with the public to manage potential negative impacts, NCEP is becoming more progressive. Infrastructure is their primary constraint in making pre-operational data available.

Peter noted that the responsibility for distribution need not be solely with NCEP, that OAR could help in the distribution as has been done within HIWPP. Bob Lipschutz noted that if data is distributed by OAR rather than NCEP, it reinforces that this is research data without the NWS “seal of approval”.

Mark Sponsler of StormSurf:

Mark re-iterated that from his point of view, early access is “huge”, especially to a third party distributor like his company. He has been reviewing FIM along with other models, and incorporates this into his writings and analyses on the company website.

Kevin Kelleher, NOAA/ESRL/GSD:

Kevin noted that HIWPP had a big investment in infrastructure in order to support the Open Data Initiative, and that if only a couple of companies are really using the data, then perhaps this could be managed with less cost for infrastructure.

Caleb Shulte, U.S. Army - Cold Regions Test Center, from email:

I agree with all the statements Peter said about the access to the experimental data, I would have offered more feedback during the meeting, but really cannot offer much as I have not had a chance to see or utilize the data yet. Unfortunately, network security issues have been a hindrance thus far...

I have been viewing the FIM for the last 2-3 years now by using the fim.noaa.gov site. I liked the arctic overlay it had where Alaska was more focused on (better zoom), now with the new northern hemisphere overlay, it is a bit harder to see things for Alaska. I was hoping to utilize the HIWPP to see the grib files and create my own products, but unfortunately have been having issues accessing the data with port 8080 being blocked.

(from Bonny: by DOD firewall)

I am trying to get port 8080 opened on the DREN to your site http://dtgo.gsd.esrl.noaa.gov , but who knows how long this could take and if they will even allow it.

I would like to try NEIS as this may be the only way I can access the data right now, if it will even work, and I can get the approval to install the software.
What ports does NEIS utilize for accessing the data?

I currently use IDV when viewing model data, so would be interested in seeing how this performs compared to it.

John Keyes, NOAA/NWS Pocatello

John has been a big early user of NEIS. He would like to see more descriptive information about the fields in the model data - moreso than is provided by the GRIB tables.

Future Plans:

Bonny noted that, under HIWPP, the Open Data Initiative is currently planned to go until mid-Feb 2016. Any continuation under either HIWPP or otherwise must be reviewed and approved by NOAA management.

A second Users Meeting will be held before Feb 2016. This could be either a second virtual meeting like this one, or could be a meeting held during AMS in January. Stan Benjamin suggested a 45-60 min meeting at AMS.

Regarding future participation in a Users Meeting, Peter Neilley noted that this would depend on whether there is a “HIWPP ODI - Phase 2” or something similar. His company would be reluctant to participate further if no data will be available beyond Feb 2016. He would like to see NOAA management discuss plans over the next 2-3 months and announce to the community what the future plans will be.

Tim Schneider noted that this will be brought before the HIWPP Executive Oversight Board.