Session: Integration of the Solar Terrestrial Environment
Panel Discussion: Comments expressed by James L. Green

I believe we all recognize that the S-T environment is a distributed one. What the system consists of is a long-term archive (NSSDC), a few multi-mission active archive systems (i.e.: CDAWeb, SSCweb, etc.), mission web sites, and instrument web sites. We have come a very long ways since the first Data Systems Users Working Group and the accessibility of data is unprecedented in our field.

The current situation is that we will not receive significant new funding to build anything new from scratch so we must make do with small incremental improvements. It is now time to take the next step and coordinate our current distributed environment.

We need to raise the bar and define a new capability that leads us into a truly integrated S-T system. It is no longer good enough to just post data. We need a variety of different data products on various time scales, new tools and analysis capability, access to medium/high scale computing capabilities integrated with our data archives, and new value added data sets and catalogs just to name a few things.

How do we coordinate our efforts? If every distributed data system group would devote some fraction of resources for coordination purposes within a few years we should obtain a new level of integration and by doing so take a giant leap forward. One thing we can do to coordinate our activities is to hold a workshop where we develop several science scenarios based on strategically important questions that we need answers to. With several scientists going off and using our distributed data system to perform this work we can collect information about what we need to do that is inhibiting this type of work. With that in hand the coordinated data centers and sites should work together to fix these problems.

We may not be able to fix everything but lets move towards better facilitating the kind of science we need to do in the future and build a system that supports that science.