

Long Term Ecological Research Privacy Policy

Introduction

As part of and in compliance with the Long Term Ecological Research (LTER) program, the LTER Network Office (LNO) collects different types of data from web site visitors who come to this site. This privacy policy outlines the different forms of data being collected by LTER and the LNO, and the ways in which the data are being stored and safeguarded. These data may include information, such as your IP address, the date and time of your visit, the type of operating system and web browser that you use. These data are used to analyze web site visits and to support tools to enhance user experience. Different data are collected and stored in different ways which have different implications for your privacy. LTER supports a standardized set of privacy policies and practices, which balance the privacy needs of its users with the LNO's ability to provide users high quality and customizable access to its resources.

You can visit our website without telling us who you are or revealing any personal information (which we will refer to in this privacy policy as "Personal Data") about yourself. To obtain access to certain areas of our website, however, or to receive certain services we provide, you may be required to register with us and, in connection with such registration, to provide certain Personal Data (e.g., your email address). We use such information to provide the service you requested, to monitor internally usage of our website.

If you have any questions about this project's privacy practices, please call 505 277 2551. You will be asked to provide your name and contact information when you contact us.

Scope of this policy

This policy applies only to the public available web sites for the LTER Network (lternet.edu). Please note that if you leave this web site for another web site, including the web site of another LTER project, this privacy policy will no longer apply.

Web Metrics

This web site currently does not but may in the future use third party web metrics to record the details of your visit. This involves collecting data such as the pages you have viewed, the browser you have used, and so on. Web metrics data can range from the anonymous (e. g., time/date of visit) to the identifiable (e.g. IP address). These data provide useful statistics for project managers and project funders, as well as support the improvement of web site design and functionality. These data are always anonymous, and almost always aggregated.

Registration

Some LTER websites offer LTER project users resources beyond browsing free-access pages. Those sites require that users be registered by their site and may invite users to register conditionally until confirmed by their site authority. Registering for such accounts requires:

1. Name (First and Last)
2. Email Address
3. Position (PI, Graduate Student, Faculty Associate, etc.)
4. Personal convenience password

and invites voluntary online submission of pertinent user information, or attributes by the user or site authority. When a user registers for an account with LTER or LTER resources, the following information may be used for the following purposes:

1. Providing a publicly-accessible online directory of LTER personnel

2. Allowing access to appropriate content
3. Personalizing access based on area of need
4. Web Metrics
5. Grouping of individuals into email lists based on position, interest, or other voluntary attributes.
6. Issuing updates, invitations, newsletters, etc.
7. Confirming personal accounts

In the event that collected information will be used for purposes other than those described above, users will be notified of such changes and will be given the option to opt out of those furtherances.

Voluntary Registration

Some LTER websites offer public users resources that can be customized or that invite participation beyond browsing free-access pages. Those sites invite users to register for free for individual user accounts. Registering for such accounts requires voluntary online submission of pertinent user information, or attributes. When a user registers for an account with LTER or LTER resources, the following information may be collected:

1. Name (First and Last OR Username)
2. Email Address
3. Position/Job Title/Subject Expertise
4. Personal password

LTER will use this information for the following purposes:

1. Allowing access to appropriate content
2. Personalizing access based on area of need
3. Web Metrics
4. Issuing updates, invitations, newsletters, etc.
5. Confirming personal accounts

In the event that collected information will be used for purposes other than those described above, users will be notified of such changes and will be given the option to opt out of those furtherances.

Personal Accounts

Users should be aware that any information about themselves that they post in a publicly viewable place, such as customized homepages, discussion forums, etc., may be seen by other users as well as by site administrators. This Privacy Policy covers information communicated between the LNO and the user for activities such as account registration and maintenance, but when the user communicates their information in a publicly viewable web space, the degree of privacy or anonymity covering that information is entirely up to the individual user. Because of this, LNO recommends that users under the age of thirteen not participate in publicly accessed forums or services.

Access to Information

LNO maintains the accuracy of our information by relying on site authorities and individuals. Users may access and edit their own personal information. Users may contact us via strategically placed “buttons” on the websites about any inaccuracies they may find. Users may delete their voluntary

personal information from our database and may be entirely deleted by contacting their site authority.

Cookies

HTTP Cookies are small text files that a website uploads to a user's computer in order to provide the user's computer with enough information that it remembers the user's previous visit(s). This allows the user to access certain features of the website more efficiently than they would if it was a first visit or if a computer is set to not accept cookies. While cookies, in general, are innocuous, they have also raised controversy as some people feel that there are similarities between having a cookie on a computer and having a surveillance device in their homes. This is a misunderstanding of the underlying technology of cookies. While they do convey information about a user, this is solely information about a user's computer and browser session (IP address, navigation, etc.), and this information is collected for the purposes of authentication, user tracking, and maintaining user preferences.

There are two types of HTTP cookies

1. Session cookies are cookies that reside on the user's computer only during the time when the user is online at the cookie providing website. These allow the online system to respond more quickly and personally during the user's session than it would be able to without having the preloaded information that the cookie enables.
2. Persistent cookies are cookies that remain on a user's computer after closing the browser session during which the cookie was downloaded on the local computer. Persistent cookies allow fast access during subsequent visits to the website.

Any computer can be configured to accept all cookies, accept some cookies, or accept no cookies. Accepting no cookies can often prevent full use of a particular website which might require the use of cookies. Additionally, cookies can be set to expire, so that after a certain amount of time elapses between uses the cookies are simply deleted from the user's computer. Some good information about cookies can be found on Wikipedia at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/HTTP_cookie

Compliance with court orders

LNO will not voluntarily share user information with parties outside of the project's scope. In the event of a subpoena or court order for the release of such information to local, state, or federal courts, LNO will comply with the jurisdictional law regarding such a transmission of information and will supply only that information which it is legally compelled to hand over. Every reasonable attempt will be made to preserve the anonymity and/or privacy of individual's identities in whatever data is subpoenaed. LNO will also make reasonable and legal effort to inform users about the transmission of such subpoenaed data.