Direction

I talked with Rob Raskin at JPL and he gave me a history of SWEET. He advised me to stay away from ranking as purposes for each vocabulary can be different. I know Peter Fox had a different opinion, or at least that a TRL ranking should be given. As I gathered details and reviewed vocabularies I tended to fall into line with Rob’s view (sorry Peter ☺). Perhaps it was my shortcoming, but to my mind at this stage the objectives of this exercise didn’t have the necessary defined boundaries or requirements to adequately make valuable, ranked comparisons. It seemed more helpful at this point to attempt to characterize each vocabulary leaving rankings to the time when requirements (based on use cases?) for a polar profile can be used as the standard for comparison. The cross discipline overlap further complicated my attempts at ranking.

Steps

To begin I examined various polar research projects to get a picture of what research disciplines needed to be included in this survey. Most were the usual suspects, but one, “agriculture”, probably would have been missed without the review. The original idea was to organize the vocabularies under discipline headings – biosphere, cryosphere, etc. However once I started reviewing the vocabularies I found that they weren’t always so neatly structured and most had enough cross-discipline elements to warrant another approach. The best method seemed to simply develop a coverage key to list disciplines and apply them to each vocabulary as appropriate. With a combination of tips from Raskin and some polar networks, MMI (a great source of info), and internet searches, I read through each discovered vocabulary and its supporting information in order to understand its discipline coverage, origins, and intended applications. This led me to included or exclude vocabularies from the inventory. The rejected in some cases were more like classification schemes rather than vocabularies. Still these are listed in the “rejected listings” tab of Inventory.xlsx. I collected important documents and web info with details for each for further review. I attempted to describe each vocabulary using Peter’s evaluation criteria to try to highlight the characteristics of each. Results are given in Inventory.xlsx.

Finally, despite attempts to be as inclusive as possible I’m sure there are vocabularies that were left off this list. There are no doubt leads not discovered or perhaps followed to their very end, and I’m sure that more vocabularies are out there.