

The German Environmental Information Portal PortalU[®] and INSPIRE

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The web-enabled German Environmental Information Portal PortalU[®] (www.portalu.de) provides access to over 1 Million internet pages and over 500 000 database entries from almost 200 public institutions and organisations. The portal bundles decentral distributed environmental information from web pages, databases and data catalogues. The entire environmental information - data as well as metadata - can be search by a powerful search engine. Thereby spatially, temporally and semantically specifications can be taken into account. Besides the search engine PortalU[®] provides additional features to improve the understanding of environmental information in particular. Selected environmental information is separately structured in environmental topics, while spatial data from expert systems can be visualized in a map viewer. PortalU[®] is conform to several ISO and OGC standards and is successively adapted to new demands if required. The portal bundles a high amount of public environmental metadata and will be therefore the node for the access of environmental metadata with regard to the INSPIRE directive (2007/2/EG) for Germany.

Due to the demands of the implementing rules (IR) for metadata of the INSPIRE directive an adaptation of the metadata model of PortalU[®] is currently prepared. The IR for metadata shall be adopted by May 2008. However further modifications of the current draft of these IR are not expected, due to the closing discussion of public comments by the drafting team January 2008 in Ispra (Italy). Adaptations of the metadata model have to be implemented concerning conformity of metadata objects, explicit identification of data sources, limitation on public access, lineage, conditions applying to access and use, responsible parties, classification of spatial data services and the required thesaurus. Besides the technical realisation of the INSPIRE demands, the migration of the existing metadata sets is an additional challenge. Thus the environmental data catalogues (UDKs) which were successively build up in the last decades on state and on federal level in Germany contain more than 20 000 data sets.

In the new release of the PortalU[®] software (InGrid[®] 2.0) which will be available in June 2008 with new features. The main improvements will be the adaptation of the metadata model on the demands of the IR for metadata and an online administration tool to record new environmental metadata objects. With the new release metadata can be centrally recorded, administrated, managed and accessed over PortalU[®].