ComPADRE Policies, Priorities, and Practices:

Policies and Best Practices are established to help users understand what they will find in the ComPADRE collections, how information is organized, and the reliability of the material. The following guidelines are for all ComPADRE collections. Some collections will further develop their policies and procedures to meet the needs of their community.

Quality of Content

Quality of content is vital for the trust of users. Most users base their quality judgment on the accuracy and importance of the science, with other important aspects being the quality of the activity and the age-appropriateness of the material. The following criteria and processes are used to decide on resources to be included in the collections.

- All materials are scientifically sound resources. The editors or editorial boards review all materials before posting.
- All additional review criteria for each collection are given on the website.
- Materials with an obvious scientific bias are not included or are clearly tagged to warn the user.
- Links to materials are accurate and up-to-date. Materials with a broken link for 2 weeks will be removed and new links established if possible.
- ComPADRE cannot be responsible for materials linked to, but will address immediately any questions or concerns brought by users.

Commercial Materials

The inclusion of commercial products in digital collections is sometimes contentious. This includes both products that must be purchased and materials that are supported by web ads. Many teachers worry of the potential for distractions from ads and other non-related links, or how to include for-fee products in their teaching. The following guidelines are used in ComPADRE to handle these resources.

- The ComPADRE collections include the highest quality materials whether free or commercial.
- The fact that an item has a cost will be noted.
- Websites with potentially distracting ads or web-links will be noted.
- ComPADRE users will have the option of not viewing items with costs.

Catalog Depth and Breadth

The added value brought to the materials by being included in the ComPADRE collections is the extra information provided by the resource catlog. This information helps users discover useful material and place it in context both in topic and classroom use. The following guidelines outline the information provided by ComPADRE for its users.

- Information will be organized to meet the needs of collection users, with clear categories that mirror standard language and use.
- All materials will be classified by topic, resource type, and grade level. Additional information includes author/publisher, cost, and copyright.
- Descriptions of material on ComPADRE will be brief but convey to users the information necessary to make usage decisions about the material.
- For large sites or collections with multiple topics or activities, links will be created to both the overall site and the topical sub-pieces where appropriate for a ComPADRE collection.
- As much as possible, ComPADRE will link directly to specific topics or activities so that users will not need to search on the target sites.
- Featured items in ComPADRE Collections will be placed in context by links to related materials and annotations about potential uses as much as possible.

Privacy and Intellectual Property Issues:

The following are the rights and responsibilities of both ComPADRE users and the ComPADRE project regarding the information provided. The ComPADRE metadata is copyrighted. ComPADRE users should expect to have control over the use of the information they supply to ComPADRE.

- The metadata provided by ComPADRE is the property of ComPADRE and its supporting organizations.
- Use of the information provided by ComPADRE is free for non-commercial purposes with reference to ComPADRE.
- Commercial use of the information provided by ComPADRE requires the express consent of ComPADRE.
- ComPADRE is not responsible for any damage due to materials linked to from the collections.
- Personal information provided to ComPADRE by users will not be used by the participating organizations without the consent of the user.
- Personal information provided to ComPADRE by users will not be given to any third parties not participating in ComPADRE
- Although ComPADRE will take all reasonable precautions to protect personal data, it is not responsible for information lost due to malicious attacks.
- For assessment and security purposes, use of the ComPADRE site will be monitored, but this tracking will not identify the use of individual users.

Assessment:

The usability and use of the ComPADRE sites and materials is evaluated in several different ways for quality assurance and improvement of the collections. The following tools and methods are available for use.

- Each collection is able to survey users with an objective (multiple-choice) survey.
- Each collection has an electronic discussion board for open feedback from its users.
- Task-based usability testing will be performed on collections during and after development. This testing will find difficulties users have navigating the website and the usefulness of the information provided.
- Advisory groups, editorial boards, and other knowledgeable users will provide feedback about collections before they are made public.
- Tracking and logging of the use of the collections performed continuously.
- Volunteer users will be solicited to track changes in their teaching or learning due to the use of the ComPADRE collections.

Archiving:

A common concern among users of the web is the reliability of access to materials precisely when it is needed. ComPADRE is working to improve the reliability of access to resources in its collections through the following steps.

- Where possible, links will be made to definitive and reliable sources.
- With the permission of authors, Featured Items in ComPADRE collections will be mirrored on ComPADRE servers when this will be more reliable.
- ComPADRE will work with the NSDL Core Integration group in their efforts to archive all materials linked to the NSDL.