

Informatics Strategic Planning Workshop Summary

The Informatics Strategic Planning (SP) Workshop was held August 27th and 28th at UA's Biosphere2. Forty-six participants gathered for the session from colleges across campus. Participants were identified for their expertise and diversity across information, computer, data, and social sciences.

The Informatics reception included welcome remarks by Dr. Jennifer K. Barton and a presentation on "Analyzing the Language of Food and Social Media" by Dr. Stephen Kobourov, Professor, Department of Computer Science at UA.

Breakout discussions on the second day consisted of the following topics:

- 1) **Cloud Commons and Persistent Data**
- 2) **Heterogeneous Dataset Integration**
- 3) **Data Analytics: Visualization, Text Mining, Statistical Analysis**
- 4) **Necessary Infrastructure**

Each breakout session was held twice, and was moderated by an expert in the field. Session leads reported back to the full group on the opportunities for growth, new strategic capabilities, proposed project time horizons, resources required, program risks, and strategic issues, focusing on what UA could and should do to ensure success.

The following represent the primary recommendations identified during the full-group discussion:

1. **Consider a shared knowledge-infrastructure for informatics, computing, and data science needs across campus.** A reoccurring theme between breakout sessions was the request from research active faculty for access to research scientists capable of conducting and assisting with cutting-edge data science. The faculty envisioned a **shared knowledge network** for faculty seeking additional assistance in information management, statistical analysis, and computing – including knowledge of and access to the available national shared research computing systems. Participants did not specify whether they viewed this infrastructure as a core facility or as a service of ORD. However, they did feel that this service should be distinct from the current UITS mission of providing telecommunications and general computing support for campus. In addition, participants suggested that the individuals associated with the knowledge network be located in a distinct facility to encourage cross-collaboration and interdisciplinary research. Finally, participants suggested that the network could provide data science training to research faculty. It should be noted that this recommendation was made again, with slight variations, in several of the other ORD Strategic Planning workshops.
2. **Nurture, maintain, and add to UA's research infrastructure.** Participants identified many of UA's unique resources, both physical and personnel, and recognized that resources require nurturing, maintenance, and eventually, additions. Specific suggestions included:
 - a. **Build upon UA's success in working with high-value datasets and data expertise.** Specifically, UA is well positioned to build upon our existing expertise in large, high-value datasets including those related to iPlant, iMicrobe, Tara Oceans, Large Synoptic Survey Telescope, and Catalina Sky Survey. Additionally, UA has existing capabilities in bioinformatics; genomics, particularly ecosystem genomics; and networks, particularly cybersecurity and social networks. Each of these areas could be further cultivated.

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- Necessary Infrastructure, Nirav Merchant, Director, Information Technology, Arizona Research Labs, nirav@email.arizona.edu

For additional information on the workshops, please contact Jennifer Barton at barton@email.arizona.edu or Neal Armstrong at nra@email.arizona.edu.