

# **Developing the Cross-Disciplinary Information Model for NASA's Science Mission Directorate**

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## **Abstract**

The five divisions of NASA's Science Mission Directorate (SMD) represent a very broad spectrum of academic disciplines, ranging from Astronomy, to Planetary science, to Heliophysics, Earth science, Biology and Physical science with measurement scales ranging from components of atoms to the structure of the entire universe. In addition, the systems that support access to these data range from systems based on formal and broadly accepted OWL ontologies, to those based on current and historical disciplinary metadata standards, to ad-hoc or bespoke systems dating back to NASA's very earliest missions; all generally developed to support the mission or, more recently, discipline focussed data users. Consequently the access mechanisms, data structures, vocabularies, terms in use, etc. vary widely across the divisions making cross-disciplinary research at best difficult if not impossible.

Currently NASA SMD is working to improve support for cross-disciplinary/transdisciplinary research by developing a system that supports discovery across all of SMD's data products, a model that can be extended to all forms of scientific output including software, tools, models, publications, etc. The core underpinnings of such a system is an information model being developed using the methodology developed by Dr. Peter Fox and Dr. Deborah McGuinness. Here we discuss the model (a knowledge graph), lessons learned along the way, and key findings for other systems attempting to bridge across broad disciplinary challenges.

# Goals and Background

**RESEARCH**  
~3,000 Completely Selected Awards

To support discovery and access to complex scientific data, across all of NASA's Science directorate divisions, for users including:

- Researchers from both within and outside of NASA including scientists, citizen scientists, students, and educators
- Managers and program officers
- Decision makers

**TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENT**  
~\$397M Invested Annually

**SMALLSATS/ CUBESATS**  
49 Science Missions  
29 Technology Demos

**EARTH-BASED OBSERVATORY MISSIONS**  
23 Completed Missions  
5 Upcoming Technology  
Observatory Missions

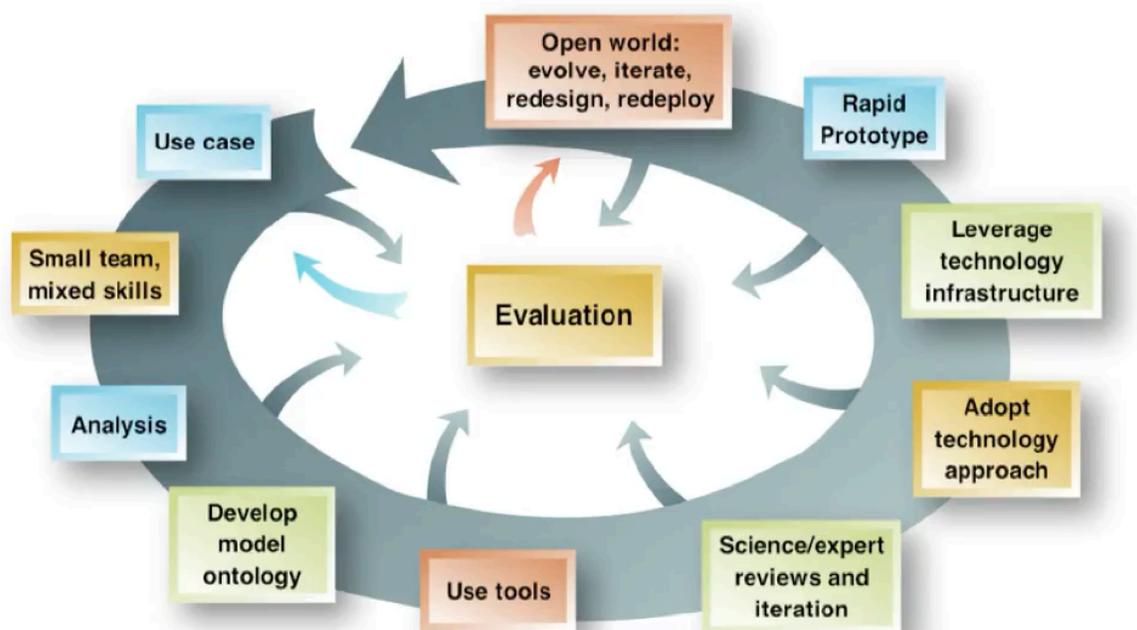
**LAUNCHING ROCKETS**  
2 Science Missions Launched  
45 In Development

**BALLOONS**  
54 Missions in Development

**by the NUMBERS**

Movie #1: In this short video the goals of the SMD catalog project are described, as are their implications for the Information Model component of the project.

# Methodology



# Key Insight

Use cases have shown that scientific data discovery involves more than metadata.

| Science Data Discovery Need | RadBio Use Case Examples   | Organic Exomoons Use Case Examples   |
|-----------------------------|--|--|
| <b>Data Analysis</b>        | Integrate GOES 5 min Proton data to create calculated doses and dose rates | Determine stellar properties, Estimate spectral properties                               |
| <b>Model</b>                | Linear no-threshold (LNT) model of radiation effects                       | Stellar Spectral Energy Distribution Model, HITRAN/MODTRAN, Planetary Spectrum Generator |
| <b>Event</b>                | Solar Particle Event, Geomagnetic Storm                                    | Coronal Mass Ejection  |
| <b>Feature</b>              | South Atlantic Anomaly, Inner Radiation Belt                               | Spectral Energy Distribution, Radiant Energy Budget                                      |

Table 1: Examples of different kinds of things, other than data, needed in order to satisfy a science discovery use case mentioned during the two use case workshops held to date.

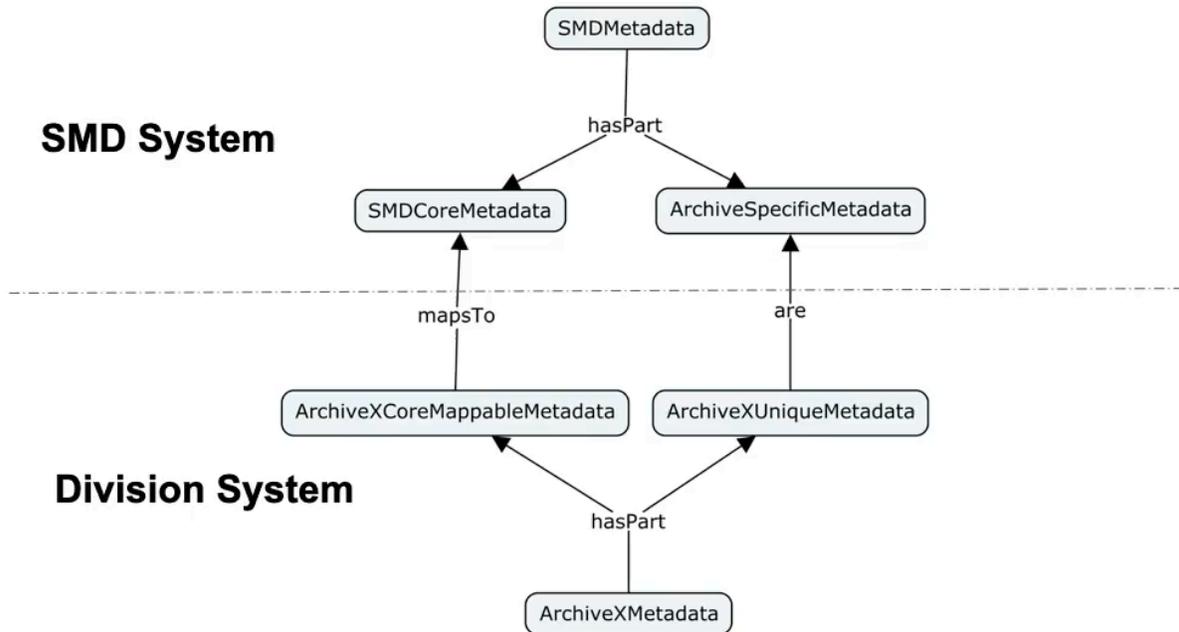
## Lessons Learned

### Lessons Learned

1. Every NASA division has developed deep capabilities and a variety of useful tools in support of their user communities

Movie #3: Several lessons learned while analyzing the various systems within NASA's SMD are described.

# The Information Model



Movie #4: After a brief discussion of metadata variations across scientific disciplines, this movie describes the main components of the SMD Information Model.