

## **DIVISION XII / COMMISSION 5 / WORKING GROUP VIRTUAL OBSERVATORIES, DATA CENTERS & NETWORKS**

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### **1. Introduction**

The Working Group *Virtual Observatories, Data Centers, and Networks* was established under Commission 5 at the Prague General Assembly in 2006. The purpose of the WG is to provide IAU oversight of the activities of the *International Virtual Observatory Alliance* (IVOA, <[www.ivoa.net/](http://www.ivoa.net/)>), to encourage data centers and other data providers to archive and publish data according to IVOA standards, and to help assure that astronomical research facilities are electronically linked with current network technologies. The WG coordinates activities closely with the WG-*FITS*, as the IVOA uses FITS as its primary format for binary data exchange, and the WG on *Astronomical Data*.

### **2. Activities**

To date the WG has been inactive, the bulk of standards developments being managed within the IVOA context. As various virtual observatory projects transition from their development phases to operational facilities, it will be the purview of the WG to review the IVOA standards (primarily from a process perspective, to assure that astronomy community interests are being served) and to act as a liaison with astronomical data providers and encourage their adoption of IVOA standards. The WG will convene as part of Commission 5 meetings during the IAU XXVII General Assembly in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 2009.

Robert J. Hanisch  
*chair of Working Group*