

# Inventory and Evaluation of Clinical Research Networks

## IECRN

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**Stephen Durako, PI**

Westat  
Rockville, Maryland

## **BRIEFING BOOK SUMMARY**

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## A. PROGRAM SUMMARY

The three major goals of the IECRN project are to:

- Develop a publicly available inventory and database of clinical research networks
- Prepare a detailed description of existing practices and assessment of best practices within clinical research networks
- Conduct a national leadership forum on the results of the inventory and assessment studies.

The first goal resulted in the creation of the online searchable database of clinical research networks that can be accessed via the IECRN web site. The inventory currently contains 269 networks (per the project definition of a Clinical Research Network). The inventory will continue to add new eligible networks as they are identified. Networks can be submitted for inclusion in the inventory by accessing the Join Inventory link on the IECRN web site at <https://www.clinicalresearchnetworks.org/register.asp>

The second and third goals were accomplished via the completion of a Core Survey with data on 244 networks that responded as of March 2006 and Descriptive and Best Practices studies with a subset of those networks. The information from the surveys and studies was analyzed and presented at a National Leadership Forum on May 31 and June 1, 2006. The study project reports can be accessed via the IECRN web site at <https://www.clinicalresearchnetworks.org/reports.asp>

The presentations, transcripts, web casts and reports from the National Leadership Forum can be accessed via the IECRN web site at <https://www.clinicalresearchnetworks.org/forumagenda.asp>

### 1. INTRODUCTION

This summary encompasses information about the Inventory and Evaluation of Clinical Research Networks (IECRN) web site <https://www.clinicalresearchnetworks.org> which includes the Inventory of clinical research networks (CRNs) and other IECRN project information and reports. The data incorporated in the report is from the 7 month period beginning September 1, 2006 and ending March 31, 2007.

#### 1.1. Revisions to Web Site

The following is a listing of updates and changes made to the IECRN web site from September 2006 through March 2007. Most of the revisions involved additional coding of search terms and edits resulting from the annual updates.

- **Sept 2006**
  - Revise site organization and menu structure
  - Revise Home Page to incorporate Network Searches

Create an IECRN Project Page with information about the various pieces of the project

Editorial update to Core Report

Editorial update to National Leadership Forum Comments Report

Update Join Inventory page with links for criteria for CRN and Core Survey

Update Network Profile listing

Broaden searches using MeSH terms by including down tree codes in results

- **Oct 2006**

Update Advanced Searches page with information on MeSH

- **Nov 2006**

Create new email log for inquiries originating from website

Update MeSH codes and terms resulting from annual update request

Streamline summaries page by moving reporting MeSH synonyms as a separate window on demand

Add web link to top profile

- **Dec 2006**

No significant updates to web site, regular support & performance monitoring

- **Jan 2007**

Update data structures to accommodate annual review dates

- **Feb 2007**

Update MeSH codes and terms resulting from annual update request

- **March 2007**

Update year on copyright notice

Added "How did you hear about us?" to the "Join Inventory" request

Adjusted real estate in profile to accommodate widest type of study answer with additional "\*" for "Most frequent type of study conducted"

Updated some MeSH terms and corrected typo

## 2. PROJECT ACTIVITIES

The project current activities include

- Core Survey distribution to newly identified potential CRNs
- Posting profiles of new CRNs on IECRN Inventory website
- IECRN web site maintenance of the Inventory of Clinical Research Networks
- Promotion of IECRN at various professional conferences/meetings

### 2.1. Network Profile Activity

The search for new clinical research networks (CRNs) is ongoing. Potential networks can go to the "Join Inventory" feature on the web site or can be recommended by others in the clinical research field. Periodic online searches are also conducted (ex. PubMed, NIH web sites, etc.). All potential new networks are researched by program staff. Networks found to be eligible per the project definition of a CRN receive the IECRN Core Survey. Data from returned surveys are organized into network profiles. Each network reviews and approves the preliminary profile. Fifteen additional network profiles were posted on the IECRN web site between September

1, 2006 and March 27, 2007. The following table illustrates the network profile activity.

	<b>Last Seven Months</b>	<b>Total Project Period</b>
	Sept 1, 2006- Mar 27, 2007	September 1, 2004 – March 27, 2007
Potential networks identified	23	833
Potentials not being surveyed	3	546
Core Surveys sent to eligible networks	20	287
Completed Core Surveys	17	278
In review and approval process	2	9
Posted Profiles	15	269

## 2.2 General Web Site Statistics

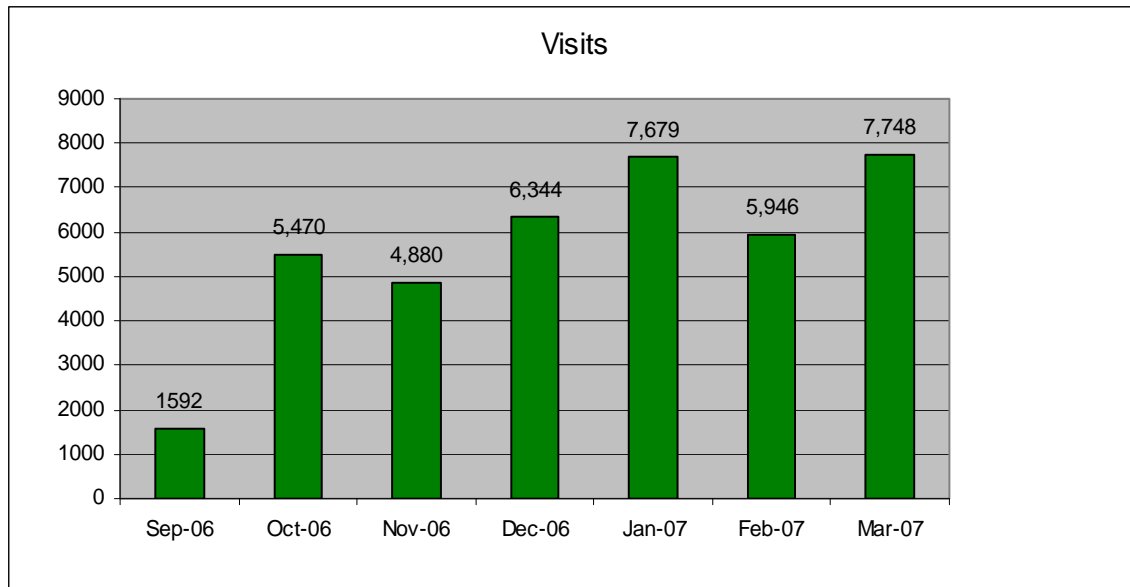
The General Statistics table below provides an overview of the activity the IECRN web site from September 1, 2006 through March 31, 2007. The data are compiled from WebTrends, a commercial off the shelf software package used by Westat to track web site activity.

<b>Activity<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>September 1, 2006 through March 31, 2007</b>
Total Hits	114,158
Average Hits per Day	538
Total Visits	34,252
Average Visits per Day	161
Average Visit Length	17:01
Median Visit Length	1:35
Unique Visitors	9,652
One-time Visitors	7,235
Repeat Visitors	2,417
Most Active Day	September 05, 2006
Number of submitted profile updates <sup>2</sup>	56

<sup>1</sup> Activities are defined in a glossary at the end of the report.

<sup>2</sup> Number may include more than one update by the same network during the period.

The Visits graph below displays the overall number of visits to the IECRN web site from September 1, 2006 through March 31, 2007.



The Top Pages table below lists the most frequently viewed pages on the IECRN web site from September 1, 2006 through March 31, 2007. Latest viewing statistics suggest web visitors are interested in the network profile pages. Annual profile updates with networks in the Inventory are conducted in batches. The latest update requests were sent in October 2006 and January 2007. Web site visitors are also browsing the network listings and accessing multiple profiles during a browse session.

Top Pages		Views ▼	% of Total Views	Visits	Avg. Time Viewed
1	<a href="#">/profile.asp</a> (Individual Network Profiles)	27,952	54.11%	10,570	00:02:52
2	<a href="#">/summaries.asp</a> (Listing of Networks via searches or browse)	4,178	8.08%	2,433	00:01:22
3	<a href="#">/default.asp</a> (Home/Network Searches)	2,772	5.36%	2,408	00:02:02
4	<a href="#">/redirecthttps.htm</a> (Redirect to Home Page)	2,479	4.79%	2,168	00:00:22
5	<a href="#">/reports.asp</a> (IECRN Reports)	1,934	3.74%	1,589	00:02:07
6	<a href="#">/forum.asp</a> (National Leadership Forum)	1,318	2.55%	1,197	00:02:59

The Most Downloaded Files table lists the most frequent files downloaded from the IECRN web site from September 1, 2006 through March 31, 2007. Web site visitors mostly downloaded the IECRN Complete Project Report that includes the Project Executive Summary, the Core and Descriptive Survey Report, and the Best Practices Study Report. The Best Practice Profile of Networks and results of the Best Practices Study are also of interest to web site visitors.

<b>Most Downloaded Files</b>			
<b>File</b>	<b>No. of Downloads</b>	<b>% of Total Downloads</b>	<b>Visits</b>
Complete Project Report	3,079	12.63%	114
Core and Descriptive Survey Report	2,412	9.89%	95
Best Practices Profile of Networks	2,147	8.80%	243
Best Practices Study Report: Chapter 2: Best Practices Study Results	707	2.90%	98
Core and Descriptive Survey Report; Chapter 2: Core and Descriptive Survey Methodology	585	2.40%	378

## B. PRESENTATIONS AND PUBLICATIONS

### PUBLICATIONS;

Communications paper about the IECRN and BAA projects will be submitted to the JAMA by mid-summer 2007.

### POSTERS/PRESENTATIONS:

American Medical Informatics Association Symposium on November 12-14, 2006  
Posters and Brochures regarding IECRN web site were presented as part of the NCRR exhibit.

cancer Biomedical Informatics Grid™ (caBIG) conference on February 5-8, 2007  
A poster regarding the IT and Data Management findings of the IECRN study was presented at the conference.

Society of Clinical Trials Meeting on May 20-23, 2007

Two posters and two oral presentations regarding the findings of the IECRN study will be presented by Westat staff.

#### Posters:

- Barriers To And Facilitators Of Effective Network Functioning: Results Of The Inventory And Evaluation Of Clinical Research Networks (IECRN) Project
- Management, Governance And Financial Practices Of Research Networks: Results Of The Inventory And Evaluation Of Clinical Research Networks (IECRN) Project

#### Oral Presentations:

- Information Technology And Data Management Practices Of Research Networks: Results Of The Inventory And Evaluation Of Clinical Research Networks (IECRN) Project

- Operational, Recruitment, And Training Practices Of Research Networks: Results Of The Inventory And Evaluation Of Clinical Research Networks (IECRN) Project

## Glossary

Glossary	
<b>Hits</b>	A single action on the Web server as it appears in the log file. A visitor downloading a single file is logged as a single hit, while a visitor requesting a Web page including two images registers as three hits on the server; one hit is the request for the .html page, and two additional hits are requests for the downloaded image files. While the volume of hits is an indicator of Web server traffic, it is not an accurate reflection of how many pages are being looked at.
<b>Average Hits per Day</b>	Number of successful hits divided by the total number of days in the log.
<b>Visits</b>	All the activity of one visitor to a Web site. If a visitor is idle longer than the idle-time limit, it is assumed the visit ended. If the visitor continues to browse the web site after they reach the idle-time limit, a new visit is counted. The default idle-time limit is thirty minutes, but can be changed in Options.
<b>Averaged Visits per Day</b>	Number of visits divided by the total number of days in the log.
<b>Average Visit Length</b>	Average number of minutes the Web site was viewed by a visitor.
<b>Median Visit Length</b>	Median of non-zero length visits in the log. Half the visit lengths are longer than the median, and half are shorter. This number is often closer to the "typical" visit length than the average visit length. Numbers that are wildly atypical can skew the average, but will not skew the median so much.
<b>Unique Visitors</b>	Individuals who visited the web site during the report period. If someone visits more than once, they are counted only the first time they visit.
<b>One-Time Visitors</b>	Individuals who visited the web site only once during the report period.
<b>Repeat Visitors</b>	Individuals who visited the web site more than once during the report period.