Informatics, or information science, focuses on all aspects of extracting information from data. The objectives of informatics include assembling and providing access to well-curated data resources, developing and applying advanced analytical and visualization methods, and the interpretation of results after applying these methods. Open and reliable data resources that conform to FAIR (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, and Reusable) practices are an essential pillar of scientific advances through informatics. Mineralogists have long benefited from open-access data resources such as mindat.org, rruff.info, and earthchem.org, but a significant amount of published and unpublished data on mineral occurrences, compositions, physical properties, and other attributes are not yet available on any open-access platform. Most mineralogical publications do not require new data to be deposited in an open-access form, nor are there uniform standards for reporting such data.

Accordingly, significant opportunities exist to improve the accessibility and reliability of a wide range of mineralogical data, as well as to develop and disseminate analytical and visualization methods to advance mineralogical research. We hope to start a conversation among engaged members of the community to identify needs and opportunities, to formulate best practices, to encourage a culture of data sharing among members of the Earth and planetary materials community, and to develop and share new resources.

Accordingly, Sergey Krivovichev, Shaunna Morison, Yan Li, and Robert Hazen have been asked to lead a new International Mineralogical Association called the “Mineral Informatics Working Group.” As a first step, we are developing a list of interested mineralogical community members. If you would like to receive future notices, and perhaps participate in this effort, please email Robert Hazen at rhazen@ciw.edu.