NWQMC
NATIONAL WATER QUALITY MONITORING COUNCIL
Working Together for Clean Water

Methods and Data Comparability Board

National Environmental Methods Index (NEMI)

Use NEMI first to find the environmental methods you need. NEMI (http://www.nemi.gov/) is a user-friendly, searchable online methods database that allows you to easily search and compare regulatory and non-regulatory methods. NEMI was publicly released in October 2002, and has been accessed over 45,000 times as of September 2003. Here are some of the reasons why NEMI has become a part of so many environmental professionals' toolboxes.

NEMI is Free and Easy to Access

NEMI is free to the public, and can be easily accessed on any computer with Internet access. If you need to get method information to a colleague, you can simply e-mail them the link to the NEMI website. When you travel, you don't need to worry about loading NEMI software on your laptop. Since NEMI is web-based, updates are immediately available, with no new software needed.

NEMI has Easy-to-Compare Method Data

Whether you are in a laboratory or an office, if you work in the environmental field you need to have access to information on analytical methods: What is the most sensitive method for an analyte? Most precise? Most cost-effective for your needs? (Cost differential may be lab-dependent). NEMI makes comparing methods easy: simply type in the analyte name or CAS number, click on the search button, and you'll have information on a host of methods in a format that makes method comparison easy to accomplish.

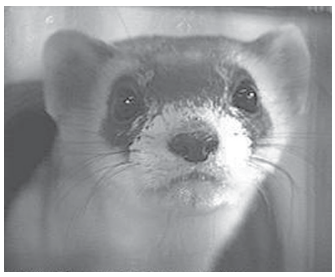
NEMI is being developed under the direction of the Methods and Data Comparability Board, a partnership of water-quality experts from Federal agencies, States, Tribes, municipalities, industry, and private organizations. The Methods Board is chartered under the National Water Quality Monitoring Council.

NEMI includes Regulatory Information

Deciphering the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) to find EPA-approved methods can be an onerous and frustrating task. Approved methods are distributed in various sections throughout the CFR, making them difficult to find. Adding to this difficulty, methods often are modified by regulations (that appear only in footnotes). NEMI makes finding approved methods a much easier task by allowing the user to simply select the pollutant and regulation of interest. A list of the approved methods, with all relevant modifications required by CFR footnotes will be quickly generated. Furthermore, you can download the approved version of publicly available methods with a single mouse click.

NEMI is on the "Grow"

NEMI is already useful, but is still a developing system with great potential to grow. There are currently plans to expand NEMI's content by adding field and biological methods, additional regulatory information, and analytical methods for all media. An extension of NEMI is also being tested that includes additional information that may be useful in the event of a terrorist attack on water systems involving chemical, biological, or radiological (CBR) agents. NEMI-CBR will be available to authorized environmental, health, and security managers and personnel. Furthermore, NEMI users have a say in how NEMI grows, by submitting comments via easy-to-use online forms. If there's something you'd like to see in NEMI, let us know.



National Environmental Methods Index

Feedback

Taken from NEMI's Message Board

"This is great, such a resource tool you cannot truly imagine. Office or field response help at the touch of a key stroke!!!"
Quality Assurance Compliance Officer - New York

"This is an excellent idea. A "one stop" shopping for analytical methodologies."
Quality Assurance/Control Officer - Kentucky

"It's great to have a quick reference, when I just want to check how another method handles a problem."
Environmental Health Chemist - Vermont

"This site is a great idea and will be very useful."
Resource Management Specialist - Wisconsin

"Love the site. It is very useful. The database retrieval and searches are fast and the data generated extremely helpful. Very good job."
IT Specialist, Analytical Laboratory - Alaska

Good Questions about NEMI

How do new methods get entered into the NEMI database?

Here are the most common ways:

1. Provide direct funding. Several agencies have provided support that allows the NEMI workgroup members to edit and review their methods data for inclusion in NEMI.
2. Provide in-kind support. For this option, an agency or organization contacts the NEMI group, usually via e-mail, and requests information on the data required and the business rules for the data. They then provide the information to populate the data fields in NEMI. Online forms are being tested and will be available in the near future to facilitate data entry.

How can I get my method in NEMI?

Contact us! Through the online forms being tested, you will be able to directly enter your methods into the staging area of the database where they can be reviewed. If you'd like more information, use the comment submission form on the website or send email to Dan Sullivan (djsulliv@usgs.gov).

How can I get more involved?

Once again, contact us! If you have comments on how NEMI can be improved or would like to join a workgroup, please let us know.

What are the next set of methods and features I can expect to see in NEMI?

There are a number of exciting developments, including:

1. A working group is being formed to address how field collection methods can be added to NEMI.
2. Nearly 100 additional methods are in the staging area of NEMI. As the data entry is completed for these methods, they will be reviewed for consistency and then uploaded to the public website. These include methods for new categories including toxicity, biological field collection, and marine environments.
3. Methods for additional media will be added to NEMI. Most of the methods currently in NEMI are water analytical methods. Methods for air, animal tissues, and soils/sediment are being prepared.
4. New technologies in methods are a focus area for additions to NEMI. Methods that use cutting-edge technology are being sought out for inclusion.

The National Water Quality Monitoring Council

The National Water Quality Monitoring Council (Council) provides a national forum to coordinate consistent and scientifically defensible methods and strategies for improving water quality monitoring, assessment, and reporting. The Council promotes partnerships that foster collaboration, advance the science, and improve management within all elements of the water quality monitoring community. A vital aspect of this role is fostering increased understanding and stewardship of our water resources.

The Council was created in 1997 as a vehicle for bringing together the diverse expertise, skills, and talents needed to develop collaborative, comparable, and cost-effective approaches to water quality monitoring. The Council's 35 members meet several times a year in locations throughout the country and represent federal, state, interstate, tribal, local, and municipal governments; watershed and environmental groups; the volunteer monitoring community; universities; and the private sector, including the regulated community. These members are organized into work groups whose activities and products advance the Council's goals. The current Council work groups are *Collaboration and Outreach, Water Information Strategies, Watershed Components Interactions,* and the *Methods and Data Comparability Board.*

The Council is co-chaired by the U.S. Geological Survey and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and is chartered as a subgroup of the Advisory Committee on Water Information (ACWI) under the Federal Advisory Committee Act.