

TAG Hydrothermal Vent Field on the Mid-Atlantic Ridge. Photo courtesy of Rob Reves-Sohn and Susan Humphris.

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'The great thing about InterRidge is that it allows you to pull together both the intellectual as well as the sea-going resources that no single nation could hope to achieve.'



**WELCOME TO
INTERRIDGE**

**AN INTERNATIONAL PROGRAM DEDICATED
TO EXPLORING VOLCANIC SPREADING
CENTERS AT THE BOTTOM OF THE OCEAN,
ONE OF EARTH'S LAST TRUE FRONTIERS.**



<http://www.interridge.org>

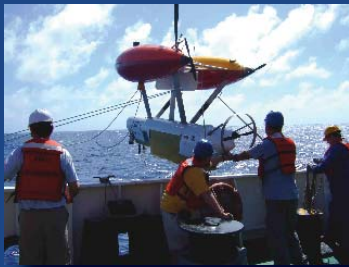
FRONT - The Alvin submersible (USA). Photo courtesy of Richard Lutz.

THE EVOLUTION OF INTERRIDGE

The event that sparked the birth of InterRidge occurred when two countries, using the same resource- and labor-intensive tools to visit the same place on the ocean floor, realized that it made more sense to share resources than to independently fund their own. It was 1991. Now, more than 17 years later, InterRidge remains anchored by the principle of collaboration. We are an international organization that pools the resources of its member countries to drive oceanic ridge research forward in a way that is cost-effective, cooperative and proven to be successful.



The ISIS ROV (UK). Photo courtesy of Chris German.



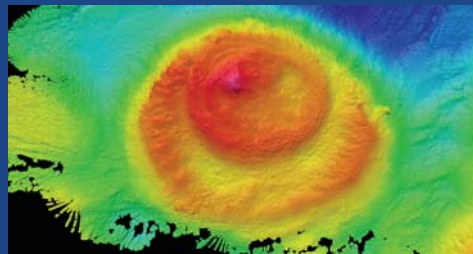
The Autonomous Benthic Explorer (USA). Photo courtesy of Dana Yoerger.

In its first decade InterRidge produced a coordinated, international ridge community of member countries that had previously been working alone, and left a string of success stories in its wake. Two examples are the first-ever mapping and sampling of one of the slowest and most remote spreading centers – the Gakkel Ridge in the Arctic Ocean, and the exploration and study of the Southwest Indian Ridge. Now in its second decade, InterRidge currently has 30 Member Regions and Nations and 2500 individual member scientists. The second decade (2004-2013) plan is three-fold:

- To establish a long-term, real-time presence on the ocean ridges,
- To identify and support key oceanic ridge projects that require large-scale international collaboration,
- To raise public awareness of the oceanic ridge environment through education outreach initiatives.

INTERRIDGE EXISTS TO:

- Promote interdisciplinary, international studies of the ocean's spreading centers
- Coordinate scientific exchange (information, technology, facilities) between national research groups
- Provide a unified voice for ocean ridge researchers worldwide
- Encourage the protection and management of the oceanic ridge environment
- Promote communication between nonscientists, scientists, educators, and policy-makers
- Spearhead education outreach efforts to raise awareness of the oceanic ridge environment



Multibeam bathymetry of the TAG Hydrothermal Mound on the Mid-Atlantic Ridge. Image Courtesy of Rob Reves-Sohn.

'Ridge science is entering a fascinating era, as long-term, real-time and continuous monitoring of the deep oceans becomes technologically and financially feasible. [InterRidge] represents a Mission to Planet Earth, establishing a presence in an environment that covers 70% of the surface of our world.'

InterRidge reaches its research and outreach objectives in a number of ways, including:

- Hosting specialized scientific workshops
- Publishing scientific implementation plans in the form of workshop reports
- Developing, managing and hosting the InterRidge website and databases
- Publishing the electronic InterRidge bi-weekly news and the printed InterRidge annual newsletters

INTERDISCIPLINARY, TEAM-BASED APPROACH

InterRidge has teams of researchers (Working Groups) that meet regularly, and focus on current research priorities. Each of these Working Groups has a clear set of goals and a finite lifetime (approx. 5 years) in which to achieve them. Because of this dynamic process, individual Working Groups are continuously winding up and reporting on what they have achieved, just as new initiatives are being developed and proposed for the future.

Working Groups in 2008:

- Biogeochemical Interactions at Deep-Sea Vents
Chair: Nadine Le Bris (France)
- Deep Earth Sampling
Chair: Benoît Ildefonse (France)
- Long-Range Exploration
Chair: Colin Devey (Germany)
- Mantle Imaging
Chair: Nobukazu Seama (Japan)
- Monitoring and Observatories
Chairs: Javier Escartin (France) and Ricardo Santos (Portugal)
- Seafloor Mineralization
Chair: Maurice Tivey (USA)
- Ultra-slow Spreading Ridges
Chair: Jon Snow (USA)
- Vent Ecology
Chairs: Charles Fisher (USA) and Stephane Hourdez (France)



Tubeworms at the East Pacific Rise. Photo courtesy of Richard Lutz.