



What is Datzilla?

Datzilla is a web-based system used to report errors and track resolutions in NOAA data sets and data products. Once an error has been identified, reporting it is easy and provides invaluable information to Data Managers and System Developers. Most error reports take only a few minutes to submit by following on-line prompts. Datzilla is interactive, allowing Error Reporters and Data Managers to communicate with each other and to monitor the error reporting and resolution process from start to finish. Datzilla is designed for reporting errors in archived data or systems. Data corrections to recent observations should be handled through amended observation reports, etc.

Datzilla is a limited access system. Users are authorized on a case-by-case basis, and are limited to select NOAA personnel (local, regional and national level), Regional Climate Centers, and ARSCO-credentialed State Climatologists.

Why Datzilla?

Datzilla was developed to track the submission of errors in NOAA data sets by authorized personnel (e.g., NWS Climate Focal Points, climate community partners, etc). Use of Datzilla will result in continuing improvements in NOAA's data sets.

Accessing Datzilla

Datzilla is located on the web at:

<http://datzilla.srcc.lsu.edu>

From the Datzilla web page, you can request an account as an Error Reporter. In NWS field offices, such accounts should be established for one primary person (e.g., Climate Focal Point, DAPM, OPL). A regionally-established alias for each office will help keep track of these WFO contacts and route follow-up emails.

How to Use Datzilla

Overview

Datzilla allows error reports for a wide variety of NOAA data sets and products. Each error report submitted to the system is assigned to a Data Manager at NOAA's National Climatic Data Center (NCDC) or another climate services partner. Datzilla is used by the Data Manager to document remedial actions in response to information entered on the error report. All actions are visible to the Error Reporter and to the wider Datzilla user community. The Error Reporter also has the option of being notified of each action via email.

Users may also monitor the status of error reports using Datzilla's query interface. Queries can return simple or extended report lists as well as tabular or graphical summary reports. These latter options are useful for documenting report activity.

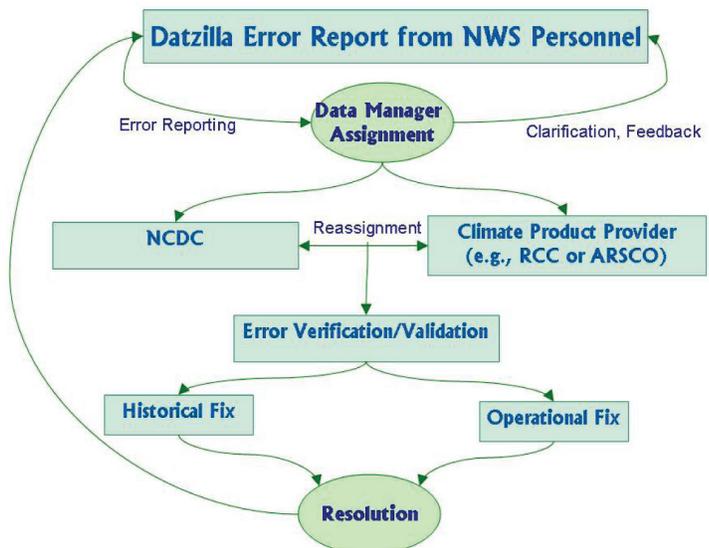
The figure to the right illustrates the general flow of an error report in the Datzilla system.

Creating an Error Report

Begin by entering your User ID (email address) and password and pressing the "Login" button. As a first step, you should confirm that the error has not already been entered into the Datzilla system. Redundant error reports waste time and will be marked as 'Duplicate' by the Data Manager. Use the Datzilla search page to find any error report, comment, or patch currently in the Datzilla system. It can be accessed from the Datzilla home page by selecting "Search existing error reports."

If the error is not already in the system, report it using the following procedure:

1. From Datzilla's home page, choose "Enter a new error report", or from the menu bar at the bottom of any page, choose "New".
2. Select a Source System and a Data-Product. This information will assign the report to the correct Data Manager and will allow them to reproduce and verify the error.



General flow diagram of the error tracking system.



Errors entered into the system are further defined by indicating a *Problem Area*, which describes the general nature of the error. A short error summary and a longer, more detailed error description also are required. Datzilla also prompts you to assign a level of severity and a priority to the report, and to attach supporting documentation to describe the error or to suggest 'fixes' to the problem. In the case of missing or erroneous data, the you should attach any relevant data files or original forms so NOAA archives can be appropriately updated.

Menu Keywords

Certain text areas and pull-down menus are identified by keywords. The keywords have specific meanings within Datzilla:

- ✓ **Source System:** The NOAA data system from which the data or product was originally obtained. Specifying a *Source System* helps determine if the error is related to bad data or a software problem.
- ✓ **Data-Product:** A *Data-Product* is the information (e.g., data set, display) that was produced from the *Source System*. You may click on the *Data-Product* link to obtain a description of available *Data-Products*.
- ✓ **Problem Area:** The *Problem Area* describes the general nature of the error and gives the Data Manager an idea of where to begin his investigation of the error report.
- ✓ **Browser and OS:** The Web Browser and the operating system of the computer on which the error occurred are important considerations. *Data-Products* may work correctly on one browser and incorrectly on another. If this is the case, the error report will be reassigned to a software developer. Default values are determined by information sent from your browser.
- ✓ **Severity:** *Severity* is the perceived impact that the error has on the reporter's job performance. The *Severity* link describes each severity level. If you are not sure what severity to report, accept the default value of 'normal'.
- ✓ **Assigned To:** This is an automated field used to assign the report to a Data Manager. Datzilla assigns the error based on the combination of *Source System* and *Data-Product*. A Data Manager may reassign the report to another Data Manager as necessary.
- ✓ **CC:** This is an optional field for use by Data Managers. Email addresses specified in this text area must belong to registered Datzilla users. Otherwise, an error message will be displayed.
- ✓ **Summary:** Summarize the error in under 60 characters. A good summary quickly and uniquely identifies an error

report. "Rainfall errors at Peoria, IL Jan. 1952." is an example of a useful summary.

✓ **Description:** This field is the place to provide a detailed description of the error. This assists the Data Manager in identifying the specific cause of the error and results in a more timely and accurate resolution of the error report. This section is critical and should contain the following:

- A detailed expansion of the *Summary*.
- Any relevant station IDs (COOP, WBAN).
- Specific dates if applicable.
- Identify any supporting source material that would help correct the error. After submission you can attach a digital copy if available.
- Describe the actual erroneous results versus the results that were expected had the error not existed.
- Provide step-by-step instructions on how to reproduce the error (if a system error).
- Note if the error could be reproduced on other browsers or operating systems.
- Any additional information that may help describe or clarify the error. The identification of a systematic error, for example, can fix hundreds of other, unreported errors.

Who is responsible for Datzilla?

Datzilla was developed and is maintained by NOAA's Southern Regional Climate Center, Dr. Kevin Robbins, Director.

Questions regarding the Datzilla system? Please contact krobbins@srcc.lsu.edu.

Data report review at NCDC is managed by Dr. Karsten Shein (Karsten.Shein@noaa.gov).

For more information:

<http://datzilla.srcc.lsu.edu>