



Interoperability Working Group

International standards describing astronomical data are a key towards realising the Astrophysical Virtual Observatory. Agreed data formats will also make it easier for European astronomers to share and reduce their observations by establishing common software standards. The OPTICON interoperability working group is helping to define a virtual observatory data format called VOTable. This activity has been called the most important step in astronomical data format standardisation for two decades.

The definition of agreed standards is vital for a global Virtual Observatory. The OPTICON interoperability Working Group works with all the international VO projects to establish a list of required standards and to build a consensus on their implementation. It also promotes the results of the AVO interoperability work to the community of European data managers. This will increase awareness about possible interoperability of existing and future European archives.

Key Objectives

- Circulate information amongst participants in Europe and amongst other international VO projects.
- Promote lessons learnt and discuss virtual observatory developments with a wider audience across Europe.
- Draft a roadmap for the development of standards for data exchange.

Our Mission

The OPTICON Infrastructure Coordination network brings together all of Western Europe's owners and operators of large observatories and data centres. Our goal is to identify opportunities where greater progress can be made by collaboration than by competition, and to take unified actions to achieve those agreed goals.

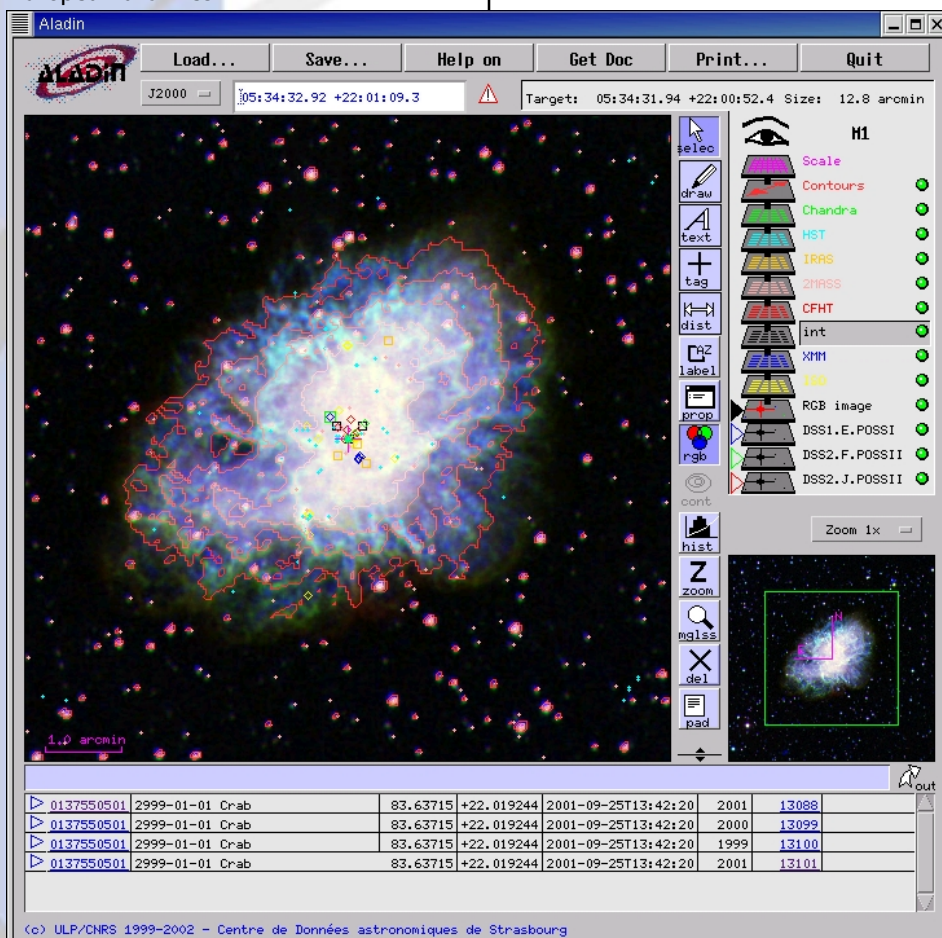
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OPTICON - The Optical
Infrared Coordination Network
for Astronomy



A virtual observation of the Crab Nebula made by combining several sets of archived data taken from ground based and space telescopes.

