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Subject: Re: Overlaying gridded winds on satellite data  
Posted by [K. Bowman](#) on Fri, 22 Jul 2005 16:56:00 GMT  
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In article <20050722.083335.706043324.21076@buckley.atm.ox.ac.uk>,  
"Christopher Lee" <cl@127.0.0.1> wrote:

This won't add anything of substance to this topic. ;-)

I think the terms westerly, northerly, etc. are pre-scientific usages that have persisted into scientific applications. From a physicist's point a view, air moving from north to south would have a velocity vector pointing southward. The average person, however, is more interested in where the wind is coming from than where is is going to (a northerly wind, being from the north, is cold, etc.)

To confuse things further, the oceanographic usage is the reverse of the meteorological usage. That is, an easterly current is toward the east. This does make sense, as a ship is more interested in where a current will carry it, than where the water came from.

The dictionary has both senses of the word (toward and east as well as from the east). To avoid confusion, I tend to use westward, rather than easterly.

Ken Bowman

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