Session 028: From Databases to End Users – Transforming the Myriad of Coastal Information and Data Sets into Wickedly Useful Tools
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Session Overview
Many data tools exist but few stand out for their user-friendly nature. This session took a closer look at critical steps in data tool development that lead to enhanced user experience and tool utility.

Session Highlights
Defining the goals and philosophy of data tools is important as they may vary by user group. Examples may include:
- Bridging the gap between data and information for the users
- Make the same data available multiple places and serve it up multiple ways, such as:
  - Tables
  - Maps
  - Photographs
  - Charts
- Helping users differentiate and/or prioritize information, including:
  - Land-use conservation approaches
  - Other data tools available according to user-described needs
  - Changes in runoff according to land-use
  - Historical ocean data
  - Oil properties

Many factors and approaches increase the utility of a data tool and enhance the users’ experiences. Some examples of best management practices include:
- Easy for users to access
- Attribute data sources
- Keep costs low for developers and users
- Determining who the target end-users are
  - Examples: Natural resource managers, emergency responders, educators, legislators, scientists
- Assessing the needs of end-users
- Beta-testing and incorporating feedback prior to final release of tool
- Making metadata available to end-users
- Develop tools for one specific use but envision other possible uses as well