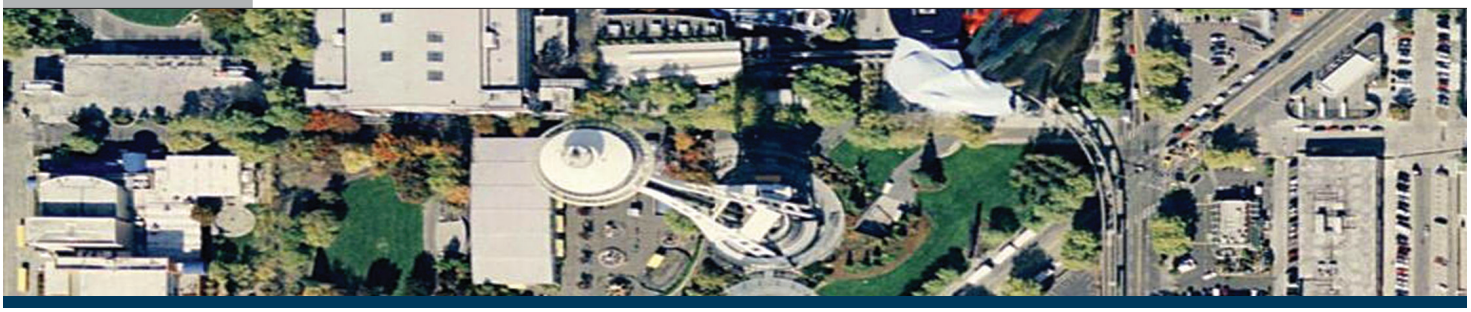
CASE STUDY

Product solution for: Environmental Protection Agency

DigitalGlobe™



An EPA-wide solution for obtaining and sharing Earth imagery

For many years, the EPA has used GIS for projects such as the Superfund site cleanup, wetland and pesticide analysis, air and water quality monitoring, endangered species protection, and emergency response. Aerial views provide a valuable visual backdrop that helps EPA staff set up projects, plan data collection, locate nearby facilities affected by chemical spills, and help others understand the problems being addressed.

High resolution imagery required

Until recently, finding and accessing image data have been bottlenecks. Like other imagery users, the EPA had to choose between two unsatisfactory solutions. Its staff could buy large datasets to use over a period of years, knowing that they would never use most of the data, or as needed, they could order smaller datasets that were still larger than they needed for a specific project, downloading them via FTP. In either case, EPA customers bought more data than necessary and wasted valuable time searching for the portion needed. Users had little assurance that they received the most recent or accurate images available.

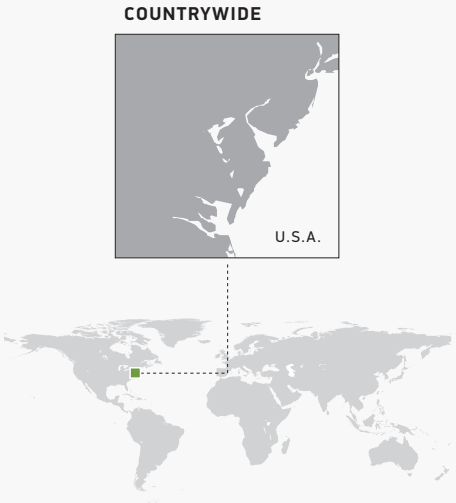
Constantly in need of the most current high-resolution data available for analyzing changing environments, EPA staff members turned to commercial web services to provide easy access to the most relevant imagery data available.

Eliminate bottlenecks

In 2003, EPA staff around the country began using DigitalGlobe's ImageConnect plug-ins for ArcGIS Desktop and ArcIMS to eliminate imagery bottlenecks. They purchased subscriptions to the service, which provided more Internet access to the petabyte of aerial and satellite imagery available on the company's servers than previous methods. This enabled the EPA users to quickly find, view, compare, and download the necessary data. In 2005, EPA's management in Washington, D.C. responded to employees' increasing demand for current high-resolution imagery by expanding DigitalGlobe data access to the entire agency. EPA employees could then integrate access within all of the ArcGIS desktop products, as well as inside EPA's Enviromapper ArcIMS web viewers.

Company information

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) leads the nation's environmental science, research, education, and assessment efforts. AA majority of EPA's staff are engineers, scientists, policy analysts, and legal staff who apply their technical skills in fulfilling EPA's mission of protecting human health and the environment.



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Environmental Protection Agency

Imagery solutions for unmet needs

EPA offices nationwide have been using ImageConnect to expedite their activities and decision making. For example, since the events of September 11, 2001 and Hurricane Katrina, emergency response has been a major EPA focus. Working in an office in a suburb of New Orleans, Louisiana, EPA staff and contractors needed access to pre- and post-Hurricane Katrina imagery as quickly as possible. From that office, EPA's Harvey Simon explains, "We needed high-resolution imagery, as well as good metadata both in the application and in separate files, to document conditions. It helps to be able to toggle back and forth to get a good picture. Also, this single solution eliminates duplicate procurement efforts."

Serving the mountain and plains states is EPA's Region 8, where Tony Selle leads a group of database managers focused on a Superfund program to protect and remediate our ecosystem. "We frequently need current high-resolution imagery in places we can't anticipate, particularly remote and rural areas," he says. "Our emergency response program gets a lot of tanker truck rollovers, for example. EPA has to make a determination of seriousness and magnitude based on a phoned report. Then, imagery provides pinpointed information."

"The fact that we can share access to the service agency-wide and between multiple ESRI applications makes things a lot easier and cheaper for us. Also, obtaining images can now be done in a few minutes for anywhere in the region."

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- Emergency planning
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- Flood management

Challenge

Accessing the most current high-resolution data available for analyzing the constantly changing environments they monitor.

Solution

EPA sought out the best satellite imagery tool to manage all of their monitoring and analysis activities and create efficiencies.

Results

DigitalGlobe's ImageConnect allowed EPA to access and share current high-resolution imagery and metadata across agencies and applications.

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