



Mind the Gap: furthering the development of EU-US collaboration in marine geoscience.

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There is a large and ever increasing amount of marine geological and geophysical data available throughout Europe, the USA and beyond. The challenges associated with the acquisition of this data mean that the cost of collecting it is very high and there is therefore a need to maximise the potential re-use of this data wherever possible. Facilitating this is becoming an increasingly important aspect of marine geosciences data management as the need for marine data increases at a time when the financial resources for data acquisition are being dramatically reduced.

A significant barrier to the re-use of marine geoscience data is the variety of different formats, standards, vocabularies etc which have been used by the various organisations engaged with the collection and management of marine geosciences data at a regional, national and international scale. This is also proving to be a barrier to the development of interoperability with other data types at a time when there is a need to develop a more holistic approach to marine research.

These challenges are currently being addressed within Europe by a number of EU funded initiatives, the objectives of which are an improvement in the discovery and access to marine data. The Geo-Seas project is just one of these initiatives, the focus of which is the development of an e-infrastructure for the delivery of standardised marine geological and geophysical data across Europe. The project is developing this e-infrastructure by adopting and adapting the methodologies of the SeaDataNet project which currently provides an e-infrastructure for the management of oceanographic data. This re-use of the existing technologies has lead to the development a joint multidisciplinary e-infrastructure for the delivery of both geoscientific and oceanographic data.

In order to expand these initiatives further and bridge the gap between these European projects and those being undertaken by colleagues in both the US and elsewhere a number of collaborative relationships have been developed. To further these growing collaborative relationships a new EU initiative has recently been proposed in parallel with the relevant funding agencies in the USA and Australia with the objective of developing common standards and methodologies which will allow the development of a common multidisciplinary approach to marine science on an international scale.