

Roles and Responsibilities for Observing, Collection, and Distribution Systems: A Commercial Viewpoint

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ABSTRACT

Mr. Jones submitted three successful proposals to NASA while at working at NBC4 television in Washington D.C. Those projects resulted in innovative developments (WeatherNet4 and New Weather Set) and a significant increase in “non-traditional” imagery exposure to the public. These accomplishments contributed significantly to NBC4 market dominance, opened up the public’s eyes to new and interesting data, and resulted in partnerships with NASA, NOAA, and FEMA. This experience lead to the formation of a new company—StormCenter.com, Inc. That company is a founding member of the Earth Science Information Partner Federation (ESIP). The objective of ESIP is to increase public awareness of environmental information; foster partnerships between government agencies, universities, non-profit organizations, and businesses; and make earth science information available to a broader community.

Since September 11, 2001 everything has changed. The future is in providing environmental information (with weather as a key part). All government agencies will need to focus on how their missions keep Americans safe. This will increase the need to have standardized formats and quality control for all observed, collected and disseminated information. The government and private sectors have distinct roles to plan in this regard. The absolute responsibility for observing, collecting, and disseminating information must remain with each government agency. Private sector data should augment this data stream if quality measures are met. High levels of quality assurance must exist to ensure that the data collected is consistent in its quality and prepared for distribution to the private sector and public. The private sector’s role is to add value to available data and focus on creating products and services to serve all markets (including the government). The private sector should work with government agencies as partners. The establishment of public/private partnerships with critical government agencies should be accelerated. The process could be enhanced by identifying a common approach to working with the private sector.