The Deepwater Horizon (DWH) disaster was the largest marine oil spill in US history. The spill required unprecedented engagement and collaboration with scientists across multiple disciplines in government, academia, and industry. Although this spurred the rapid advancement of valuable new scientific knowledge and tools, it also exposed weaknesses in the system of information dissemination and exchange among the scientists from those three sectors. As we draw on the tragedy of DWH to inform our preparation for future oil spills, more effective rapid exchange of scientific information and ideas is clearly an imperative.

**GOALS**

We seek to understand the obstacles to and success cases of effective scientific collaboration during environmental crises such as large oil spills.

We will design new tools, protocols, and practices - and amplify existing successful ones - that enable rapid information exchange between government agency responders and non-governmental scientists from multiple relevant disciplines. These solutions will be applicable in other complex disaster response contexts beyond marine oil spills, such as earthquakes, tsunamis, and public health crises.
The one-year project (July 2014-2015) includes three phases. In phase 1 (Design Ethnography), we conducted over 100 in-depth interviews with academics, agency scientists, decisionmakers, and journalists to understand key barriers and identify opportunities. In phase 2 was Concept Generation & Refinement, we proposed a wide set of ideas to overcome barriers to and enable collaboration. In Phase 3 (Prototyping), we are testing 3 possible solution tools and strategies among decisionmakers and user groups, with the assistance of the SPERR Advisory Teams. In April-July 2015, we will refine our final proposed solution, and work to ensure its uptake, implementation and longevity with our agency, academic, and industry partners.

If you are working on similar projects to increase collaboration during disaster response, we want to know!

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