

ITS Resource Center Home

Hurricane Katrina and Other Natural Disasters

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First, a few general sites to use in any search for disaster-related resources, and then examples of what you might come up with if you searched for a particular event and GIS. Most of the following sites will have resources for multiple events; these are examples to give you ideas, not exhaustive listings.

General Disaster Response Resources

ESRI provides a [Disaster Response](#) web site for information on all types of disasters -- wildfires, earthquakes, flooding, etc. This includes continuously-updated map viewers and extensive resource pages.

Google's [Crisis Response](#) project works with government agencies, NGOs and other organizations to provide information in the case of [natural disasters](#) and to assist with [emergency responses](#) (the latter page includes case studies).

[Crisis Commons](#) "seeks to advance and support the use of open data and volunteer technology communities to catalyze innovation in crisis management and global development." They sponsor crisis camps and wikis to enable volunteers to assist in disaster response.

[Humanitarian Open Street Map Team](#) "acts as a bridge between the traditional Humanitarian Responders and the [OpenStreetMap Community](#)... We believe that free geodata can help save and improve lives in times of political crisis and natural disasters."

You can expect that any large natural event such as a hurricane or earthquake will be covered by relevant government agencies such as [NOAA](#), [FEMA](#), [NASA](#), [USGS](#), etc. Major newspapers are also often a good source of news and interactive media; bloggers can also provide lists of resources.

[Infoplease](#) can be a useful starting point for general information about disasters, natural and man-made.

Hurricane Katrina (2005)

Not originally focused on hurricanes, the [Greater New Orleans Community Data Center](#) now includes updates for Katrina in addition to their extensive collection of mapped census data.

The Times-Picayune has a detailed animation of the hour-by-hour [Flooding of New Orleans](#) (you will need Flash on your computer to view this).

Find news, maps and images in the [Hurricane Digital Memory Bank](#).

The Perry-Castañeda Library Map Collection (UT/Austin) has developed an extensive clearinghouse of [Katrina related images and maps](#).

The New York Times's own interactive multimedia on the [Impact of Hurricane Katrina](#) features several maps prepared with GIS.

Government resources include [NASA archives](#) and [NOAA archives](#).

Joplin, MO Tornado (2011)

[Washington University in St Louis](#) developed an interesting [damage assessment tool](#) using satellite imagery to illustrate the extent of the disaster. This site includes the address of web services which can be incorporated into other sites or mapping tools as well.

You can see an example of rapid development for rapid response at the [Joplin GIS site](#), hosted by [The Center for Advanced Public Safety](#) of the University of Alabama.

Japan Earthquake, Tsunami, Nuclear Crisis (2011)

[Japan Quake Map](#) shows an amazing time-lapse sequence of earthquakes beginning on March 11, 2011, which really gives a sense of the aftershocks.

You can browse this extensive collection of [visualizations](#) provided by the [On the Cutting Edge](#) workshops of the [Science, Education and Research Center](#) at Carleton.

[GIS Lounge](#) maintains a [Sendai Earthquake and Tsunami Mapping Response](#) page which includes map viewers and data portals.

[The GIS Doctor](#) provided an initial listing of GIS resources related to the quake.

Gulf of Mexico Oil Spill (2010)

Google's [Crisis Response](#) project maintains a page on the [Gulf of Mexico 2010 Oil Spill](#), which includes a multi-layered map, KML files for Google Earth, an index of map and data sites, news and help resources, and a playlist of videos of the spill.

Independent researchers often develop useful tools, such as [How Big is the Gulf Oil Spill?](#)

[Gulf County, Florida](#) has a nice page of GIS resources.

[Data Basin](#) has a nicely laid-out [resource page](#) with links to datasets and maps.

Haiti Earthquake (2010)

In response to the earthquake which struck Haiti on Jan 12th 2010, the [Harvard Center for Geographic Analysis](#) launched this [web portal](#) to provide GIS datasets for relief and reconstruction efforts.

The wiki [Crisis Commons](#) has a list of [data and map repositories](#) (scroll down page to see these).

Southeast Asia Tsunami (2004)

[Reefbase](#) (a global information system for coral reefs) has an extensive [map viewer](#) with downloadable datasets.

[Directions Magazine](#) had a good collection of [articles and resources](#) related to the global response to the tsunami.

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