Creating an Effective Volunteer Monitoring Database

Data management techniques and lessons learned

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So you want to build a database…

What the customer wanted

How the customer described it

How the developer understood it

What the customer needed
Take a step back

Plan your database

Implement your plan

Create the database

Release the database
ALLARM’s timeline

- June 2010: Shale gas program launched
- January – July 2012: Developed database proposal
- October 2012: Awarded $65K grant to develop database
- October 2012: Rejected offer, won $5K for design instead
- 2013: Designed database for proposal
- September 2014: Created revised database proposal
- January 2015: Won $20K to develop database (citisci.org)
Planning your database

• What is the state of your data and program?
• Talk to experienced stakeholders
Planning your database

- What functionality do you want, and what do you need?
- What tools need to be built, what can be leveraged?
Implementing your plan

• Communication among the teams is key
• Integrate data cleaning into your plan
Creating the database

• What are your quality assurance measures?
• Lay the groundwork for rolling out the database
Creating the database

- What are your quality assurance measures?
- Lay the groundwork for rolling out the database
Releasing your database

- In-person trainings are ideal
- Consider a slow rollout/testing
Where are we now

- Creating online tutorial for all monitors to use
- Fixing bugs and uploading remaining data
Lessons learned

• Use current knowledge and experience
• Communicate all needs clearly throughout team
• Start planning for your launch early
Questions?

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