SDSC Team Supports Tsunami Reconnaissance Data Collection

Information to be utilized to do research on this unique event, to help rebuild the area and prepare for future natural disasters

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More than 20 NSF-funded scientific reconnaissance teams went to work in Asia capturing data from the 2004 Tsunami - the deadliest in recorded history. Information collected will be preserved, curated and used by researchers to better understand the broad impact of tsunamis on communities, buildings, ecology and people.

The research is being led by SDSC's Network for Earthquake Engineering Simulation (NEES) Cyberinfrastructure Center (NEESit) team. This group operates and supports an extensive central information technology infrastructure for earthquake scientists and researchers.

"The teams are working with regional partners to gather and translate data in support of research projects aimed at better understanding the impact of this unique event." said Anke Kamrath, director of NEESit. "We're looking forward to capturing and preserving these findings to support research endeavors on this tsunami which may continue for decades or even centuries from now."

More than 20 different teams were deployed from the NSF looking at the many different types of impact the tsunami had on the world. Six of the teams focused on collecting social, environmental, geological and ecological data and spent several months in the region. The various foci of these teams is detailed below:

Team 1 collected social data from survivors along the Andaman coast in Thailand - one of the most severely hit areas - to understand human behavior and responses to the recent Tsunami.
Team 2 focused on social data on the recovery process in Southern Thailand. This data will be used in models to test the hypothesis of coupling between physical and social systems and how this relates to tourism.
Team 3 studied government and non-government responses to body recovery, identification and disposal of deceased victims and how this compares to traditional Western methods.
Team 4 collected census data, local government records and household interviews and remote sensing data such as satellite images. They will also address the gaps in scientific research on social and physical vulnerability assessments.
Team 5 studied and provided insight into ecosystem degradation, remote sensing as a research tool and environmental conservation as a mitigation strategy.
Team 6 collected a variety of data such as tsunami deposits, paleo-tsunami data, sedimentology data, fishing records, interviews and plans for recovery.

Teams were comprised of researchers from University of Southern California, University of Hawaii at Manoa, University of Albany, Millersville University, Texas A&M, University of North Carolina, University of Pennsylvania and the University of Oregon. The data from these teams will be made publicly available through the NEES tsunami data repository - targeted for deployment at tsunami.nees.org in 2006.

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