

# Hurricane Katrina



**goldsystems**  
INNOVATION THROUGH TECHNOLOGY

In the immediate aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, the New Orleans region was flooded. Rescue and relief efforts were hindered by both high and contaminated water. Gold Systems was able to work quickly and build an unlikely tool to aid relief efforts.

CHALLENGE

## Challenge

The Environmental Protection Agency needed to work quickly to assess the flood waters and their potential impact upon the health of both those who were stranded by the storm and those involved in the rescue efforts. This information would need to be thoroughly checked for errors and then provided to the rescue teams and the media in a format that was easy to understand and utilize.



APPROACH

## Approach

In order to meet this challenge it was clear that a single central database must be used to store this data. Additionally, there needed to be a way for those collecting the samples in the field to get the monitoring results into the database as quickly and accurately as possible. With no existing database created specifically for this purpose, the decision was made to record and publish the data from the EPA's national water quality database. The mechanism chosen to load the data was the Web-Based STORET Import Module (WebSIM) developed by Gold Systems. Additionally, a staging area was needed where the data could be reviewed and checked for accuracy before being made available to the public through the national STORET web-site.

Working with the EPA, Gold Systems was able to architect and deploy a solution within 24 hours of being notified of the situation. Gold System stood up a secure copy of the national STORET database, WebSIM, and a data warehouse that would allow the data providers to quickly submit, track, and QC these records. Each evening, Gold Systems provided an updated copy of the entire database to the National Computing Center. There it was prepared for release via the EPA's mapping tools allowing users to identify the contaminated water areas. As a participant in this emergency effort, Gold Systems donated the hardware, software, and bandwidth used to host this solution.

OUTCOME

## Outcome

Due in large part to the flexibility, adaptability, and rapid response of the Gold Systems team, water quality data was able to be processed, validated, and provided to those who needed it, often within 24 hours of being collected. The EPA's map

interface to this data allowed those leading the rescue efforts to assess risk and set protocols as the efforts continued and until the flood waters eventually receded.