



NATIONAL
ESTUARINE
RESEARCH
RESERVE
SYSTEM



UNIVERSITY
of NEW HAMPSHIRE



NATIONAL ESTUARINE RESEARCH RESERVE SYSTEM

Research Funding Program Implementation and Impact Evaluation

June, 2010
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- **“Performance measurement...may be a necessary medicine for many agencies and organizations, but its use needs to be surrounded by bold-face cautions about potential harmful side effects.”**
- **Feller, I. 2002. American Journal of Evaluation**





- **“All indicators are flawed, whether qualitative or quantitative...What matters is not finding the perfect indicator, but settling upon a consistent and intelligent method of assessing your output results, and then tracking your trajectory with rigor.”**

- **Collins 2005. Good to Great and the Social Sectors (a monograph to accompany “Good to Great”)**





- **“I’m not having fun and I’m going to quit.”**
- **Jonah Matso, 2009**





**The Cooperative Institute for
Coastal and Estuarine
Environmental Technology
(CICEET)**

**The NERRS Science
Collaborative**





- **How does a funding organization best use its influence to foster collaboration?**

- **If we're successful in fostering more collaboration...will it lead to more science providing a service to society in the near-term?**





- **Evaluating the program as a whole**
- **Evaluating impact of various projects**
- **Evaluating our evaluation**





Specific
Actionable
Time-limited
Measurable
Relevant





research-impact-8.nvp - NVivo

File Edit View Go Project Links Code Media Format Tools Window Help

Look for: Search In Tree Nodes Find Now Clear Options X

Nodes

- Free Nodes
- Tree Nodes
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Sources

Nodes

Sets

Queries

Models

Links

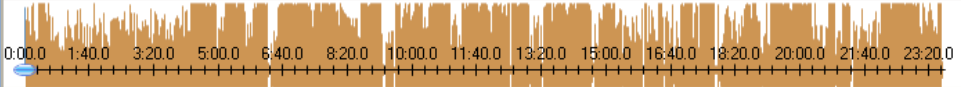
Classifications

Folders

Tree Nodes

Name	
+	Causal conditions
+	How increase impact
-	Intervening Conditions
o	academic context often not helpful to application goals
o	ease of use is a concern
o	expense of tech is a concern
o	fitting into existing datasets is important for usage
o	funding from other sources was instrumental in success
o	high issue visibility increases application
o	idea behind tool can have benefit even if tool doesn't work
o	interactions with users increase application
o	lack of data availability can hinder use of tools
o	lack of success precedent hinders application
o	lots of competition in technology sector
o	maintenance requirements
o	perception that proof of concept or development shouldn't link to users
o	perception that technical matter is not suitable for users
o	perception that tool's ability to solve problems is key to application
o	problems with industrial partners
o	research timelines and budgets often mismatched with problem being address
o	understanding of users evolved during project
o	understanding regulators is critical for application
o	user chain is multiple and complex
+	What happened

hutchins-user-audio



	Timespan	Content
24	12:03.4 - 12:36.5	EH: Other communications existed also. They actually installed some equipment at one site and got into trouble with the town. They didn't have permission from the town. They proceeded without permission, which was not good. They were told to disconnect their stuff and beat it. And I was not in the loop until after that happened. That was a site in Maine.
25	12:36.5 - 13:01.7	EH: At another site, where they did some of their experiments, in Massachusetts down in Cape Cod...they were not keeping the town in a proper loop with their equipment that was on a town culvert down there, and it was raising more than some eyebrows from the town officials and the state officials, saying "What's going on here?" So, the communication was kind of poor on this across the board.
26	13:01.7 - 13:17.3	CT: In hindsight, is there anything that CICEET could have done differently to increase the application?
27	13:17.3 - 13:40.1	EH: I'm tempted to say the answer is yes, and I'm trying to think of what it would be. I think forcing a stronger collaboration between the PI and the potential end users.
28	13:40.2 - 13:56.3	EH: The process allowed for them to rapidly make it look like there was a bunch of end users, but without them being as actively involved in the project as may be prudent.
29	13:56.3 - 14:04.2	CT: [clarification]
30	14:02.6 - 14:33.7	EH: For example, "Hey, we're putting this project together, is it ok if we put you down as an end user?" And then the process...all it required was "Hey, did the end user review





- **Logic models**
- **Qualitative interviews**
- **NVIVO for analysis**
- **Performance metrics**
- **Ability to implement eval plan**





From Adam to Eve

- **Less time chasing the perfect indicator**
- **Agree on raison d'être**
- **Each component customizes**





- Collaboration can lead to increased linking of science to decision making



- **Our review system is an appropriate approach**



- Applicants are approaching collaborative processes with sufficient rigor



- *When collaborative processes are done poorly, you can actually make matters worse.*

