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Web-based software as a service for coastal and marine spatial planning

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In the last decade, scientists, resource managers and technologists have made great strides in the development and implementation of online tools that promote participation, science-based decisions and transparency. It is now well recognized that simple, easy-to-use, web-based applications can help stakeholders without a science or technical background, develop spatial plans that are grounded in peer-reviewed research. This talk underscores the importance of combining modeling approaches (which may be somewhat cryptic to the average stakeholder) with geodesign, a process of iterative sketching (drawing) and analysis. Using a web-based tool called SeaSketch (www.seasketch.org), in combination with other popular planning tools such as Marxan and Marine InVEST, users may generate and explore virtually any spatial plan and estimate the potential consequences of that plan. I will argue that user-friendly geodesign tools lower the technical threshold to participatory planning. Finally, I will emphasize the importance of gathering stakeholder input by way of unstructured, map-based discussion forums. When it comes to understanding the relative merits of any planning scenario, the discussions and debate around any given scenario has a great deal of importance, particularly to stakeholders and the final decision-makers. I will demonstrate how map-based discussion forums in SeaSketch facilitated a highly successful marine spatial planning exercise in Barbuda.

Biography

Will McClintock has a PhD in Ecology, Evolution and Marine biology from the University of California Santa Barbara. His lab of software engineers and marine spatial planners has supported coastal and marine planning initiatives in the US, UK, Canada, New Zealand, Cook Islands, Barbuda, Montserrat, Curaçao, and the Galapagos Islands.

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