



# NEWS

## U.S. Department of the Interior

Office of the Secretary  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
August 4, 2008

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### Secretary Kempthorne Showcases Free Public Availability of Landsat Satellite Image Archive at ESRI Conference

SAN DIEGO, CA -- Secretary of the Interior Dirk Kempthorne announced at the ongoing ESRI Conference that his direction to the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) to make its 35-year Landsat satellite image archive available over the Internet for free marks the commitment of the department to breaking down information barriers.

"With the click of a mouse, scientists, government officials and land managers will be able to see the changes in the earth's landscape at any point in the past three and a half decades," he told the conference on Saturday. Some 14,500 participants are gathered this week in San Diego for the ESRI conference.

"This is a great contribution," said ESRI President Jack Dangermond. "It will open up new avenues for geographic understanding around the globe. It represents the democratization of digital data and empowers people everywhere with rich information."

The USGS, an Interior agency, expects to have the full archive online by February 2009. The Department of the Interior has the responsibility for coordinating the geospatial activities of the entire federal government through the Federal Geographic Data Committee.

"As Secretary of the Interior, I have made breaking down barriers and building bridges a high priority of the department," Kempthorne said. "We are fully committed to this task."

The Landsat archive is an unequalled 35-year record of the Earth's surface that is valuable for a broad range of uses from climate change science to forest management to emergency response. As an example of uses for the archive, Kempthorne showed a Landsat image of Las Vegas in 1973 compared with an image from 2000. The juxtaposition of the images provided a dramatic picture of the explosive population growth and the rapid spread of the city into the surrounding desert ecosystems.

"Data is the power in the engine of innovation," said geographer Roger Tomlinson, an emcee at the ESRI conference known as the "father of GIS."

A technical announcement of the Landsat archive's availability can be found at [http://landsat.usgs.gov/images/squares/USGS\\_Landsat\\_Imagery\\_Release.pdf](http://landsat.usgs.gov/images/squares/USGS_Landsat_Imagery_Release.pdf)



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