The U.S. Educational Seismology Network

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Over the past five years, IRIS and its member institutions have contributed to a growing movement that seeks to introduce students to geophysical study of the Earth through the deployment of seismological sensors in educational settings. These science outreach programs promote the use of seismographs and seismic data to improve scientific literacy, spark student interest in scientific research, increase their understanding of natural hazards, and to actively engage them in real-world scientific research. Following community initiation and involvement, IRIS has taken the lead in organizing and energizing this new approach to earth science education—the U.S. Educational Seismology Network, or USESN.

The mission of the USESN is to promote the use of seismographs and seismic data for science education. This project has emerged out of several independent educational seismology initiatives, whose collective efforts have resulted in the development of a 300+ station national school seismograph network. The USESN effort is envisioned to include support for a full range of educational seismograph options, from display-oriented, stand-alone systems to networked broadband instruments. USESN seeks to provide an organizational structure for the coordination of the numerous educational seismology activities that are developing across the country. The primary goals of the USESN initiative are to: (1) promote the installation and operation of educational seismographs and effective use of seismic data; (2) disseminate high-quality curricular materials and educational services that promote the use of seismology in science education; and (3) provide an organizational framework for coordination and advocacy of educational seismology across the country. A 2003 national workshop led to a prioritization of efforts in curriculum development, professional development, resolution of technical issues, and organizational structure. Additional information about the USESN initiative can be found at http://www.indiana.edu/~usesn/ and http://www.iris.edu/.

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