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**Government geoscience in managing for  
impact and opportunity**

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Since before confederation until quite recently, the Geological Survey of Canada (GSC) emphasized the provision of maps and related products to promote the exploration and discovery of Canada's vast wealth of mineral and energy resources. This has served Atlantic Canada and the nation well and helped establish significant mining districts and assisted in opening up the frontiers to energy exploration. However, the GSC, like all federal science and technology organizations, is undergoing a major paradigm shift. The reasons for this shift are complicated, but reflect the interplay between the changing nature of the federation, the role of government science, local, regional and global economic, social and environmental dynamics strongly imprinted by the Information Age revolution – the “knowledge economy”. From the government's perspective, it is increasingly important to see measurable returns from its investment in science and demonstrable impact on important “quality of life” issues. For the GSC this means that

it is no longer sufficient to continue providing “map” coverage and ancillary products to a limited “professional” audience. These products and audience will continue to be important, but the GSC has to broaden its market and work toward ensuring that its work has the intended outcome. This requires a fundamentally different approach to where, how, why and with whom the GSC works. Key elements include:

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- Re-definition of “partnerships” in science delivery with the provinces and territories, within the framework of the Intergovernmental Geoscience Accord, as well as with academic/industry organizations.
- Broader utility of geoscience data and information through comprehensive and efficient access on-line to a geoscience knowledge store fully integrated with provinces and territories.
- Rationalizing geoscience data collection – collect once-use many – by a multitude of traditional and new clients for decision support
- Development of a “socio-geoscience” agenda for Canada – the deployment of geoscience expertise in concert with other instruments, to address critical issues facing Canada – such as community development in the North; rural development elsewhere in Canada; security of gas supply; Canadians at risk through water related issues; at risk through environmental quality issues etc.

This talk will review these developments with a focus on what some of the opportunities and implications may be for Atlantic Canada.