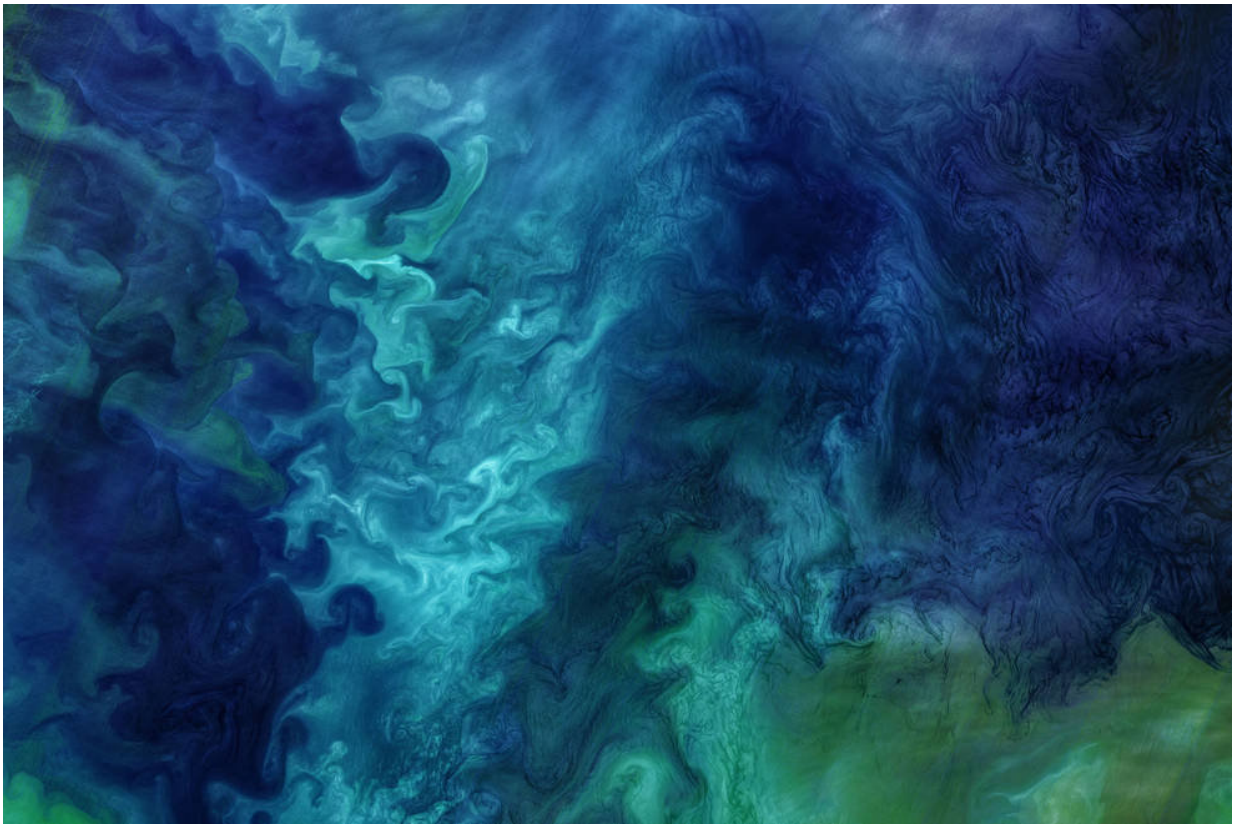
NASA debuts online toolkit to promote commercial use of satellite data

July 19 2018



Through its constellation of Earth observation satellites, NASA collects petabytes of data each year, including this image of the Chukchi Sea acquired on June 18, 2018, by the Operational Land Imager (OLI) on the Landsat 8 satellite. Thanks to a new Remote Sensing Toolkit created by NASA's Technology Transfer program, users will now be able to find, analyze and utilize the most relevant remote sensing data for their research, business projects or conservation efforts. Credit: NASA/U. S. Geological Survey/Norman Kuring/Kathryn Hansen

While NASA's policy of free and open remote-sensing data has long benefited the scientific community, other government agencies and nonprofit organizations, it has significant untapped potential for commercialization. NASA's Technology Transfer program has created an online resource to promote commercial use of this data and the software tools needed to work with it.

With the Remote Sensing Toolkit, users will now be able to find, analyze and utilize the most relevant data for their research, business projects or conservation efforts. The toolkit provides a simple system that quickly identifies relevant sources based on user input. The toolkit will help users search for data, as well as ready-to-use tools and code to build new tools.

"This new tool makes finding and using NASA satellite data easier than ever before, and we hope it sparks innovation among the entrepreneurial community and leads to further commercialization of NASA technology and benefits people across the world," said Daniel Lockney, NASA's Technology Transfer program executive. "Our mission to bring NASA technology down to Earth is expanding with the release of this remote sensing toolkit."

Through its constellation of Earth observation satellites, NASA collects petabytes of data each year. The variety of open source tools created to access, analyze and utilize the data from these satellites is familiar to millions of science users, but accessing and utilizing this data remains daunting for many potential commercial users.

For example, NASA's remote-sensing data and tools are spread out across dozens of sites. The NASA Technology Transfer program reviewed more than 50 websites and found that no source provided a comprehensive collection of information or a single access point to begin a search.

While the Remote Sensing Toolkit is new, using NASA satellite data to create commercial products isn't.

"Over the years, many organizations around the world have found innovative ways to turn NASA satellite data into beneficial information products here on Earth," said Kevin Murphy of NASA's Earth Science Division in Washington. "Remote Sensing Toolkit will help grow the number of users who put NASA's free and open data archive to work for people."

NASA Spinoff LandViewer, a subscription-based software, relies on a variety of data, including NASA satellite data, to provide daily updates on the state of corn vegetation. The result is a prediction of future corn production on national, state and county scales.

The Technology Transfer program will host a tutorial of Remote Sensing Toolkit. To participate, potential users should sign up to be notified of future webinars.

NASA's Technology Transfer program, managed by the agency's Space Technology Mission Directorate, ensures technologies developed for missions in exploration and discovery are broadly available to the public, maximizing the benefit to the nation.

More information: For more information about the Remote Sensing Toolkit and NASA's Technology Transfer program, visit: technology.nasa.gov/

Provided by NASA

Citation: NASA debuts online toolkit to promote commercial use of satellite data (2018, July 19)