Rumblings

...what's new in educational seismology

June 2009

Plan for Summer!

Summer is the most dangerous time for an educational seismometer!

If your seismometer will remain assembled over the summer, please prepare a sign for cleaning staff instructing them not to remove the cover for dusting or otherwise move the instrument.

If you are planning to pack the instrument up for storage, wrap the knife edge with tape or a piece of protective foam. Any nicks on the knife edge will significantly impact the quality of the instrument's recording.

New on the Web

The Seismographs in Schools Website has a new forum. The goal of the new discussion forum is to increase communication within the educational seismology community and to enable and encourage information and expertise to be shared among community members. Another positive change by switching from the listserv to a forum- the content will be preserved, providing users the ability to search and find answers to questions.

Registering your station is all you need to participate in the forum! The station code and password for the main website also provide access to post to the forums.

Our First Issue!

Welcome to the first issue of our monthly newsletter! We hope to offer technical help, school highlights, teaching tips, etc. Have a great summer and look for our back to school issue in August!

School Spotlight

The 44th annual BT Young Scientist and Technology Exhibition, held January 2009, featured over 1,100 students presenting 500 projects. Students came from each of the 32 counties in Ireland, 201 different schools, representing the future of science, engineering, mathematics and technology. In the 'Chemical, Physical & Mathematical Sciences' category there were 98 projects presented.

Denis Patterson and Shane Curry, part of the Seismology in Schools (Seismeolaíocht sa Scoil) Pilot Program, presented a project on "Seismic Activity in the British Isles and the Wider World". Their study explored the recording potential of the SEP seismometer, and a comparison and analysis of teleseism recordings, man-made noise, and the microseism.

Two awards were received: "International Year of Planet Award" and first prize in the "Category Award: Chemical, Physical, and Mathematical Sciences". Congratulations!

Do you have a story to share? Please contact us, you could be our next feature!

IRIS Seismographs in Schools Program
http://www.iris.edu/hq/sis

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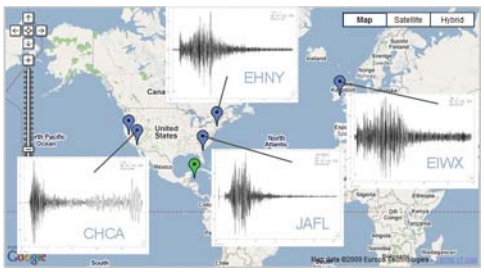
Teachable Moments

On April 6th a magnitude 6.3 earthquake hit Central Italy. More than 179 people died and 50,000 were left homeless. The narrow streets of the historic center L'Aquila were filled with rubble.

On May 28th a magnitude 7.3 earthquake struck offshore Honduras. This earthquake killed at least six people, injured at least 40, damaged homes and caused damage in neighboring Guatemala.



Check out the powerpoint files on the IRIS Seismographs in Schools website under "Teachable Moments".

We intend to create this type of resource for large earthquakes throughout the school year. In order to make the most helpful resource possible, we would like your thoughts and input regarding the materials prepared for this earthquake.

Please send your feedback on this resource to sishelp@iris.edu.

Need Help?

Contact Us! sishelp@iris.edu

Seismometer Tips

There are two types of damping available on the AS-1 seismometers. The first AS-1 seismometers were supplied with an oil based damping system. However, in cases where the instrument is exposed to temperature changes, you may benefit from a switch to magnetic damping. Contact sishelp@iris.edu for the replacement parts for magnetic damping.

When an AS-1 seismometer doesn't have enough damping, the P wave arrival from an earthquake will still be "ringing" when the S wave arrives and you will not be able to distinguish the two wave types. If your system has too much damping your earthquakes will seem very weak or you won't see any earthquakes at all. What is "properly" damped? There are two videos on the IRIS Seismograph in Schools web page (under "FAQ" or frequently asked questions) to help you. The first video walks you through the process of setting the damping correctly. The second video helps you troubleshoot common problems with damping. Take a moment to watch these videos and adjust your damping. You'll be glad you did!

The John C. Lahr Educational Seismology Fund

The Lahr family and Incorporated Research Institutions for Seismology (IRIS) are pleased to announce the establishment of a fund to support Seismographs in Schools program. In the last several years of his life, John Lahr became very involved in supporting this program.

This fund will provide funding toward seismographs and teacher training through the SIS program. For more information see the IRIS Seismographs in Schools website at www.iris.edu/hq/sis. Thank you, John, for all that you have done for our teachers!