Running the River -
Reading and Responding to End Users.

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Abstract

Whitewater rapids are classified by river runners based on how dangerous and exciting they are. Standard river classes are Class 1 through Class 5. As the water gets more turbulent, the need for the rafter or paddler to "read the water" increases. In Class 1 water, it's easy to just paddle downstream in the flat water. In Class 2 water, the paddler needs to do simple maneuvers, for example to avoid taking a canoe broadside down a rapid.   In Class 3, paddlers need to read the water, knowing where the rocks are beneath the surface and where the current will carry them through. In Class 4 and 5, reading the water is even more important as the water becomes more dangerous, and the safe choices are fewer.

Ask any river guide, and he or she will tell you that while the river can pose dangers, the greatest danger comes from out-of-control paddlers who don't adhere to the safety rules.

If we think of the ISSO (or system or program manager) as our river guide, responsible for getting us all safely down the river, then the ISSO needs to "read the user" to determine how dangerous each user is to the system, and what is the best way to effectively communicate with that user.

This session will categorize computer users into classes based on their potential to adversely impact the organization's mission, and provide tips for recognizing concerns and communicating vital safety information to the various types of computer users.