Interview Notes (no recording equipment available)

Subject 1: Forecaster at energy company

Q: What is your job position:

A: Meteorological forecaster for \_\_\_\_ (energy) company.

Q: What kind of decisions do you make based on natural hazard information?

A: He doesn’t make weather-related decisions. Rather, he gets the data from the weather service they subscribe to. He makes sure the data is appropriate. They mostly use temperature, wind, solar.

Q: Do you provide any uncertainty information?

A: No. They look at, for example, a 2-week temperature forecast. They provide a single number for all that. People generally understand that there’s more uncertainty as you go forward in time. They don’t distinguish uncertainty for future forecasts.

Q: What format do the decision-makers receive the information?

A: The temperature information can be a number that gets inserted into a spreadsheet. It could be a number that gets input into a model for demand forecast (which is automated decision-making). It could be in terms of a graph for energy traders, who make decisions based on many other factors, such as supply and demand. There is only one number in the graph. The demand forecasts are all automated so there aren’t any people making decisions. The energy traders make trades based on many factors such as supply and demand so it’s not purely weather-based decisions. We don’t typically think in terms of uncertainty but instead in accuracy. We base things on climatology because we know that forecasts are unreliable beyond 10 days or 2 weeks. We have to forecast energy use for the next two years. Forecasts aren’t good that far in advance, it’s more accurate to use climatologies. So we have to make sure we have the right climatology. That information is presented in graphs.