

Data and GIS Users Discussion Forum
Summary of Discussion
February 27, 2007

The meeting began at noon in 150 Hodges Library with 18 attendees:

UT Libraries: Eleanor Read, Moderator (Hodges), Janette Prescod (Hodges), Gregory March (Map), Sandy Leach (AgVet), Diana Holden (AgVet), Ritchie Sexton (AgVet)

Faculty: Bruce Ralston (Geography), Joanne Logan (BESS), Tim Prather (BESS), Darrell Hensley (EPP), Ben Bates (JEM), Mark Harmon (JEM), Stephanie Bohon (Sociology), Debora Baldwin (Psychology)

OIT: Bob Muenchen (Statistical Consulting Center), Ann Reed (Statistical Consulting Center), Sue Smith (Statistical Consulting Center), Chris Hodge (Sunsite)

Ellie Read welcomed the attendees and explained the purpose of the meeting. This is a time for data and GIS users, support staff, and other interested parties to have an informal discussion about current activities, services, resources, and support needs with regard to secondary data and/or GIS research at UT.

Ellie announced the new workshop she will conduct on March 6th: Cross-National Time Series Data at UT, an introduction to World Development Indicators, UN Common Database, International Statistical Yearbook, and other resources as time allows.

Greg March, the Libraries' map librarian, gave an update on new equipment and software in the Map Library. The new GIS workstation is in. The Global Mapper and Google Earth Pro software is here and waiting to be installed on the computer. We have not yet received the KGIS vector data from KGIS. Greg also announced that preparations are underway for moving the map library from Hoskins Library to the ground floor of Hodges Library. The move is scheduled for winter break 2007/2008. Contact Greg March at 974-3878 or gmarch@utk.edu for more information about the map library.

At the November 2006 meeting, there was a discussion about the best way to provide the GIS software to the UT community. Since then, Greg and Bob Muenchen have been looking into the possibility of putting GIS software Analysis.utk.edu server, which would allow remote access to the software. Bob gave some background and a brief demonstration of the server. At this time Bob and Greg are looking into putting ESRI's ArcGIS and Leica Geosystems' ERDAS IMAGINE software on the server (we have site licenses for these). Other GIS software may follow later. This server could also be used to store and share mapping data among UT users.

Bruce Ralston announced that the Census Bureau would release its new TIGER files in February. These files include some new fields, such as the new congressional boundaries and state legislative districts. Bruce will create his TGR2SHP programs for the new TIGER files and post them on the Tennessee Electronic Atlas page (under Downloads) at <http://tnatlas.geog.utk.edu/tea/>.

Bruce also mentioned that the TNGIC conference will be held in April in Chattanooga. TNGIC is the Tennessee Geographic Information Council.

Mark Harmon showed the group the Survey Documentation and Analysis system (SDA; <http://sda.berkeley.edu/>) and explained some of the advantages of using it, particularly for very large studies such as the General Social Survey and the American National Election Studies. Online analysis allows the user to explore, analyze, and extract data without having to deal with a large data file and statistical packages. The SDA system even allows you to create your own variables and saves them on the system.

Mark asked about new developments at ICPSR (Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research), a major source of secondary data for UT. Ellie mentioned that ICPSR will now create setup files on demand for studies that do not already have setup files and/or portable data files. This will facilitate preparation of formatted SAS, SPSS, or Stata files, but there will be a time lag while ICPSR does this work. Remember that the Statistical Consulting Center can also help users write input code to create data files.

We will meet again in the fall.

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