

Geoweb, Neogeography, and VGI: New Challenges for Geomatics Sciences and Engineering

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SUMMARY

An important democratization process characterizes Geospatial technologies. Web mapping and virtual globes, GeoWeb, GPS navigation, Location Based Services - LBS or geocaching are concrete examples of this democratization process. Geospatial technologies are accessible everywhere, every time, and by everybody. Even if such a process seems to impact GI Sciences, very little is known about its characteristics and mechanisms. This process is embedded into the exponential development of the Web 2.0., which is a more opened Web, based on sharing, peering and crowdsourcing, in which the location component plays a dominating part - GeoWeb. In this context, new forms of geospatial information production appear, illustrated by web service like Wikimapia or OpenStreetMap for example. Such a "User-driven generated content "initiative", qualified by Mike Goodchild as "Volunteered Geographic Information - VGI", are more generally linked to the new trend called "Neogeography". Our presentation aims at providing an overview of the concept of neogeography from a geomatics sciences perspective, by providing a critical analysis of the geospatial technology democratization process. We provide an analysis of the most popular forms of neogeography, through a series of case studies (Point Of Interest – POI, creation e-community, VGI, geoblog or wikicarto). This presentation finally highlights to what extent all these initiatives challenge geomatics sciences and engineering, from a technological and informational perspective as well as from a professional certification perspective.

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