Possibility or a dream?

Spatially Enabled Geovernment and Societies

Geospatial experts from different background and part of the world share their views on Spatially Enabled Government and Society (SEGS) at UNRCC-PCGIAP International Symposium organized by Department of Surveying and Mapping Malaysia during 15 – 16 February at Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. They highlight pertinent issues, challenges and suggest way forward to achieve the goal

The ultimate challenge

Paul Cheung
Director of Global Geospatial Information Management (GGIM) Secretariat and Statistics Division, United Nations

It is important to deal with institutional, legal and common frameworks, management models, and technical standards for the building of sustainable spatial data infrastructures.

The ultimate challenge is how we can help countries develop the full potential of geospatial information and the underlying technology in order to make it accessible to, and able to be used effectively by, a broad range of users.

Sustaining the technology

Hiroshi Murakami
PhD, Director-General,Geospatial Information Department, Geospatial Information Authority of Japan (GSI)

GPS or the satellite positioning and timing technology has been deeply interwoven in various activities of the society now in Japan, ranging from vehicle (cars, airplanes, ships, trains, etc.) navigation to timing for online trading. It is anticipated that there could be insurmountable damage to the functions of the society in case GPS signals were to be disrupted indefinitely.

However, the technology currently depends totally on the operation of one country. While Russia, EU and China are developing their own GNSS, political leaders in Japan have come to an understanding that the country should be independent and self-sustained on this important technology.

A journey, not an end

Teo CheeHai
President, International Federation of Surveyors (FIG)

Spatial maturity could not be simply defined with a set of parameters. Instead, it would be more evolutionary, progressing from one stage to another. The goal posts may change and keep moving forward. In a sense, it is a journey and not an end. The important aspect is that that such a journey is shared by most if not all of the jurisdictions within the Permanent Committee on GIS Infrastructure for Asia and the Pacific (PCGIAP) region. We should endeavor to engage more and more jurisdictions in this journey. It may so happen that some of the jurisdictions may progress slower than others but all are the part of this journey, striving to progress towards a spatially enabled society as that would ultimately benefit the people within these jurisdictions. If we fail to involve all these jurisdictions, particularly the small islands and developing jurisdictions in this journey, then that would be sad for humanity.

Build with the end goal in mind

Brent A Jones
PE, PLS, Global Industry Manager, Cadastre/ Survey/AEC, Esri, USA

Successful cadastral systems evolve. As societies, culture, laws, and technology evolve, so can the benefits from the system. It is important to understand full spatial enablement and begin building with the end goal in mind and build a system designed to evolve and grow.

For citizens

Datuk Prof Sr Dr Abdul Kadir Taib
Director General, Department of Survey and Mapping Malaysia

The geospatial information generated by mapping agencies like Department of Surveying and Mapping (JUPEM), Malaysia should ultimately benefit the people and society. I will consider the objective of spatially enabled governance and society has been achieved when geospatial information is not only used by the government agencies which are working in geospatial domain but also by those agencies who do not deal with geospatial data directly. However, the geospatial data should ultimately be used by the citizens. When that happens, I can say, we are Spatially Enabled Society.

Legislative interoperability

Peter M Laarakker
Advisor, Cadastre, Land Registry and Mapping Agency, The Netherlands

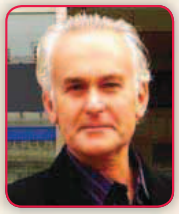
The processes of land management like land use planning, taxation and property rights registration both use ánd produce land information. One of the objectives of an NSDI is to reuse the produced information as much as possible for the other land management processes. The extent to which this is possible is depending on the laws that govern those land management processes, that all have a perspective on spatial reality but which perspectives are not necessarily the same. One can speak of legislative interoperability when all hindrances for reuse in these land management laws have been removed and concepts and definitions of spatial objects are aligned as much as possible.

We seriously risk "spatial stagnation"

Greg Scott
Group Leader, National Geographic Information, Environmental Geoscience Division, Geoscience Australia

By definition, 'spatial enablement in action' means that we (governments) must make our spatial information "actionable". That is, it must be used and leveraged beyond just for mapping. It must form the enduring fundamental authoritative spatial data layers of a nation, and do so in a way so that it is able to support evidence-based decision making for the many social, economic and environmental drivers challenges that face our Governments. It is incumbent on us doing so. Should we not do so, we seriously risk "spatial stagnation", and have a rich resource of geoinformation that remains largely untapped and with significant unrealised potential.

Technology transfer is a key



Professor William Cartwright
School of Mathematical and Geospatial Sciences, RMIT University, Australia; Chair, Joint Board of Geospatial Information Societies

Capacity building and technology transfer is a key issue for spatial and geographic information management. There is a need for a global agenda for capacity building and technology transfer for countries in the context of spatial information. This element is also central to the objectives of the Joint Board GIS member organizations in support of local, national and international spatial data management and infrastructure developments that will allow nations and their citizens to better address social, economic, and environmental issues of pressing importance.

Knowledge transfer, conducted by Joint Board of Geospatial Information Societies (JB GIS) member associations, in many instances conducted in collaboration with national member organizations, affiliates and industry, are provided to contribute to the provision of new knowledge and to foster the advancement of the discipline. In order for students to have access to relevant courses and for industry to keep abreast with developments in technology and contemporary geospatial information thinking, it is important for relevant educational courses be offered.

JB GIS is committed to supporting existing educational courses and providing specialist courses where needed. Sister organisations that form the JB GIS champion education and training. This can be in the form of traditional university and training college programmes, short courses for professional and technical members of mapping agencies and as outreach initiatives to transfer knowledge about the discipline and its contemporary practices.

These programmes can be supported by JB GIS member associations offering programmes independently, or in partnership with sister associations.