Development of a Virtual Australia Utilising an SDI Enabled Platform

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SUMMARY

Spatial Data Infrastructure (SDI) which is an evolving concept and can be viewed as an enabling platform linking data producers, providers and value adders to data users. With this in mind, many nations and jurisdictions are investing in developing such platforms and infrastructures that enable their stakeholders to work together in a more mutual approach to create distributed virtual systems that support better decision-making. The success of these systems depend on collaboration between all parties and need to be designed to support efficient access, retrieval and delivery of spatial information to where it is needed.

Within Australia, through the Cooperative Research Centre for Spatial Information (CRC-SI), there is a vision to provide a single entry point to SI, modeling and visualization tools, making spatial information available and useful to all – at any time and in any place. This requires the seamless integration of SDIs at different levels including state and national to form a virtual jurisdiction such as Virtual Australia, providing a foundation for identifying best practice and key performance indicators of SDIs in terms of their policy, technology and institutional frameworks.

This paper will discuss how SDIs can be used as an enabling platform in the construction and delivery of a Virtual Australia, based on the SDI hierarchy model where data flows with minimal impediments within and between state and federal/national levels. The benefits of Virtual Australia will be more than just the representation of feature based structures of the world, it will also include the administration and institutional aspects of such features, enabling both technical and institutional aspects to be incorporated into decision-making. This is an aspect of research identified as more challenging than complex technical issues.

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