

Report of the Geospatial Data Access Committee for 2009/10

Geospatial Data Access Committee (GDA) members for this past year were Trudy Bodak, Kathleen Matthews, Richard Pinnell, and Ann Smith.

What follows is a summary of some of the issues that have attracted the interest of the GDA Committee in 2009 and early 2010.

ATIC proposal for educational access to SPOT imagery

The committee has continued to press Mr Eric Kokko, president and CEO of the Alberta Terrestrial Imaging Center, for a breakthrough solution to the bargaining impasse. In November Mr Kokko indicated that his proposal for a consortium of university libraries was not successful because it had no industry support. He reported that he is now trying to develop a data portal that would give access to imagery and that he is determined to find a way to “fund a capacity that is easily accessible to all.”

SimplyMap Canada

Throughout 2009 Geographic Research Inc vigorously promoted SimplyMap Canada (SMC) to the map/GIS library community in Canada by continuing to offer product trials, workshops, and discounts. The OCUL Map Group has suggested to the OCUL Projects Officer, Faye Abrams, that there is interest in this product but that the asking price, even with the modest discounts offered by Geographic Research, is far too high. Faye is working with members of OCUL IR to try to get more Ontario institutions to subscribe; I have learned at time of writing this report that three institutions have signed an agreement and a fourth has indicated it wishes to do so. Because of this encouraging development, Geographic Research has recently revised its discount structure; the first five subscribers are now eligible for a 20% discount.

The final outcome of OCUL’s negotiations with Geographic Research should establish a pricing structure for SMC that will roll out to institutions elsewhere in Canada. And that in turn may trigger additional discounts as the subscriber base grows. SimplyMap Canada is a new product that is largely based on the SimplyMap data model. The company’s development of this product is still not complete in that the training tutorials continue to use the US interface and data for illustrative purposes.

Open Data

Members of the Geospatial Data Access Committee are greatly encouraged by and supportive of recent open data initiatives in Canada. City of Vancouver launched its open data catalogue in September 2009 <http://data.vancouver.ca/datacatalogue/index.htm> and City of Toronto in November 2009 <http://www.toronto.ca/open>. Nanaimo and North Vancouver are also early adopters, and City of Ottawa launched its open data catalogue in May 2010. An Open Licence generously grants members of the data-using community a world-wide, royalty-free, non-

exclusive licence to use, modify, and distribute the datasets in all current and future media and formats for any lawful purpose.

In reaction to several comments about some of the clauses in this Open Licence, submitted to the GDA Committee by ACMLA members, the Committee discussed the merits of bringing these concerns to the attention of those responsible for managing these open data services. One of the clauses in the Open Licence states that: *If you are accepting (the Terms of Use) on behalf of your employer or another entity, you represent that you have full authority to bind your employer or such other entity to the Terms of Use.* This would only be an issue if we as librarians download the data and store it locally. One reason for doing this might be because of another clause in the Licence: *The City may at any time and from time to time add, delete, or change the datasets.* It would seem there are no provisions for data archiving. Although the Committee has drafted a letter outlining these concerns but in a tone that makes it clear we are highly supportive of Open Data, this letter has not yet been sent to any of the open data municipalities, as the Committee continues to monitor ongoing developments.

Respectfully submitted,

Richard Pinnell, Chair
ACMLA Geospatial Data Access Committee
4 June 2010