

Report on GeoConnections

Management Board

The most important development under GeoConnections over the past year has been the development of GeoBase, a set of standard framework data including both vector data and imagery for the entire country which would be freely available via the Internet. Two levels of content have been defined. The minimum level includes national and provincial boundaries, road network, elevations, names, LandSat 7 imagery and the Canadian Base Network. The target level includes much of what we now see on standard topographic maps. The project has been endorsed by CCOG (Canadian Council on Geomatics) and will involve the provinces and federal government working together. A pilot project will involve Ontario and Nova Scotia. At the most recent Board meeting, it was agreed that the Framework Advisory Node will merge with the GeoBase Steering Committee.

GeoConnections wants to focus more on specific user groups, what they are calling “communities of practice” to work with collaboratively. From a long list of possible communities presented at the Management Board, health, emergency response and environment were identified as the priorities for the forthcoming year. Strong support for the educational sector was also expressed by the various members of the Board. The Geomatics Skills Network program is creating a two-page information handout to publicize the program. The GeoConnections Secretariat is working with the Geomatics Industry Association of Canada and Canadian Institute of Geomatics to investigate opportunities for projects targeted toward students, new graduates and those wishing to upgrade their skills. I also suggested that they work more with CAG and the Faculties of Educations to promote geomatics as a career choice.

At the spring Management Board meeting, Joanne Frappier gave a demonstration of the National Atlas on the web, which will now be called the Atlas of Canada. There will be an entirely new look for the Atlas as of spring 2002. In the area of standards, it was reported that there is now a draft Canadian profile for the new ISO geospatial metadata standard which will replace the FGDC. They now have to meet with their U.S. counterparts to develop harmonize the profile for North America. Natural Resources staff are looking at the geospatial extension for the Dublin Core.

There was also a presentation by the Industry Canada representative on innovation and how Canada is lagging behind other countries. Two recent mentioned in the presentation provide “an invitation from the Government of Canada to Canadians to work together to develop a blueprint of how to move forward together in developing a national agenda for skills and learning as well as innovation”. The two reports are available in PDF at the following address:

<http://www.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/stratpol/sl-ca/doc/report.shtml>

Policy Advisory Node

The Policy Advisory Node has held several meetings over the past year. Several new members have recently been added to the Node, most notably Alex Miller, President of ESRI Canada and several others from the private sector. The Node is focusing on 4 key projects: the first project, a follow-up to the detailed study last year of government pricing policies for geospatial data, is

an investigation of product pricing/financing models used by several government geospatial agencies across the country, with the objective of proposing ways to reduce prices while maintaining the operations that produce, maintain and disseminate data; a second project aims to develop standard, or simplified, user licenses for government geospatial data to facilitate data access and use; the remaining two projects will research the archiving and preserving of geospatial data, and communicate the Node's findings to government and non-government audiences. The ACMLA is taking the lead on the development of policies for the archiving and preservation of the geospatial data. James Boxall, David Brown and I are participating in the working group which reports to the Policy Advisory Node. Funding for a study to develop policies has been provided to the ACMLA and a student hired to undertake the work.

The last two meetings of the Policy Advisory Node addressed the policy issues associated with the provision of a free road layer within the GeoBase project and the possible implications on the private sector revenues. Node members from companies that collect and sell road data for applications in precise navigation and intelligent transportation have agreed to draft principles for private-sector participation in GeoBase. The private sector members, while recognizing that they could lose some business when the GeoBase road data set becomes freely available, also see the advantage of a single, high quality representation of roads in Canada

Richard has continued to represent the Association on the Transportation Node and has provided a separate report.

Respectfully submitted by:

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