

Candidate Participant Interests in Digital Gazetteer Research and Practice Workshop
December 7 – 9, 2006, Santa Barbara
Paul Veisze, GIS Manager, California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (OES)

General

- Digital gazetteers in georeferencing applications

Effective management of California emergencies depends on accurate, accessible location information, delivered in forms applicable to local needs. Emergency Managers must have the means to answer "Where is it?" and to extend that answer to the communities they serve in terms understandable by all.

- Collaboration and advancement of a research and practice agenda

OES is working with the University of California Office of the President in support of the California Hazards Institute (Rundle and others, 2006), a multi-campus initiative to leverage University resources for statewide emergency management. Placenames are key.

Core elements of gazetteers

- Placenames

I have a professional passion for the "cross-disciplinary data compression" that placenames offer: language, history, geography, sociology, technology, policy...

- Place categories

California's administrative complexity requires parity in the complexity of reference systems, particularly in the hyper-sensitive arena of public safety. I would like to launch a census of administrative names (Ranger Districts, Water Districts, and the like) that would lead to their comprehensive encoding in the USGS Geographic Names Information System (geonames.usgs.gov).

- Geospatial locations

This workshop is fertile ground for engaging debate on the merits of the National Grid (aka Military Grid Reference System) for emergency management applications.

Support Missions

- Enterprise georeferencing systems

California law mandates a Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS). The SEMS is the model for the National Incident Management System (NIMS). I view placenames as a core element of these standardization processes.

- Geoparsing of text to derive spatial locations

Case in point: OES has just taken delivery of over 80 plans for Continuity of Operations and Continuity of Government, submitted by State Agencies. The explicit identification of alternate facility locations is central to the acceptability of the plans. Participation in this workshop would broaden my access to research and development on tools for automation of reviews and evaluation of these and related administrative documents.

- Navigation services

I offer my experience in aviation and earth imaging to the workshop community.

- Geographic information retrieval (GIR)

Emergency management (EM) represents a demanding court of engagement for GIR: systems must enable managers to ascertain what is where (in terms of vulnerable populations, evacuation routes, care and shelter resources, etc) in a hot hurry.

Selected Session Issues

- Appropriate generalization of the geospatial location

I am interested in the diversity of perspective on this...appropriate for whom, for what...

- Creation and sharing of category schemes for gazetteers

Referring to above notions of administrative naming: SEMS/NIMS need their own gazetteers: e.g. names of fire stations, police stations and their associated districts

- Integration of gazetteer data from multiple sources (crosswalks, etc)

This is among the central challenges to GIS for emergency management: OES must be able to “navigate” local, county, and regional location reference systems in order to deliver information to a wide spectrum of clients, including the Governor, federal officials, and the public.

- Interoperable gazetteer services

As above.

- Gazetteers of official toponymic authorities

As above; seeking support for processing of administrative names within the GNIS

- Place identifier tables accompanying GIS datasets

Would find applicability in the everyday work of the OES GIS Unit (7 staff, 3 cities)