

Capacity building in GIS and RS for Pacific island countries

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Introduction



- Education and training opportunities in GIS and RS in the Pacific islands
- GIS and RS at the University of the South Pacific
- Challenges in GIS and RS in the Pacific islands
- Perspectives on GIS and RS for disaster management

Education and training



- University of the South Pacific
- University of Papua New Guinea
- PNG University of Technology
- Fiji Institute of Technology
- SOPAC training programme

University of the South Pacific



- 12 Pacific island countries
- Campuses in each country
- 12,000 students
- Distance and flexible learning
- USPNet dedicated satellite communications
- AARNet internet connection on Southern Cross cable

Geospatial science at USP



- Undergraduate programme
- Certificate, diploma and degree (with information systems)
- Links with Geomatics programme
- Dedicated 25-seat lab and servers
- ArcGIS site license
- 150 students do 2nd year electives in GIS/RS
- 15 students complete GS programme

Geospatial science at USP



- University-wide support for GIS and RS
- Data server for Pacific GIS and RS data
- Advice and support to GIS and RS community
- Host annual Pacific GIS and RS conference

Challenges in the Pacific islands



- Information infrastructure
 - Physical vs. institutional capacity
 - Data sharing, distribution and publication mechanisms
 - Limited progress towards SDI
 - Culture of data archiving

Challenges in the Pacific islands



- Technical expertise
 - Few trained locals with long term commitment to the islands
 - Bubbles of activity around externally funded projects
 - Working in isolation with limited tech support
 - User groups and annual conference

Challenges in the Pacific islands



- Island geographies need creative ways of thinking
 - More so for atolls countries of east and north Pacific
 - Distance (large and dispersed) and size (small)
 - Linear (atolls)
 - Economies of scale for GIS are marginal

Challenges in the Pacific islands



- Outsourcing – the Google Earth “solution”?
 - New (and some existing) users finding solutions through external mechanism like Google Earth
 - Failure of local solutions to meet needs?
 - Discourages investment in local capacity in strengthening local information infrastructure
 - Leapfrog means that local GIS nodes not being joined

Disaster management and GIS



- Information infrastructure for preparedness and risk assessment
- Information infrastructure for post-event response and action
- Needs to be process-based, not person-based
 - “Pacific way” solutions are limited in time-critical situations

Questions



- What spatial data information capacity do Pacific DMOs have and need?
- Is spatial data built in to DMOs processes and cooperative agreements?
- What can Pacific GIS and RS user community offer DMOs?
- How can Pacific GIS and RS user community facilitate links between DMOs and international support mechanisms?

Thank you for your attention



- Questions and comments:
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