

Notes from Geospatial/GIS Meetup

December 9, 2021

via Zoom

Attendees: Janet Reyes, facilitator;
Via Zoom: Ademide Adelusi-Adeluyi, Amanda Grey, Anto Paul, Bart Kats, Cheryl Diermyer, Gerald Winkel, Jagdish Chhabria, Joseph (Jay) Spencer, Lynn Sweet, Michael Yonezawa, Mike Cohen, Salvador Jr Olguin, Samantha Eastman, Samir Kulkarni, Shanon Langlie, Steve Ries, Utitofon Inyang

Announcements

This meeting was recorded; video is available [here](#). The access passcode to view is B@*6s^QP

The second [UC GIS Week](#) on November 16 - 18 was a success. Five UCR affiliates were among the presenters, and two UCR affiliates submitted story maps. Four UCR affiliates and a recent alumna were involved in planning the event.

Information gleaned from Eventbrite registrations:

- 59 out of 892 registrants were from UCR
- Mostly grad students and staff
- Public Policy, CSE, and Environmental Sciences were the best-represented academic departments
- Mostly beginners

Students interested in geospatial careers may want to register for an [AAG Early Career Webinar](#) presented by Esri's Joseph Kerski on Tuesday, December 14, from 12:00 - 1:15 pm PST. The title is "Mapping Your Career Pathway in Geography and Geotechnologies."

Esri's next [GIS in Higher Education Chat](#), at 9:00 am on Tuesday, January 4, 2022 will cover spatial statistics tools in ArcGIS Pro.

Winter Geospatial/GIS meetups will be held on January 13, February 10, and March 10 (all Thursdays) from 12:00 - 12:50 pm. January's presenter is UCR Entomologist Matt Daugherty.

Janet will be offering two **workshops in Winter Quarter**. ArcGIS Pro: Building Skills with Vector Data will be on Thursday, February 3, and ArcGIS Online Web App Options will be on Wednesday, February 16. Both will start at 2:00 pm.

The [Geospatial/GIS Quarterly](#) will be updated shortly to include information regarding meetups, workshops, and other events in Winter 2022. Janet is open to adding a section featuring the work of our UCR geospatial community members. She has started a [StoryMap Collection](#) to archive the Quarterlies over time.

Lynn asked how much time and disruption might be involved when she and her colleagues **switch from using ArcGIS Desktop to ArcGIS Pro**. Janet guessed one week, but many variables might affect that. If the transition can be delayed until when there's less time pressure for the maps they produce, that might be safer! Janet has given a workshop on ArcGIS Pro; a recording for this and other geospatial workshops can be viewed in the [Geospatial playlist](#) on the library's YouTube channel. Esri also provides [training material](#) to assist in making the transition. [The library has the book [Switching to ArcGIS Pro from ArcMap](#) available for checkout.]

Utifon asked how to connect with the **student GIS group**. The [R'Geospatial Club](#) is always looking for new members and would be happy to answer any questions. There are plans for club members to assist Environmental Health & Safety in updating a map of drinking water stations on campus, in support of the Healthy Beverage Initiative.

First-time Attendees

Michael Yonezawa is the Early Experience Teaching Librarian at UCR Library.

Anto Paul and **Jagdish Chhabria** also joined us for the first time.

Presentation

Jay Spencer coordinates the writing support program at the Academic Resource Center at UCR. He led a discussion on Using Mapping Platforms in First Year Courses.

Jay has been teaching English Composition since 2008 at various local colleges. He noticed a trend in students choosing hypothetical situations to back up their arguments. Jay encourages students to use concrete examples; he wondered if it would be suitable to include maps or other geospatial products in first year writing assignments, as a multimodal assignment to expand their focus beyond text-based materials.

Jay showed us an example of a writing prompt regarding work attitudes during and after the Industrial Revolution. He thinks this assignment could be modified to include students mapping the locations in which they've held jobs, and writing about how their attitude towards work changed.

Since the pandemic started, much of the classwork has been conducted asynchronously using CANVAS and is focused on text. It has been difficult to plan collaborative assignments.

Jay shared an assignment on local air quality for an ecology class at North High School in which students used the story map platform to convey what they were learning in class to an online audience. Students varied in their ability to consider who the audience was.

Jay ended with a slide containing questions for discussion, including: "How might we use ESRI StoryMaps to build more inclusivity yet highlight academic values for communication practices?" He hopes to apply

the feedback from the discussion to a course he'll be offering in the spring. Anyone with input on incorporating maps into writing assignments can contact Jay at joseph.spencer@ucr.edu.

Discussion

Samantha (an instructional designer with XCITE) observed that story maps can be inclusive, as several students can contribute to the content, either directly in the platform or by pasting it in from their own document. It could be one project for an entire class. Janet has supported assignments for classes in which small groups (2-4 students) worked on story maps together.

Samantha has worked with Prof. Anthonia Kalu on mapping the locales of stories in an anthology of African literature. She has also supported Covadonga Lamar-Prieto as her students contribute content to a story map on places visited during [FLEAP](#) trips abroad. Another XCITE team member has facilitated class projects on crime map analysis for a Public Policy GIS class, as well as applications of GIS for business in a class taught by Rich Yueh.

Jay expects there might be pushback from some students on encountering an assignment in first-year writing that involves learning a technical skill like mapping. Michael suggested a scaffolded approach, starting with an assignment that involves the students writing about what they glean from a story map or map having a few layers of data to examine. Perhaps a later assignment could be the students creating their own map. Samantha suggested gathering the students in a computer lab to get some guided practice for creating maps.

Jay said Esri's [Mapping Hour](#) recorded lessons for K-12 have good information, but he may need to rework the presentation to cut down on technical jargon. Samantha suggested there may be other recorded lessons that are easier to understand. She also raised the idea of partnering with graduate students who could do some of the preliminary mapping work. Another idea: Amanda Lucia in Religious Studies has had her students use Google Maps to plot the location of a religious service they attended; perhaps start with a simpler mapping platform like that.

Utifon teaches African literature and is intrigued with the idea of combining writing assignments with strengthening students' spatial awareness. She wants to emphasize how important the visual component is in our understanding of spatiality.

Shanon works with students on adapting their voice and tone in their writing to who the audiences are. Also, when students are collaborating on a writing project, it's important that they synthesize their styles into a unified voice that the audience can follow. She emphasizes to them that such skills will be important to them in the working world.

From the chat:

Ademide: some readings that might work for this are having them read texts that highlight travel or different itineraries. I will think of examples and share afterwards. A good one might be Equiano's narrative.

Lynn: As an assignment, have them walk around using google maps to see their location, have them tell stories about what they see. I think the connection would happen organically.

Janet: How about asking students to write about the differences they notice among several maps that are representing the same data? (such as election results)

Possibly helpful resources from Esri:

<https://www.esri.com/en-us/industries/higher-education/roles/educators>

Map sharing

- In the chat, Mike shared a new [Story Map about the Conservatory](#) that Janine Almanzor of UCR Botanic Gardens recently completed.
- In the chat, Shanon shared recent stories from ProPublica regarding air quality: <https://www.propublica.org/article/toxmap-poison-in-the-air> and <https://projects.propublica.org/toxmap/>