Notes from Geospatial/GIS Meetup
February 11, 2025

Zoom

Attendees: Janet Reyes, facilitator

Via Zoom: Bennie McGhee, Bobbi Mansour, Deonna Pope, Emma Stapely, Gerald Winkel, Jalondra A Davis, Jasmin Young, Jeffrey De Leon, Jing Han, Karina Jones, Kritika Gupta, Lidia Monsivais, Mike Cohen, Mohammad Koohi, Robin Katz, Ryan Bruellman

<u>Announcements</u>
This meeting was recorded; video is available <u>here</u>. The passcode to view is 8&y82f%@

<u>UC Love Data Week</u> is taking place this week. Sessions of particular interest include:
Historical Maps as Data	Feb 11, 1:00-1:50
<u>Finding Geospatial Data</u>	Feb 14, 10:00-11:50

Learn how to discover **detailed historical maps of California cities** in the <u>Find Insurance Maps with FIMo</u> workshop on February 18.

A few local job postings that may be of interest can be found on the Inland Empire GIS User Group (<u>IEGIS</u>) website.

The **<u>Los Angeles Geospatial Summit</u>** takes place at the USC Hotel on February 28. It features presentations and networking opportunities.

<u>CalGIS 2025</u> will be held in Sonoma April 14-16.

Next month's Geospatial/GIS meetup will be a discussion session for UCR faculty and researchers. A GIS career panel is the intended format for April's meetup.

<u>Shared links</u>
About renaming map features: <u>https://www.sco.wisc.edu/2025/01/22/renaming-denali-and-the-gulf-of-mexico/</u>

<u>Presentation</u>
Dr. Jalondra A. Davis, Assistant Professor of English, and UCR students Karina Jones, Bobbi Mandour, Lidia Mosivais, and Deonna Pope gave a presentation on "**Trusting Student Leaders, Supporting Community Institutions, Collaboratively Building a Storymap with ArcGIS in a Public Humanities Course**."

A few years ago, the English department undertook a curriculum revision. Students advocated for more coursework that was directly applicable to their lives, such as a public humanities course. Dr. Davis wrote the first Public Humanities course for the department, in which students are introduced to "the practice of doing humanities within and for the benefit of diverse publics." The course focused on spaces, institutions, organizations, and communities, which included museums, libraries, archives, historical landmarks, public arts councils, bookstores, and more.

Despite the time limitations of the quarter system, Dr. Davis also wanted the students to complete a public-facing project of service to the broader community. For the Spring 2024 class, she decided on a mapping project, although she herself had no background in mapping. Options available in ArcGIS Online were promising, although they wouldn't accommodate multiple students working on a map all at the same time.

Because simultaneous access to a map wasn't possible, as well as several students expressing reluctance to learn the software, Dr. Davis structured the class (approximately 40 students) to work in small groups that gathered information about a particular public humanities entity in the Inland Empire. She also recruited a Project Lead group to learn the software, do the mapping, collect the data, and help manage the process for all of the groups. This distribution of authority, enabling students to be invested in the final product, worked exceptionally well. The Project Leads contributed in multiple ways to ensure a successful outcome.

The class as a whole decided what kinds of questions they wanted to ask the public humanities entities, and considered the ethics behind public engagement.

Lidia shared the ArcGIS StoryMap, titled "[Inland Empire Public Humanities Organizations](#)," on her screen as she and the other students spoke about their experiences. At the outset, Janet had given the Project Leads an introduction to using ArcGIS Online and ArcGIS StoryMaps, including their capabilities and limitations. They chose to use StoryMaps due to its narrative appeal. Lidia and Karina were primarily responsible for creating the map. They encountered some difficulty using StoryMaps on older laptops and Macs. After weighing the pluses and minuses, they created the map tour in the StoryMap internally rather than in ArcGIS Online. They included navigation tabs in the StoryMap to minimize scrolling. In addition to narrative about an organization, groups contributed media such as video, images, and an infographic to the StoryMap. Using the guides and resources that Esri provides, Lidia found it fairly easy to build the StoryMap.

Karina spoke about how the Project Leads worked to coordinate the class in creating the final product. Each lead worked with two teams, keeping them on track. Deonna was also responsible for collecting the data. The team considered creating an ArcGIS Online map because of the ability to color-code points, but they liked the map tour layout (StoryMaps) better than having information contained in popups (ArcGIS Online). Because the groups didn't have direct experience with the StoryMap, they sometimes unknowingly provided photos that couldn't be easily incorporated.

Deonna spoke about the challenges of the short turnaround time for receiving information back from the organizations. Follow-up emails were often needed to ensure on-time completion. The leads

gravitated towards the groups that fit with their strengths (for Deonna, that was ethnography). The leads maintained a calm presence as they worked with their groups under the time constraint, and made sure the needs of the group and the contacted organization were being taken care of. A script was created for soliciting input from the organizations, ensuring a measure of standardized structure to the narratives. Groups submitted the information they collected via Google Drive. Deonna noted that one of the organizations exists online only, providing a challenge to include it with the mapped entities. Students in the class were able to include this project on their resumes.

Bobbi likened the class project to a machine with many moving parts that had to work together. She enjoyed sourcing the many local public humanities organizations that were considered for inclusion in the StoryMap. She also enjoyed helping the groups write and revise their narratives, which needed to be journalistic in nature rather than academic.

Dr. Davis added that other writing assignments in the class encouraged the students to fold in some of the skills and experience they gained by contributing to the StoryMap. Storytelling was a subtheme of the class; guest speakers often mentioned the importance of telling a compelling story to raise interest and engagement in the organization's activities.

Deonna mentioned that half of the class were in non-humanities majors, and many of them were daunted by the writing process. The class studied and discussed examples of public-facing writing to help with that. Having the ability to tell a story in writing is helpful to students in all academic disciplines. Lidia shared that one Biology major who was in one of her groups became an English minor as a result of this class.

The StoryMap can be a resource for students looking for public humanities places to volunteer or do internships in the Inland Empire.

Discussion

Janet asked about how they handled the organization that exists online only in terms of the map. Lidia replied that you can include something in the map tour that doesn't have a physical location. A point won't be created for that entity (the map will zoom out), but the information about the entity (such as their website link) will still appear in the sidebar along with the mapped features.

Dr. Davis will teach the course again this spring, and the class will add more organizations to the story map. The Project Leads from last year will assist her in setting up the project.

Bennie encouraged Dr. Davis and the students to keep doing this kind of work. Other types of research are also starting to focus on community engagement.

Contact

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