Notes from Geospatial/GIS Meetup
February 10, 2026

Zoom

Attendees: Janet Reyes, facilitator

Via Zoom: Andrew Haglund, Ashish Kulkarni, Inyoung Shin, "iPhone," Kan Wang, Lynn Sweet, Mark Long, Mary A, Mike Cohen, Pareeya Jiyacharoen

<u>Announcements</u>

This meeting was recorded; video is available <u>here</u>. The passcode to view is   y3?g2nw7

The School of Public Policy now offers a **Geospatial Analysis minor**, open to undergraduates in all disciplines. For questions or to register, email <u>spp-advising@ucr.edu</u>.

UC Love Data Week is being held online this week. Sessions of particular geospatial relevance are "Visualizing Data with ggplot for R Users" on February 12 at 10:00 am, and "Deep Learning with Drone Imagery in ArcGIS Pro" on February 13 at 1:00 pm.

The next Cambridge Seminar in the History of Cartography will be on February 24 at 9:30 am PST. The topic is **Churchill's Secret Chart Makers**, about "the trials and tribulations of staff in [Britain's] Hydrographic Department during World War Two."

Esri's support for the classic version of Story Maps is coming to an end in February 2026. UCR affiliates should have received an email from ITS on this topic on February 9. If the **sunsetting of Classic Story Maps** impacts some of your content, you may want to watch the video of <u>"Remaking your classic stories in ArcGIS StoryMaps</u>" or refer to the guidance found <u>here</u>.

The **LA Geospatial Summit** on Friday, February 27 offers presentations and networking opportunities for students.

Plans are coming together for a **GIS at UCR: Esri Innovation & Demo Day** on Wednesday, April 15. There will be workshops/presentations, tabling, and a discussion between Chancellor Hu and Esri President Jack Dangermond.

Lynn asked about guidance for **ensuring StoryMaps meet the new accessibility criteria**. In response, Andrew shared Esri's accessibility landing page: <u>https://www.esri.com/en-us/legal/accessibility/accessibility-overview</u>. The deadline for ensuring compliance is in April.

Shared links
StoryMap frames for mobile:
https://www.esri.com/arcgis-blog/products/arcgis-storymaps/constituent-engagement/introducing-frames

Presentation
Kan Wang, a lecturer at UCR's School of Business, presented on **GIS is Everywhere - From a Business Perspective**, in which he shared his personal approach to teaching about technology**.** Much of his teaching background has been in information systems more broadly.

Kan's slide deck for the presentation was the primer that he uses to get the class [BUS179 - Business Application of Geographic Information Systems] ready for and excited about GIS. He ties the concepts involved in GIS to things the students find familiar or relatable. He starts by pointing out that because the Earth is finite, this is a constraint on humanity as a whole. Technology can help us optimize what we do within those constraints. Many of the challenges facing us are fundamentally about people, or physical objects that we want or need, occupying space.

Next, he draws attention to the fact that any particular block of earth has objects that serve us in the airspace above and under the ground (such as infrastructure) as well as on the visible surface, and somebody has to have thought through the many design and maintenance ramifications for these objects. Also, the characteristics of the surface (mountains, rivers, etc.) and natural processes (flood, fire) influence what we can do with that plot of land, entailing a set of costs and risks.

To focus more on the business element involved in concerns around space and society, Kan's next slide depicts the various commercial enterprises that may be found within a few city blocks. Kan makes the analogy between GIS and a scientific calculator, which can yield entirely different advances depending on whether it's being used by an architect or rocket scientist. It takes human intellect to assess and prioritize the risks and constraints in order to leverage the tool optimally. Potential employers will be most interested in how well the students can bring appropriate context and perspective to how a GIS can be used to solve problems.

Lastly, Kan ties the discussion more specifically to business by asking the students about their plans for the day in terms of destinations for meals or shopping, length of time to get there, etc. The information that they share can be viewed as data points, which in combination can become useful information. This is followed with a decision-making exercise. In conclusion, he points out that GIS is not simply ubiquitous, but foundational to human progress in terms of understanding locations and movement. His intent is to prompt the students to recognize how GIS might factor into their everyday life, the content of other Business classes, and their future endeavors.

In the rest of the course, the students work through eight Esri tutorials in ArcGIS Online. Also, Kan shows them maps from different industry sectors (real estate, supply chain, medical, etc.). From each class, a handful of students typically express more interest in GIS career paths.

Discussion

Andrew shared these resources in the chat: Location Analytics in Business Education - https://www.esri.com/en-us/industries/higher-education/roles/business-education …and Business related tutorial galleries - https://learn.arcgis.com/en/gallery/#?q=Business

Janet mentioned that she recently heard from someone who hires applicants for GIS-related positions that they really do value the ability of applicants to think through problems. She also asked whether any students have returned after graduating to share with Kan what they've done in the field. One former MBA student currently works at Esri. He recommends students who are interested to apply for a volunteer internship at the Esri User Conference.

Kan said that in his career at Riverside County, they used GIS heavily in relation to Assessor's data, and they worked with Esri on pioneering some solutions. A few years ago they did a proof-of-concept project using AI with aerial imagery to detect changes in residential structures, and then compare those properties to the Assessor's data to see which structural changes didn't go through the permitting process (the answer: quite a lot!). The County's Transportation and Land Management Agency is currently a heavy GIS user. Janet mentioned the County's geoportal as a useful source of information.

Contact

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