

An initiation for long term preservation of Geospatial Data at universities: A pilot study

S. Alikhan, C. Wijesundara

Library, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka

Abstract

Preservation of information for long-term use has become an essential activity in the information-overloaded society. Any information might become obsolete over time if it is not maintained properly. This scenario is applicable to Geospatial Data as well. The university researchers generate a great deal of Geospatial Data during their research activities, and often this data is unexploited or unshared after the project. To address these issues the authors have formed this study into two phases. This abstract is primarily based on Phase-I which investigates the state of the Geospatial Data produce by the Universities, their technical characteristics and, willingness to preserve and share their data. The population of the study was the researchers of the University of Colombo and the University of Peradeniya. An online questionnaire distributed among the researchers via an email list. The results indicated that 66% know the term “Geospatial Information” while others identified it as “locational Information”. The majority of the researchers created vector-type Geospatial Data (65%) during their research activities. Almost all the researchers used either internal or external data storages to store their data. Approximately 83% of the participants believed that satellite images should be preserved as they are costly and hard to obtain. All the respondents agreed on sharing Geospatial Data and more than half of the researchers (53%) prefer to share their data with constraints. About 70% of the respondent stated that universities are responsible in establishing a centralised mechanism to store and share Geospatial Data created by their institutions. Based on the responses, there is a diversity of the researchers who utilise and generate Geospatial Data in various qualities and quantities. Everyone agrees on preserving Geospatial Data through University involvement or national/international level involvement. The perception of sharing information was positive, and everyone was willing to share their data. This can be identified as the main outcome of this research as it supports determining the Phase-II of this research.

Keywords: *Data Preservation; Data Sharing; Geospatial Data; Sri Lanka; Universities*