

Community Mapping

Before starting a team project, it is necessary to develop a plan and split responsibilities. Creating a map of your community is a perfect example of a team project.

Explorer's Guide

Before You Start

In small teams, identify 5-10 different geographic objects that can be mapped. For example, this can be your route to the school, mailboxes on your street, bike trail, boundary of your soccer field, etc.

Learning by Doing

1. In your teams, learn about your teammates, and identify mapping experience possessed by each team member. Select the leader of your team.
2. Together with your instructor, review various community mapping projects conducted by your peer explorers in the past.
3. Discuss a theme for the community mapping project. Name 5-10 necessary data layers and identify which of these layers should be mapped with a GPS receiver, and which layers can be obtained elsewhere. Following is the list of websites that potentially can be used to assess publicly available data:
 - <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/land/nrcsdata.html>
 - <http://www.geodata.gov>
 - <http://www.fgdc.gov/metadata/geospatial-metadata-standards>
 - <http://www.geographynetwork.com>
 - <http://nationalmap.gov>
 - http://www.columbia.edu/acis/eds/outside_data/stategis.html
 - <http://libinfo.uark.edu/GIS/us.asp>
 - <http://www.nesdis.noaa.gov/datainfo.html>
 - <http://www.nhgis.org/>
4. Create a work plan and split responsibilities among team members. Make sure to clearly identify what type of data you'll need to search for versus the data that you can collect by yourselves.
5. Establish format of your presentation and assure you have all the components (hardware, software, people, time) needed to accomplish your task.

How Does It Work

Project Planning includes ways to implement the project plan, along with careful controls to stay on the "critical path", to ensure the project is being managed according to your plan. Following are the major characteristics of an effective team work:

- Members proudly share a sense of why the team exists and are interested in accomplishing its mission and goals.
- Members know what needs to be done next, by whom, and by when to achieve team goals.

- Members know their roles in getting tasks done and when to allow a more skillful member to do a certain task.
- Decision-making lines are clearly understood.
- Conflict is dealt with openly and is considered important to decision-making and personal growth.
- Members feel their unique personalities are appreciated and well utilized.
- Members find team meetings efficient and productive and look forward to this time together.
- Members know clearly when the team has met with success and share in this equally and proudly.
- Opportunities for feedback and updating skills are provided and taken advantage of by team members.
- Have fun and care about the team and the outcomes.

Additional Challenge

Implement your community mapping project using ArcGIS software.

Vocabulary

***Planning** is a process of creating and maintaining a plan; and the psychological process of thinking about the activities required to create a desired project.*

Viacheslav Adamchuk and Shana Thomas

Phone: 402-472-8431

E-mail: vadamchuk2@unl.edu

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