

Involving Users in the Process of Using and Sharing Geo-information within the Context of SDI Initiatives

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SUMMARY

Considerable resources have been spent by governments on Spatial Data Infrastructure (SDI) initiatives since their inception. The potential of SDI is well known to Geographic information (GI) specialists and decision-makers, however, it seems there is a problem in communicating these potentials to the large group of possible users within the wider community. Involvement of users is crucial if SDIs are to be effectively implemented and utilized, particularly in the context of sustainable development. Previous initiatives in communicating the benefits to users, such as the classical top-down approach, have fallen short and hence need to be revised. Therefore the University of Melbourne, Australia and Wageningen University, The Netherlands cooperated to research how to better involve future users in the SDI-initiatives.

In the early stage of the research it was shown that an important issue of involvement is the lack of awareness. Up to now, most of the efforts were put in direct communication only to the known potential users. In the paper three reasons are given why a wider public should be reached:

- 1) to communicate the on-going developments of SDI and justify the invested resources to the wider public.
- 2) to make more people within an organization aware of SDI and increase the chance people are starting to discuss it.
- 3) to raise the awareness also within the social environment of the people that decide to invest in SDI.

Moreover, the paper gives some ideas how to raise the awareness of the wider public on SDI, using mass communication.