

OUTREACH EVENT REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Attendee's Name and Report Writer:

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Location: Bibliographic Center for
Research, Aurora, Colorado

Event: Conduct Workshop for Librarians:
Using Geographic Information Systems for
Library Services

Date: 11 December 2001

The Bibliographical Center for Research (BCR) is a nonprofit, multistate library cooperative. BCR has existed since 1935, providing library and information services to nearly 600 voting-member libraries in 28 states. These include libraries throughout its 12 member states of Alaska, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Iowa, Kansas, Montana, Oregon, Nevada, Utah, Washington and Wyoming. In all, BCR services reach more than 3,000 libraries throughout the entire nation. These libraries include academic, school, state, research, and public. BCR's web site is <http://www.bcr.org>.

My class was scheduled during a month when the other classes included:

OCLC Searching Basics (Online Computer Library Catalog)
OCLC Interlibrary Loan Basics
Cataloging: Basic Serials Cataloging
Serial Holdings Workshop
Web Design I: Introduction to HTML
Web Design II: HTML Tables and Forms
Computing and Accommodating Patron Access: Web Design
Computing and Accommodating Patron Access: Hardware and Software



Attendees at the GIS workshop for librarians outside BCR's headquarters in Aurora, Colorado. I was impressed that nearly half of the attendees in the workshop were BCR staff, including their director, Dave Brunell.



Computer lab at BCR. Other attendees besides BCR included a public librarian and many staffpersons from the Colorado State Library, Denver.

BCR serves libraries by helping them share information resources, providing libraries with access to information services, developing and promoting new technologies for information organization, delivering and carrying out training and technical assistance in the use of information services.

Besides courses, another example of a service that BCR provides is that libraries can obtain hundreds of different reference databases from BCR. Most BCR subscriptions are at discount prices because of the purchasing power of this organization.



We collected a GPS coordinate and registered it with a DRG and DOQ from Aurora from Terraserver within ArcView GIS.



The workshop included an analysis of ArcIMS sites, downloading information from the Internet into GIS software, joining tabular information to maps, classification systems, and examining point and polygon spatial information via sorting, identifying, classifying, and querying.

Recommendations and Observations

One must be on one's toes when conducting courses for librarians! They are trained in information services, and are the most knowledgeable professionals in existence about the sources of information and how to obtain and use those sources. Therefore, I spent more time than in a usual GIS workshop discussing the nature of spatial data, organizations involved in GIS, and sources of GIS information.

Librarians are trained to know how to find resources. Obviously, they have access to a great deal of material and are some of the most computer-database-savvy data users of all. When we as the USGS get involved with these professionals--getting their input and working with them--we can understand how to best meet their needs. Such close working relationships and feedback could help our entire information delivery system. We have conducted many user surveys in the past. I don't feel that we adequately seek the input of the library community.

Many libraries already use GIS, and many already manage ArcIMS (Internet Map Server) sites for their patrons. Indeed, much of the reason why states like Montana are so active in GIS technology and applications is because GIS entered their states largely through the efforts of their state libraries. The Colorado State Library is already using ArcIMS and seeks to be more proactive at unifying the Colorado GIS community, something we desperately need.

The USGS has exhibited at ALA (American Library Association) conferences in the past as a bureau outreach event. Some of our exhibits there were not very enthusiastically received by conference attendees; perhaps we should rethink our focus. I have

conducted workshops at the Western Association of Map Librarians (WAML) meetings in the past. We might examine the possibility of participating in the Special Librarian Association (SLA) conferences and in state library conferences, such as those of the Colorado Library Association (<http://www.cla-web.org/>) and the Mountain-Plains Library Association (<http://www.usd.edu/mpla/>).

Think about it--librarians are one of the major means by which information is disseminated to the public, K through university students, and to the research community. One major role for the USGS is to disseminate scientific information. We absolutely must work closely with librarians so that they can help society make sense of our data, and so that they can give us feedback as to what they and the public need from us.

I definitely believe that working with organizations such as BCR is the correct route to take. Then, we maximize our resources in doing so, rather than working one on one with individual libraries, since organizations such as BCR have such a wide network. I recommend to outreach staff in other regions to investigate their regional librarian training centers as we have done with BCR, and ask the center if we can help their constituents.

Next Steps

Since the workshop, I have already been speaking with staff at the Colorado State Library. We will meet in early January and discuss GIS direction at the state library BCR is interested in hosting more GIS courses in the future. We could even hold a session on USGS resources for librarians in the future.

Materials

I handed out the following materials:

- (1) A 10-page handout that I created entitled "GIS Resources for Librarians" that listed some of the major journals, web sites, training events, professional societies, conferences, GIS software, and examples of what GIS is and what libraries have done with GIS.
- (2) Sample Journals Containing GIS Information.
- (3) Success with GPS and other GPS articles
- (4) USGS GeoData.
- (5) Map Projections Poster.
- (6) ESRI materials: GIS for Libraries, Schools and Libraries CDs, Make Your World Better.
- (7) UTM fact sheet
- (8) USGS web fact sheet.
- (9) How to Get Information from the USGS.
- (10) USGS Science, Society, Solutions.
- (11) Articles illustrating how libraries have used GIS and spatial information.
- (12) My own document entitled "How to Use USGS Base Spatial Data within ArcView and ArcInfo GIS."

Acknowledgements

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workshop, particularly Ellen Fox and Dave Brunell. I thank Michael Sauers for his assistance with the computer lab setup, and Susan Fayad and Mike Mulligan (BRD) for paving the way to this workshop. I thank the attendees for their professionalism and enthusiasm. I look forward to working with BCR, public librarians, and the Colorado State Library in the future.

****end of report****