

Highlights of [GAO-04-703](#), a report to congressional requesters

GEOSPATIAL INFORMATION

Better Coordination Needed to Identify and Reduce Duplicative Investments

Why GAO Did This Study

From homeland security to tracking outbreaks of disease, to investigating the space shuttle disaster to responding to natural disasters, the collection, maintenance, and use of location-based (geospatial) information has become critical to many federal agencies' abilities to achieve their goals. Local governments and the private sector also rely on such data to support essential functions.

GAO was asked to determine the extent to which the federal government is coordinating the sharing of geospatial assets, including through oversight measures in place at the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), in order to identify and reduce redundancies in geospatial data and systems.

What GAO Recommends

GAO is making recommendations to the Director of OMB and the Secretary of the Interior to direct development of a national geospatial strategic plan, and recommendations to the Director of OMB to develop criteria for assessing interagency coordination on proposals for potential geospatial investments, and strengthen its oversight of geospatial projects. In providing oral comments on a draft of this report, OMB and Department of the Interior officials generally agreed with its content and recommendations.

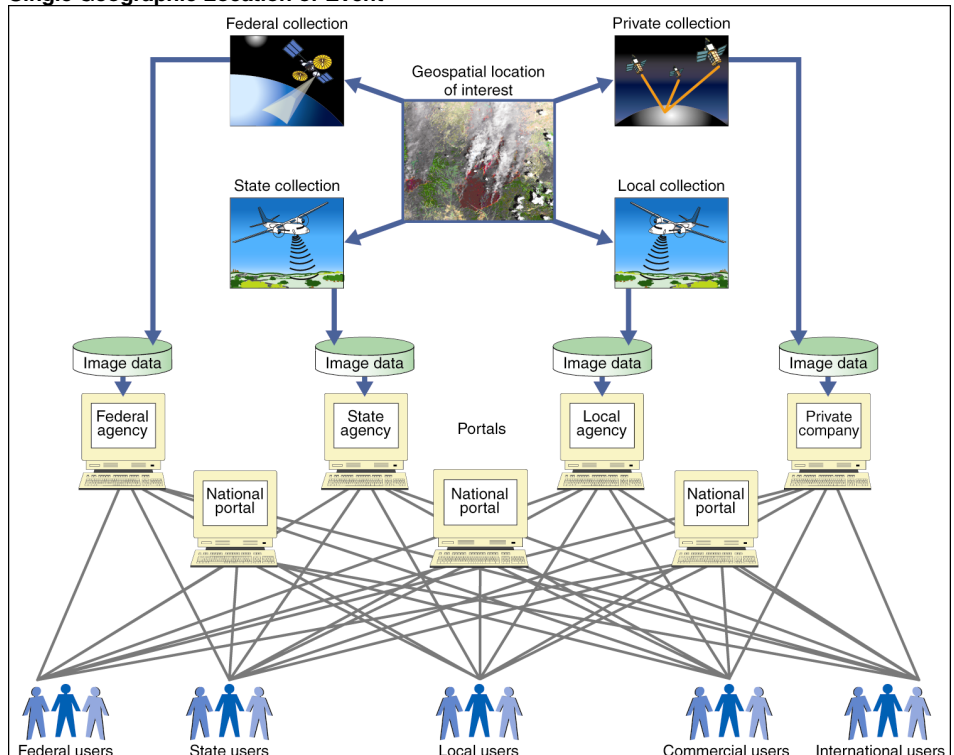
www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-04-703.

To view the full product, including the scope and methodology, click on the link above. For more information, contact Linda D. Koontz at (202) 512-6240 or koontzl@gao.gov.

What GAO Found

OMB, individual federal agencies, and cross-government committees and initiatives such as the Federal Geographic Data Committee and the Geospatial One-Stop project have taken actions to coordinate the government's geospatial investments across agencies and with state and local governments. However, these efforts have not been fully successful in reducing redundancies in geospatial investments for several reasons. First, a complete and up-to-date strategic plan for doing so has not been in place. Second, agencies have not consistently complied with OMB guidance that seeks to identify and reduce duplication. Finally, OMB's oversight of federal geospatial activities has not been effective because its methods—the annual budget review process, the federal enterprise architecture effort, and the Federal Geographic Data Committee's reporting process—are insufficiently developed and have not produced consistent and complete information. As a result of these shortcomings, federal agencies are still independently acquiring and maintaining potentially duplicative and costly data sets and systems. Until these problems are resolved, duplicative geospatial investments are likely to persist.

Entities That May Be Involved in Geospatial Data Collection and Processing Relating to a Single Geographic Location or Event



Sources: GAO (analysis); U.S. Forest Service (Earth photo) and Nova Development (clip art).