Place Names In A Spatial Environment

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Introduction

Place names are the first point of reference used by virtually all the general community when referring to a spatial location.

Each place name has both cultual and practical associations.

- Cultural apects include:
    - How the place was named.
    - Meaning and derivation.
- Practical aspects include:
    - Intelligence relating to where a place is.
    - What is there - the physical and environmental charctaristics of the place.

By creating and using place names or gazetteer databases as a fundamental part of a spatial data infrastructure we can deliver significant benefits to a range of pursuits within a country.

DISCUSSION

Considerations

•Strategic

- What is needed?
- Where is the data at present?
- Who are the clients?
- How is it to be used?
- What agency or agencies have responsibility?

•Other

- Legislative
- Policies and procedures
- Resource considerations
- Cultural factors.

CONTRIBUTING FACTORS TO MAXIMUM BENEFITS

Single Point of Truth

- May require change of procedure or policy.
- Should indicate in the database which names are offiiacal and which are deemed to be local or unofficial names
- May require multipler eddtors of parts of the data, but should have one custodian for overall maitnenance and quality control.
- Benefits include:
  - Removal of the obvious possibility of differences between data sets
  - data is maintained by the relevant authority for the information
  - Enable clients to access a single authoritative point to obtain place names data
  - Minimise data duplication and data mantenance and storage overheads.

CONTRIBUTING FACTORS TO MAXIMUM BENEFITS

Comprehensive, Accurate, and Consistent

- Comprehensive
  - The more comprehensive, the larger the client base.
- Accurate
  - Data precision can vary with different data capture methods:
    - **GPS recording.**
    - **Digitizing.**
    - **Manual capture from published mapping.**
  - Accuracy standards need to be included and clearly defined in the associated metadata.
- Consistency
  - Form of the name;
  - Relationship with generic terms, suffixes and prefixes;
  - Coding
  - Attribute data entry.

CONTRIBUTING FACTORS TO MAXIMUM BENEFITS

Feature Extents

- Effective feature extent depiction for area and linear features available to clients.
- Consitency of boundary depiction is a key aspect in order to gain maximum benefits across government.
- Example
  - Consistant use of boundaries of address localities assists in the following areas:
    - **Emergency services.**
    - **General delivery**
    - **Planning**
    - **Zoning – for aspects such as land use, school collections districts etc**
    - **Statistics**
    - **Mapping**

Who Benefits?

There is a range of government and non-government functions that benefit from easy access to a gazetteer database.

- Statistical and demographic analysis
- Planning
- Mining
- Map production
- Resource development / protection
- Environmental issues
- Scientific studies (Botany, zoology etc)
- Tourism
- Postal services
- Emergency response
- Maritime Exploration
- Littoral management
- Fisheries and related environmentally sensitive sea areas.
- Education
- Cultural retention / revitalisation
- Banking
- Insurance

Feature Extent Depiction

- Concept of developing feature extents is an emerging issue.
- Creation of extents can present some interesting challenges.
- Development of feature extents can be a staged process – not all features may require extents.
- The cultural associations with a feature cannot be overlooked when creating feature extents – use:
  - Community knowledge
  - Historical and contemporary records
  - Consultation
  - Emerging methods, such as 'web harvesting'.

CONCLUSION

Place names are the first point of entry into spatial systems by the vast majority of users.

Due regard is given to the creation and maintenance of accurate, comprehensive and consistent place names databases