

BC Environmental and Occupational Health Research Network GIS Group

Informal minutes: April 27, 2007

Attendees:

Mieke Buller (BCCDC, GIS)
Sunny Mak (BCCDC, GIS)
Genevieve Prudhomme (Fraser Health)
Eleanor Setton (UVIC PhD student)
Ian Parfitt (Selkirk GIS prof)
Meghan Winters (UBC PhD student)
Jason Su (UBC Post Doc)
Dawn Mooney (CHSPR –staff)
Carlos Silva (HELP – GIS staff)

Note to existing members and new members:

Please make sure you add your bio details to the BCEOHRN database, so we all know what people are up to /interested in...

New callers:

Jason Su – post doc at UBC Geography, he has been doing high-level spatial modeling of air pollution for the Border Air Quality Study. He has two PhDs, and programs in a variety of languages

Dawn Mooney – staff geographer at CHSPR (Centre for Health Services and Policy Research), Dawn has been involved in a number of health-data mapping/atlasses for CHSPR – see the CHSPR web links.

Carlos Silva – staff GIS technician, HELP, UBC, Carlos supports the mapping of health-related data

Update from April 19/20 workshop:

This was an opportunity for some of us to meet face to face, as well as to talk to new potential members. We had lunch with the other peer-to-peer groups, and the general conclusion was that these groups are useful and worth continuing. Some are more advanced than others in terms of generating grant partnerships, something we should continue to think about for the future.

There was some discussion about developing a protocol for geocoding and mapping sensitive data. Dr. Laurie Chan (UNBC) suggested it might be useful to put something together that could be discussed with the Ministry of Health, perhaps smoothing the data access process. Sunny noted that there are existing documents that would be useful – FGDC in the US has guidelines for confidential data, BC Stats/Stats Canada have minimum population guidelines. Eleanor Setton and Ian Parfitt agreed to follow up with Dr. Chan re: next steps.

General discussion:

The discussion was wide ranging, so these notes are a little sparse, but the general topics included:

- Other GIS groups that might be useful to watch
 - BC URISA group (<http://www.urisabc.org/index.htm>)
 - ESRI health GIS newsletter (http://www.esri.com/industries/health/news-community/healthy_gis.html)

If anyone has links they think are useful, please send them to Eleanor and we'll get them on the GIS website
- There are a lot of independent efforts within the group in terms of creating interactive web-mapping for health and related data. It could be useful to keep an inventory of these efforts, along with the data each is developing (or has developed), so we can learn from each other. Eleanor might be able to take some of this on as part of her post doc. It could also be useful to keep up to date with each other re: technical details for web-mapping. This could be a reasonable starting topic for our message board perhaps. Eleanor will start a topic and send out an email to the group with registration/login instructions.
- There was an interesting discussion around the topic of geocoding and what data sources are best/ what kinds of issues have come up in the past. A couple of hints: some postal codes have been 'retired' and reassigned to other areas! Make sure you know the effective and retired dates for postal codes. Carlos and Sunny both have experience and can provide advice.
- Ian mentioned the plans for an ESRI 'portal' site for interactive mapping. The vision is that you could trade data between web applications.
- Eleanor gave update on the MSFHR Data Access and Analysis Platform. The funding has been approved conditionally. If funded, this will be a significant opportunity to advance health geomatics in the province. As a group, we should be sure to work through BCEOHRN and participate in the development of the Platform and its health geomatics aspects.

Next dates:

May 31st (Thursday) 1pm to 2:30pm: Dr. Ying MacNab, Spatial smoothing for rate mapping
June 29th, (Friday) 10am as usual

THANKS TO ALL!!!