

New medium for dissemination of geo spatial data

The way of representation of geo spatial data in traditional method is mainly by printed maps, which gives an insight and shows the geo spatial pattern of the terrain. The main disadvantage of this method of representation is considered the hardness of updating the information presented due to lengthy production processes of printed maps. This method was followed by introduction of diskettes and CD-ROMs having more functionalities than hard copy maps. But the problem of having updated information still remains because producers do not produce updated CD-ROMs to meet the rate of change of geo information.

With the development of the information technology, The World Wide Web (WWW) has become the new medium to present and dissemination of geo spatial data. The main reasons for becoming the WWW as new medium in this context could be treated as information on the web is platform independent, possibilities to access many users at same time and easy to update frequently. It provides functionalities such as dynamic and interactive dissemination of geo spatial data offering new mapping techniques and possibilities, which are not available with traditional printed maps. Furthermore, users have the possibilities of limitless access to more information than available in printed maps and also than the information contains in CD-ROMs through hyperlinking.

Presently over 70 National Mapping Organizations around the world have been using the WWW for dissemination of their geo spatial products (Eg. USA, Canada, Britain, The Netherlands, Japan, Australia, New Zealand, Singapore etc.) The number of nations within Asia and Pacific have recognized the changing needs of their governments and people in terms of geographical or spatial information. They have set out to create an Asia and Pacific Spatial Data Infrastructure (APSDI) through the formation of the permanent committee on Geographical Information System (GIS) infrastructure for Asia and Pacific for the purpose of sharing geo spatial data. Undoubtedly these nations also have no other medium than the WWW for this purpose. However, the limitations such as copyright issues and financial implications of the WWW could be treated as main disadvantages of this medium as dissemination and presentation of geo spatial data. The financial implications could be overcome with the introduction of e-commerce but the copyright issue still remains.