



IGU Congress Session: Digital Earth: an opportunity for spatial citizenship

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Abstract:

In 1998, Al Gore presented a vision of “Digital Earth” as a globally complex, multi-resolution, 3-d representation of the planet to make sense of vast amounts of geo-referenced information on the physical/social environment. Many elements of this are now in place and used by hundreds of millions of people worldwide. Given recent technological developments, it has been argued that Digital Earth should be an obligatory target for education (Gryl et al., 2009), integrating tools to allow citizens to ask more complex and socially relevant questions and encourage creative imagination and global communication.

Strobl (2008) developed the digital earth citizen concept, he argued that this is a role that every person should accept in order to participate fully in society. They should handle, interpret and critically reflect on spatial representations and communicate with them.

This session aims to explore the characteristics and potential of Digital Earth, the concept of the digital earth citizen and the significance of an Education for Spatial Citizenship (ESC). ESC is defined as developing learning and teaching such that the outcome is the critical appropriation of space by democratic means. It is about learning how to navigate the world physically, socially and politically. ESC characteristics are transformative, connecting with information and converting it to encourage communication.

Digital Earth: an opportunity for spatial citizenship will seek to present theoretical and empirical work, setting the stage for the appropriation of space by contextualising communication through media that uses the spatial localisation of information. Possible research papers include:

- a) the search for general principles
- b) competences for ESC
- c) impacts of spatialisation
- d) the media and tools concerned
- e) the impact of participatory and crowdsourcing approaches and
- f) the necessary links between education and society.