

Worldwide Development Of National Spatial Data Clearinghouses (2000 – 2005)

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Abstract

One of the key features of a national spatial data infrastructure is a national clearinghouse for spatial data, which can be regarded as the access network of a national spatial data infrastructure facilitating access to a nation's spatial data and related services. Between April 2000 and 2005, a longitudinal web survey was undertaken in order to assess systematically the development and suitability of all national clearinghouses throughout the world and to identify critical factors that could support clearinghouse coordinators and policy makers in the development of successful strategies for establishing and maintaining these clearinghouses. By April 2005, 83 countries had already established their own national clearinghouse. This quantity alone is significant. Of concern however, are the low clearinghouse suitability and declining trends in use, content and management. Reasons for these concerning trends could be the dissatisfaction of the GI-community with the functional capability of clearinghouses and the piecemeal funding of the majority of these facilities. The main critical factors identified for the success of national clearinghouses are: creating awareness of the clearinghouse functional capabilities, introducing web services, building user-friendly interfaces with less jargon, applying ISO19115, and funding continuously.